



## Cerro Pelado Fire Update Tuesday, May 10, 2022

**Info Office Hours:** 8 am - 8 pm    **Phone:** 505-312-4593 and 303-918-4004    **Email:** [2022.CerroPelado@firenet.gov](mailto:2022.CerroPelado@firenet.gov)

**InciWeb:** <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8075/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/SantafeNF>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/2022.Cerropeladofire>

**Public Meeting Tuesday, 5/10 at 5:30 pm:** Town Hall/Post Office in Cochiti Lake at 6515 Hoochaneetsa Blvd. in Cochiti Lake, NM 87083. This meeting will be outdoors, and in-person participants are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.

**Acreage:** 42,491 acres    **Containment:** 11%

**Personnel and Equipment:** 871 total personnel; 41 engines, 9 Type 1 hand crews, 11 Type 2 hand crews, 5 Type 2 initial attack crews, 9 helicopters, 2 scooper planes, 10 dozers, 1 masticator, 2 ambulances, 1 rapid medical extraction unit and 15 water tenders. 2 Air National Guard helicopters are on standby.

**Yesterday:** Due to the Red Flag Warning, which brought west/southwest winds of over 40 mph, the east side of the fire was the major focus of operations. Firefighters continued to use hose lay and handlines on the northeast and eastern perimeters. Air resources operated until they were grounded due to unsafe wind conditions. Operations focused on suppressing the spot fires east of Forest Road (FR) 289 to connect and flank the fire. Work continued along the fire perimeter at Highway 4 on the north, FR 266 on the west, and FR 270 on the south. The fire slowly progressed southward, toward containment lines, through sparse fuels. Masticators continued to grind vegetation along Highway 4. The north side of the fire continued backing slowly toward Highway 4. Structure protection resumed in Cochiti Lake, Bandelier National Monument, and Valles Caldera National Preserve.

**Today:** A Red Flag Weather warning is in effect today, due to sustained winds and dry conditions. Strong gusts and low relative humidity are expected to contribute to fire growth potential. The northeast portion of the fire has slowed due to green spring vegetation on the mesas, which contains more moisture and is less efficient fire fuel. Fuel has become sparse as the fire moves northeast through the Las Conchas fire footprint. Though no drastic movement has occurred, wind gusts will carry embers and may ignite spot fires. Crews will verify and suppress all spots as they are discovered. Air operations will begin as soon as conditions allow, before strong afternoon winds create unsafe conditions. Crews will concentrate northeastern fire operations around FR 287, using this road as a primary containment line. Firefighters will also continue to establish and strengthen containment lines along the eastern perimeter of the fire, especially along Dome Lookout Road, where the fire will continue backing and flanking. Rocky terrain has reduced the intensity of the southern portion of the fire, so crews will continue to monitor as it slowly creeps toward Highway 267. Firefighters will strengthen containment lines along the fire's western perimeter near Hondo Canyon. The northwestern corner of the fire remains contained, but crews will continue evaluating the area. The use of heavy equipment like dozers and masticators will resume to reduce fuels and fuel viability. Air crews will begin operating 24 hours, with drone support occurring at night.

Firefighters will coordinate with the National Park Service for structure protection in Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve. The structure protection group will continue operations throughout all areas.

Additionally, fire operations will coordinate with the Pueblo of Cochiti and their resources, continuing to assess and provide protection for structures in the Cochiti Lake area.

Firefighters and line safety officers are using lookouts, communications, escape routes and safety zones (LCES) to protect line personnel. Firefighters are rotating out of extreme smoke conditions to help relieve fatigue. Wind events continue to create hazards from both dead and green trees, so active mitigation measures are necessary across the incident to protect human life.

**Weather and Fire Behavior:** Single-digit relative humidity and high temperatures continue to contribute to fire growth potential, especially on the east side of the fire. Sustained wind up to 20 mph will change direction slightly to south southwest. Expect some gusts up to 40 mph on ridges and up to 35 mph within north/south aligned canyons of the eastern portion of the fire. Strong west winds may push the fire north and east, with low-intensity fire activity occurring in the Los Conchas Fire burn scar. The north portion of the fire will continue to back slowly towards containment lines along Highway 4.

**Evacuations, Shelter Areas:** Los Alamos County remains in “Set” evacuation level. The communities of Cochiti Mesa and the Peralta Canyon area, including Cox Ranch, remain under “Go” evacuation status. Evacuations for Sierra de Los Pinos and Valles Caldera National Preserve remain in “Set” mode, meaning residents should be ready to leave at a moment’s notice. Jemez Springs, La Cueva and Cochiti Lake area remain in “Ready” status. Counties will provide updated information on evacuations as needed.

**Air quality:** Winds will blow smoke and dust into communities north and northeast of the fires, including the communities of Los Alamos, White Rock, and Santa Clara. Overall conditions are expected to remain GOOD to MODERATE. Santa Fe and Cochiti Pueblo could see brief periods of light smoke and haze. Information on air quality is at New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Public Health Tracking, <https://nmtracking.org/fire>. An interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/> allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

**Closures:** Highway 4 remains closed to all traffic from mile marker 34 to mile marker 50 (at the junction of Highway 4 and 501) due to fire activity. Fire equipment and firefighters will be working along Highway 4 and accessing the fire, especially at intersections with FR 10 and FR 280. Heavy traffic impedes firefighting efforts and endangers firefighter safety. The most updated road closure information can be found here: <https://www.nmroads.com/mapIndex.html>

The Santa Fe National Forest has issued a [closure order](#) for the Cerro Pelado fire area and a second [closure order](#) for the Cerro Pelado Firefighter Camp along FR 376. The purpose of both orders is to protect public health and safety due to extreme fire danger in the Restricted Area. Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve remain closed due to fire activity until further notice.

**Fire Restrictions:** [Stage II Fire Restrictions](#) are in effect for the Santa Fe National Forest, which prohibits all campfires and other hazardous activities. Due to ongoing fire threats, Sandoval County will not issue burn permits.

**Temporary Flight Restriction:** There is a flight restriction on the area over the fire (10 nautical miles southwest of Los Alamos, NOTAM 2/2366) to provide a safe environment for firefighting operations. Drones over the fire are also prohibited because their presence can disrupt air resources and pose additional fire hazard. More information: [https://tfr.faa.gov/save\\_pages/detail\\_2\\_6919.html](https://tfr.faa.gov/save_pages/detail_2_6919.html).