



Cerro Pelado Fire Update Thursday, May 12, 2022

43,887 acres - 11% contained - 1,032 total personnel working on the fire

Information Phone Lines: 505-312-4593 and 303-918-4004

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

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

Public Meeting: Thursday, 5/12 at 5:30 pm at the Los Alamos High School Griffith Gym at 1300 Diamond Drive in Los Alamos. This meeting will also be livestreamed on the Cerro Pelado Fire Information Facebook page and on Zoom.

Equipment: 45 engines, 27 hand crews, 7 initial attack crews, 15 helicopters, 2 scooper planes, 19 water tenders, 10 dozers, 1 masticator, 2 ambulances, and 1 rapid medical extraction unit. 2 Air National Guard helicopters on standby.

Yesterday: The area experienced sustained windy and dry conditions with low relative humidity (RH). The fire grew minimally and became established in Alamo Canyon. Low-intensity fire activity continued in the Las Conchas Fire footprint. A dry cold front moved into the area overnight, bringing some relief.

Today: A cold front will move into the area, bringing calmer west-northwest winds of about 10-15 mph. Though conditions will be more favorable, the area will still see critically low RH and breezy afternoons with gusts up to 25 mph. There may be some relief tonight with below-freezing overnight temperatures. Air quality may be affected by fire growth and increased smoke production. South-southwest winds may blow smoke and dust into communities northeast of the fires, including Los Alamos, White Rock, and Santa Clara. Overall air conditions are expected to remain good to moderate. Information on air quality is at New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Public Health Tracking: <https://nmtracking.org/fire> and an interactive smoke map is at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.

Shifting wind direction may cause flare-ups within the fire perimeter and afternoon gusts will have the capacity to carry embers beyond the perimeter. These conditions may also create erratic fire behavior in Alamo, Frijoles, and Peralta Canyons, encouraging the fire to creep down the canyons toward dry vegetation.

The northeast section of the fire is currently being held at Forest Road (FR) 287. Operations in this area will continue work along this road to strengthen the containment line to FR 289. Crews will work to secure the eastern edge of the fire at Alamo Canyon and will keep eyes on the southeastern section to address any spot fires that occur due to gusty afternoon winds. Crews will have the opportunity to perform direct fuel reduction activity in the southwestern part of the fire. Fifteen helicopters and two scooper planes will resume operations as conditions allow, dropping water on spot fires and cooling hot spots of burned areas.

The Great Basin Incident Management Team will continue communication with tribal representatives, community leaders, private cooperators, and Los Alamos National Laboratory staff to coordinate firefighting resources, protect structures, and keep community members safe. The National Park Service will resume structure protection in Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve. The structure protection group will continue operations in all areas.

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. Four additional residences are evacuated in the Cox Ranch area between mile marker 36 and 40 along Highway 4. Los Alamos residents that have special needs or are access-challenged will continue evacuation. Los Alamos High School is closed until further notice. 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.

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 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. Stage III Fire Restrictions are in effect for Cochiti Pueblo.

Temporary Flight Restriction: There is a flight restriction on the area over the fire (10 nautical miles southwest of Los Alamos, NOTAM 2/5189) 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_1589.html