



## Cerro Pelado Fire Update Friday, May 13, 2022

45,394 acres, 19% Contained, 976 total personnel

**Information Phone Lines:**

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The Cerro Pelado Fire Incident Meteorologist forecasts similar weather to yesterday. Firefighters expect gradual warming, breezy, and very dry weather conditions, with critically low daytime relative humidity values, reading in the single digits, and a very high probability of ignition. Terrain-influenced and afternoon winds from the northwest may increase fire behavior in some areas and could carry embers from torching trees beyond containment lines, potentially sparking spot fires. There are close to a thousand personnel now committed to the Cerro Pelado Fire. Engine and hand crews hold, monitor, and patrol containment lines on all sides of the fire night and day. With more favorable conditions expected today, firefighters will continue looking for opportunities to engage the fire directly.

On the north side of the fire, crews continue to monitor pockets of active backing fire burning in terrain threatened by hazard trees near Los Griegos Mountain. Backing fire became somewhat active yesterday south of Highway 4 off Forest Road (FR) 280. In the next few nights, when fire activity is less intense, crews may need to tactically burn some pockets of unburned fuel to improve and strengthen containment lines. No structures in the area are at risk, and crews continue to patrol burned areas near them, using water to extinguish any lingering areas of heat. Crews will continue to clear hazard trees, remove and masticate fuels, and chip brush piles in the Highway 4 corridor.

On the eastern and southern sides of the fire, terrain-driven and down-canyon winds could again cause erratic fire behavior in Alamo and Peralta Canyons, encouraging the fire to work its way down through very dry vegetation that is only continuous in the canyon bottoms. Despite the very strong winds earlier in the week, crews successfully held the fire that had become established in Alamo Canyon on its east rim, utilizing FR 287, the old Dome Lookout Road, as a containment line. The fire remains held up on Obsidian Ridge, and it has not crossed into Frijoles Canyon to the east.

Hand crews supported by engines worked to secure the containment line back to FR 289. Hand crews are working southward along the east side of the fire through very steep terrain on Cochiti Mesa, where they are finding little heat, and the fire appears to be mostly hung up in difficult to access rocky terrain with sparse fuels. Yesterday, a hand crew was able to hike up into Peralta Canyon, north of Cochiti Pueblo, where they made good progress containing the fire in the canyon bottom. The same crew will head back up there today.

On the western side of the fire, crews successfully used firing operations last night to bring low-intensity fire down to reinforced control lines along FR 266 in the Hondo Canyon and Bear Springs areas. Today, hand and engine crews will continue to secure, strengthen and patrol control lines and use water to mop up hot spots near the fire edge. With slightly lighter winds expected today, 15 helicopters and 2 scooper planes will be in operation for much of the day, assisting firefighters on the ground and cooling hot spots near containment lines with loads of water.

The Great Basin IMT 1 continues to communicate with tribal representatives, community leaders, private cooperators, and Los Alamos National Laboratory staff to coordinate firefighting resources, protect structures, and keep community members safe.

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**Evacuation status:** 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:** 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 available at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.

**Closures:**

- Highway 4 is closed from mile marker 34 to mile marker 50. The most updated road closure information can be found here: <https://www.nmroads.com/mapIndex.html>
- The Santa Fe National Forest has closed the Cerro Pelado Fire Area ([closure order](#)) and Fire Base Camp along Forest Road 376 ([closure order](#)). The purpose of both orders is to protect public health and safety.
- 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 (TFR).** There is a flight restriction over the fire area and drones are also prohibited.