

Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – MARK BERNAL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



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Containment Increases Windy, Dry Trend Continues; Red Flag Warning Today

Update 5/03/2022

Acres: 59,359 acres (based on Infrared Flight)

Containment: 72%

Location: North of Ocate NM, approximately 46 miles north of Las Vegas, NM

Start Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022

Cause: Human, under investigation

Fuels: ponderosa pine, oak brush and grass

Fire Update: Yesterday, Red Flag conditions persisted due to high winds and low humidity across the Cooks Peak Fire. Fire behavior was minimal, with smoke appearing where internal pockets of fuel continue to burn. Firefighters conducted mop-up activities and continued fire-suppression work where needed.

Today, the critical fire weather trend will continue with another Red Flag warning issued for the Cooks Peak Fire. Under these conditions, fire behavior has the potential to become very active. Firefighters will continue to hold, reinforce, and secure lines where areas of heat continue to threaten containment. Crews will also monitor and patrol fire lines for hot spots, mopping up where needed. Suppression repair will continue around the fire perimeter. Some smoke is likely to be observed until interior pockets of unburned fuel are consumed.

Current Evacuations for Mora and Colfax Counties: Effective 5 p.m. on Monday, May 2, all “GO” evacuations For Colfax County were reduced. The Cooks Peak Fire now has the following evacuation status’ in place:

Colfax County: SET: Philmont Scout Ranch Back Country West of State Road, Sweetwater, Rayado and Sunnyside; **READY:** Philmont Scout Ranch Headquarters.

Mora County residents previously in the Cooks Peak Fire evacuation footprint may now be under Calf Canyon/Hermit’s Peak evacuation status. Mora county residents should refer to the Mora County sheriff <https://www.facebook.com/moracountysheriffoffice> and Calf Canyon/Hermit’s Peak Fire Information <https://www.facebook.com/santafeNF> for the most current evacuation status.

The Mora and Colfax County Sheriff’s Offices are using the [Ready! Set! Go!](#) program for evacuation status that provides information on evacuation and evacuation preparation.

An Evacuation center is set up at Old Memorial Middle School, 947 Old National Rd, Las Vegas. The Colfax County Fairgrounds are closed.

Livestock: The Taos Rodeo Grounds is available to residents from Mora if they need a place for horses. Contact: Livestock Inspector Ruben Baca 505-770-1490.

Weather: Critical fire weather and a Red Flag Warning will continue today, due to persistently dry fuels and wind. The fire area experienced some overnight moisture, but drier air will be present by the afternoon. Winds will shift today, coming out of the south/southwest at 26-31mph and gusts 40-45 mph. Gusty, erratic winds and

lightning strikes from dry thunderstorms will be the main threat across the region during this week's critical fire weather period.

Highway Closures: New Mexico Highway 120 remains closed from mile marker 26 to 3 miles west of Ocate due to fire activity and equipment entering the area to support firefighting efforts. Motorists are advised to delay travel or to seek alternate routes. State Road 21 from Polo Ranch to Cimarron is open to local traffic only, and remains closed to through traffic. Visit <https://nmroads.com/mapIndex.html> for additional information.

Smoke: Impacts from smoke will be minimal over the next couple of days due to favorable wind directions, and lack of activity on the Cooks Peak Fire. Smoke from other fires in the region will cause air quality to remain in the Moderate range today, improving to "Good" on Wednesday as winds veer to the west. Occasional blowing dust may affect Interstate 25 from Wagon Mound to Springer, and northward through this evening. Stay informed of potential changes by visiting the interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov>, which allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

Aviation Restrictions: There is a Temporary Flight Restriction over the Cooks Peak Fire. Firefighting aircraft cannot fly if this restriction is violated by any aircraft including drones. This poses a danger to firefighters on the ground by leaving them without aerial support.

Fire Restrictions: The New Mexico State Forester has implemented statewide fire restrictions. Smoking, fireworks, campfires open burning and open fires are prohibited. For more information see <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/forestry-news/> The Bureau of Land Management, Farmington District has also implemented fire restrictions. Fireworks, campfires, smoking and operating machinery, including off road OHV use are restricted. Visit <https://www.blm.gov/programs/public-safety-and-fire/fire-and-aviation/regional-info/new-mexico/fire-restrictions> for details.

More Information:

Inciweb: Cooks Peak: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8066/>

Inciweb: Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8069>

New Mexico Fire information: <https://nmfireinfo.com/>

Smoke Outlook: <https://outlooks.wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlook/b335b9f4>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CooksPeakFireInfo/>

Evacuations: <https://www.facebook.com/moracountysheriffoffice/>

Colfax County: http://www.co.colfax.nm.us/government/sheriff_s_department.php