

New Mexico Fires Report #2

June 25, 2022

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Due to wildfires throughout the state, including a number over 1,000 acres, the State of New Mexico made a Disaster Declaration on May 3, 2022. The President subsequently approved a federal disaster declaration on May 4, 2022, to provide federal funding to State and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations. The declaration covers the counties of Colfax, Lincoln, Mora, San Miguel, and Valencia. The President decreased the state cost share from 25% to 0% on June 11, 2022, for a 90-day period from April 26 to July 3, 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On May 11, 2022, EPA received a signed Federal Operational Support (FOS) Mission Assignment (MA) for \$217,000 with a Projected Start Date of May 11, 2022, and Completion Date of July 11, 2022. This MA covers providing appropriate personnel to staff the RRCC, IOF, JFO, or other regional, state, tribal, territorial, or local teams, including Rapid Needs Assessment Teams, and/or facilities to include virtual as requested to support disaster operations.
- On May 12, 2022, Region 6 Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) was elevated to Level 2, Partial Activation. The Regional Incident Coordination Team (RICT) and Staff RICT (SRICT) were also activated.
- On May 14th and 15th, 2022, Region 6 mobilized a Subject Matter Expert (SME)/State EOC Liaison and EPA Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractor respectively. The SME worked with the State of New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM) and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to develop products outlining cleanup needs and applicable laws and regulations required for property owners who clean up properties on their own. The START contractor is providing technical support, conducting field assessments to determine ESF #10 tasking needs.
- On June 15, 2022, EPA received a Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) MA for \$2,000,000 with a Projected Start Date of June 14, 2022, and Completion Date of July 3, 2022. This MA covers oil and hazardous materials response operations including disposal of household hazardous waste (HHW) and bulk asbestos, in support of FEMA disaster operations under ESF #10 of the National Response Framework (NRF).

SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS

- On June 23, 2022, assessment teams began operations in Mora and San Miguel Counties. Operations included assessment teams visiting properties whose Right of Entry Forms have been validated and received by EPA from the County, recording the types of waste observed at the properties, and identifying safety concerns for the incoming collection teams who will begin work on June 27, 2022. Two Task Force Leaders will mobilize on June 26, 2022, to lead the collection teams.
- On June 23, 2022, a Liaison Officer (LNO) mobilized to the Joint Field Office (JFO) in Santa Fe to provide daily updates on EPA

activities and answer questions from FEMA.

- On June 24, 2022, the Incident Management Team (IMT) met with local law enforcement officials to discuss handling and disposal of ammunition found on assessed properties. The local law enforcement is evaluating options for staging and/or disposal of the ammunition.
- On June 24, 2022, the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued Emergency Waiver Order #21 to EPA. Under the waiver, persons conducting operations under the direction of EPA Region 6 within the major disaster areas are authorized to offer and transport non-radioactive hazardous materials under alternative safety requirements imposed by EPA Region 6 when compliance with the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR Parts 171-180) is not practicable. Under this Emergency Waiver Order, non-radioactive hazardous materials may be transported to staging areas within 50 miles of the point of origin. Further transportation of the hazardous materials from staging areas must be in full compliance with the HMR. This Emergency Waiver Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for 60 days from the date of issuance.
- On June 27, 2022, the staging pad will be ready to receive waste from EPA collection teams. Several waste staging areas were created and segregated for incompatible wastes with additional areas available as needed.

COORDINATION WITH STATE AND OTHER PARTNERING AGENCIES

- EPA continues to participate in the Debris Management Task Force (DMTF) which is composed of debris experts from New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM), FEMA, and the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE).
- Both San Miguel and Mora counties are concerned about areas susceptible to flooding after the fires and asked EPA to prioritize these areas to prevent the release of hazardous materials. EPA met with the counties to delineate the priority areas on June 21, 2022. The priority areas in Mora County are Rio de la Casa Canyon and Holman Hill. The priority areas in San Miguel County are Mineral Hill, Gallinas Canyon, San Ignacio and Cañoncito de Manuelitas.

EPA RESOURCES

2022 New Mexico Wildfires Staffing by Location (As of June 24, 2022)			
Agency	REOC and Remote IMT	Field	TOTAL
EPA	13	5	18
START	0	9	9
ERRS	0	3	3
Total	13	17	30

OPERATIONS

PROGRESS METRICS FOR 2022 NEW MEXICO WILDFIRE HHW COLLECTION					
County	ROEs Received 6/24/22	Total ROEs Received to Date	Properties Assessed 6/24/22	Properties Assessed to Date	Initial Property Assessments Remaining
Mora	7	39	0	9	30
San Miguel	0	56	16	16	40
TOTALS	7	95	16	25	70

INCIDENT MAP

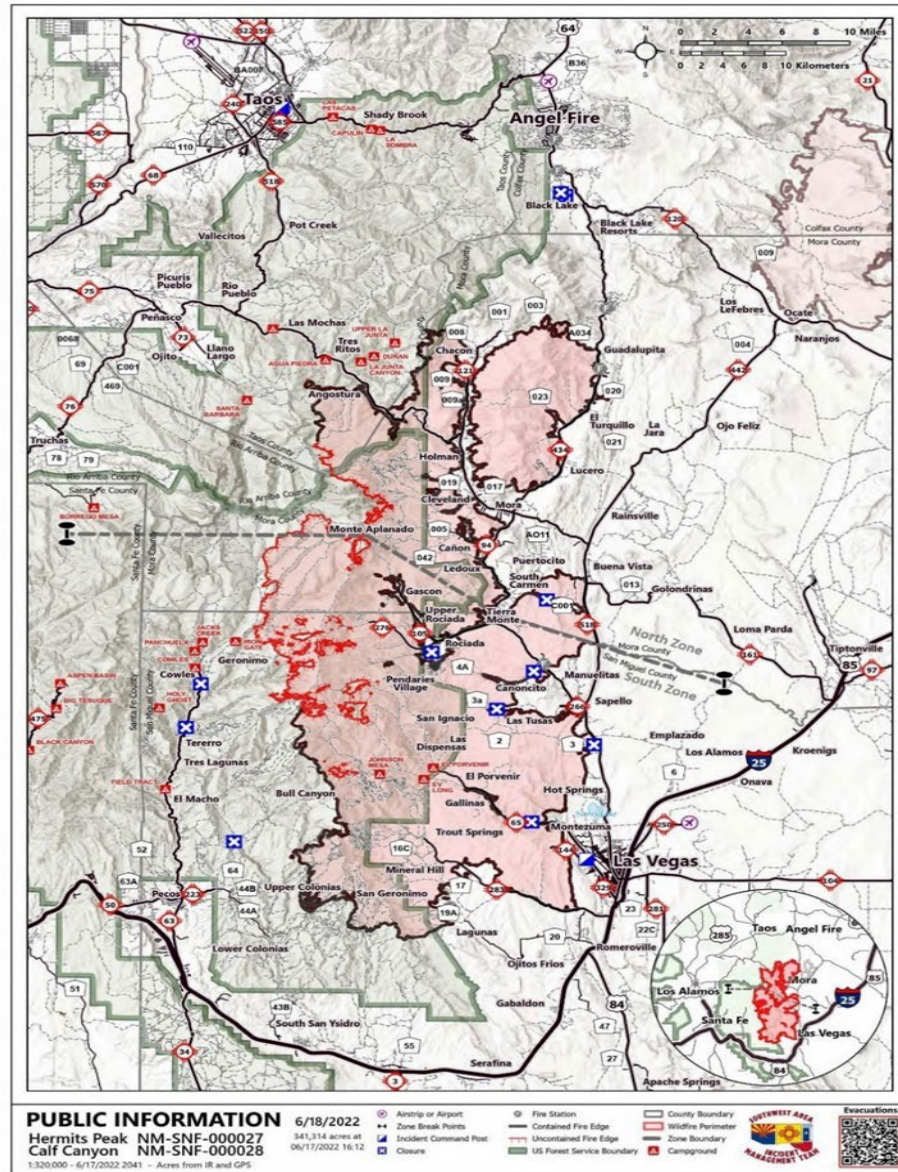




Photo 1 – Home destroyed by the wildfires



Photo 2 - Staging Area - Waste Area



Photo 3 – EPA Incident Command Post at the Staging Pad