

## **New Mexico Wildfires Report #1**

### **June 21, 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 16, 2022, the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief visited the NM Department of Transportation (NM DOT) facility near La Cueva NM. NMED procured the facility as a staging area and waste pad for the HHW and bulk asbestos collection. Only a portion of the NM DOT facility will be utilized by EPA. EPA and its contractors will provide 24-hr security at the site, set up an air monitoring network around the waste pad and develop controls to prevent materials from being released. EPA performed an EJ Screen analysis of the location and all indices for the State, region and country were below the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile at the one, three and five-mile radii.
- On June 17, 2022, the EPA Incident Management Team (IMT) traveled to Mora and San Miguel counties with the Debris Management Task Force (DMTF) to answer questions property owners had regarding EPA's planned activities in the area. The DMTF has been involved in multiple outreach meetings in each county. NMED conducted multiple interviews for local media in English and Spanish. In addition,

the DMTF created multiple outreach and guidance documents in English and Spanish for property owners.

- On June 20, 2022, EPA set up one of their mobile platforms for use as an Incident Command Post at the staging area. EPA contractors deployed to the staging area on to complete the pre-operation sampling and work with the IMT on the staging area set-up.
- On June 20, 2022, pre-operation sampling of the staging area was completed. Samples were sent to an Albuquerque, NM lab with results expected on June 24, 2022. These results will then be compared with samples taken after EPA has removed all waste from the site to ensure that EPA activities have not negatively impacted the staging area.

#### **COORDINATION WITH STATE AND OTHER PARTNERING AGENCIES**

- EPA is participating 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, the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) and consultants to the State of NM from California Office of Emergency Service (Cal OES). The group developed the Right of Entry (ROE) form which property owners must submit to request EPA conduct an assessment and, if appropriate, removal of HHW and bulk asbestos. To date, NMED has received 43 ROE forms which have been reviewed and validated by Mora or San Miguel County. NMED will review the forms, remove Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and information on insurance not needed by EPA. Once the review is complete, NMED will forward the validated forms to EPA for final review and entry into a database and mapping.
- Both counties expressed concerns regarding areas susceptible to flooding after the fires and asked EPA to prioritize these areas to prevent the release of hazardous materials. EPA will meet with the counties to delineate the priority areas on June 21, 2022.

#### **EPA RESOURCES**

<b>2022 New Mexico Wildfires Staffing by Location</b> (As of June 20, 2022)			
Agency	REOC	Field	TOTAL
EPA	6	4	<b>10</b>
START	1	2	<b>3</b>
ERRS	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>

# INCIDENT MAP

