

News Release

Santa Fe National Forest

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More Abandoned Campfires on the Santa Fe NF as the Campfire-Caused Cajete Fire Continues to Burn

SANTA FE, NM – June 18, 2017 – For Immediate Release. As more than 300 people continued to battle the 1,367-acre Cajete Fire that sparked last Thursday from an abandoned campfire, the already-overloaded fire team on the Santa Fe National Forest was forced to respond to more abandoned campfires today. As of 2 p.m., at least three had been reported to the dispatch center.

With record high temperatures, no moisture and possible lightning strikes in the forecast, Northern New Mexico is a tinderbox. Someone's carelessness with a campfire near Vallecitos de los Indios in the Jemez Mountains has not only put hundreds of firefighters at risk, but has disrupted people's lives in nearby communities that were evacuated. Fortunately, they still have homes to come back to.

The bill so far? A whopping \$1.4 million in four days. And it's not over yet – that number will continue to rise.

The Jemez Ranger District where the Cajete Fire is burning implemented Stage 1 fire restrictions on Friday, and Forest Service officials are considering options for the rest of the forest. In the meantime, visitors to the Santa Fe National Forest are urged to follow [campfire safety procedures](#) to prevent wildfire and ensure public safety.

- Bring a shovel and plenty of water to make sure you can put your campfire completely out.
- Build campfires away from overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotten stumps, logs, dry grass and leaves.
- It's always preferable to use an existing fire ring or a rock-ringed fire pit. Clear all flammable material at least five feet away from the fire in all directions.
- Don't build a campfire on a windy day.
- Building and maintaining campfires should always be done under adult supervision.
- Never leave a campfire unattended, even for a few minutes.
- Use dry wood no bigger than the fire ring or pit.
- Extinguish your campfire before you call it a night and crawl into your sleeping bag.
- To completely extinguish a campfire, pour water on the embers until the hissing and steaming stops. Then use the shovel to mix dirt and water with the ashes until what remains of your fire is cold to the touch of a bare hand.
- Don't cover the ashes with rocks to extinguish your fire. Rocks can hold heat and create a funnel for air to reignite the coals.
- Don't head for home until you are sure your campfire is DEAD OUT. If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave.
- If you discover an unattended fire, use 911 to report it and do what you can to put it out. Report suspicious smoke.



Violators of regulations that prohibit abandoning a campfire are subject to a fine and/or imprisonment. If the abandoned campfire causes a wildfire, violators can also be held responsible for fire suppression costs.

Fire updates are posted on InciWeb at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5251/> and New Mexico Fire Information at nmfireinfo.com as well as on [@SantaFeNF](https://www.facebook.com/SantaFeNF) and www.Facebook.com/SantaFeNF.

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