

New Mexico Wildfires Report #17

August 19, 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 5 to July 3, 2022, which was subsequently extended through August 1, 2022.
- On July 28, 2022, an ESF-10 Mission Assignment (MA) for EPA to extend HHW and bulk asbestos assessment and collections was received. The start date for the new MA is August 2, 2022, with the projected end date of September 27, 2022. The ceiling for the new MA is \$1,815,294 with a state cost share of 25%.
- On July 28, 2022, a new ESF-3 MA was received for an EPA Subject Matter Expert (SME) to assist with the rapid assessment for water quality purposes, and other technical assistance for Storrie Lake reservoir in Las Vegas, NM. The start date for the ESF-3 MA was July 26, 2022, with the projected end date of August 25, 2022, and a ceiling of \$10,000 with a state cost share of 0%. On August 15, 2022, an additional \$80,000 was added to the ESF-3 MA to bring the ceiling to \$90,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On May 11, 2022, EPA received a signed ESF-10 Federal Operational Support (FOS) 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 Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC), Initial Operating Facility (IOF), Joint Field Office (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 14th and 15th, 2022, Region 6 mobilized an ESF-10 SME/State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Liaison and EPA Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractor respectively. The ESF-10 SME and START 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.
- On June 15, 2022, EPA received an ESF-10 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).

- On July 1, 2022, EPA received an extension to August 1, 2022, and funding increase of \$1,653,017 for the ESF-10 DFA MA to bring the MA ceiling to \$3,653,017. The extension allows additional time to conduct HHW and bulk asbestos collection, management, and transportation and disposal. This amendment also extends the 0% state cost share.
- On July 7, 2022, EPA received an extension to August 1, 2022, and funding increase of \$31,500 for the ESF-10 FOS MA to bring the MA ceiling to \$248,500. The extension allows additional time to provide personnel to the RRCC, IOF, or JFO, as needed to support disaster operations.
- A pay cap waiver for responders working under the MAs was signed on July 7, 2022. The pay waiver start date is Saturday, June 18, 2022, and end date is Saturday, August 27, 2022.
- On July 26, 2022, EPA received an extension to September 27, 2022, for the ESF-3 FOS MA with no funding increase. MA ceiling remains at \$248,500.
- On July 28, 2022, EPA received a new MA for the ESF-10 DFA MA with a start date of August 2, 2022, and a projected end date of September 27, 2022, with a ceiling of \$1,815,294 and a state cost share of 25%.
- On July 29, 2022, EPA received an ESF-3 FOS MA SME to assist the state of New Mexico and FEMA with technical support and rapid needs assessments pertaining to Storrie Lake reservoir. The start date of the MA was July 26, 2022, with a projected end date of August 25, 2022, with a ceiling of \$10,000 with a 0% state cost share.
- On August 6, 2022, EPA received an increase ceiling for the ESF-10 DFA MA to bring the ceiling to \$3,165,294.20, with the projected end date of September 27, 2022, with a state cost share of 25%.
- On August 15, 2022, EPA received an increase ceiling for the ESF-3 FOS MA to bring the ceiling to \$90,000 with the projected end date of August 25, 2022, with a state cost share of 0%.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS

- Collection of HHW and bulk asbestos began in Mora and San Miguel on June 27, 2022, prioritizing properties located in potential flood impacted areas during monsoon season. As shown in Map 1 in this Management Report, 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.
- On July 18, 2022, NMED secured a staging area for ammunition at the Las Vegas, NM Police Department. EPA will provide pick up and disposal if ammunition is found. No ammunitions have been found to date.

- Due to lack of Right of Entry (ROE) forms and MA cost savings, EPA suspended assessment and collection of HHW and bulk asbestos activities beginning on July 31, 2022, until August 15, 2022. As of August 5, 2022, EPA has conducted all response needs virtually. On August 14, 2022, EPA field team and contractors remobilized to New Mexico to resume assessment and collection operations.

COORDINATION WITH STATE AND OTHER PARTNERING AGENCIES

- The Debris Management Task Force (DMTF) which is composed of debris experts from NMED, NMDHSEM, FEMA, and the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) has narrowed attendance to only state and county participation with FEMA for internal discussions and decisions. FEMA notified NMED that information from the state to EPA and USACE will be funneled through FEMA. On August 9, 2022, FEMA begun weekly coordination call with EPA and USACE to discuss timelines, priorities, and future transition plans.
- The City of Las Vegas continues to work Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NM DHSEM), NMED, New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA), FEMA, EPA and other state and federal agencies to address their immediate drinking water needs. In addition, discussions have occurred regarding the City of Las Vegas to purchase mobile treatment plants to reduce the turbidity of the water to levels treated by the city’s current water system. Due to expense of approximately 50% of the city’s budget, the city is reluctant to purchasing the mobile treatment plants. Another alternative being discussed is the option to haul water by milk trucks. With the hauled water requiring to be from an approved public water supply, the city may not be able to find water to meet the demand.

EPA RESOURCES

EPA Resources (As of August 18, 2022)					
Agency	Remote IMT	REOC	JFO (virtual)	IMT	TOTAL
EPA	4	12	1	3	20
NMED	1	0	0	0	1
START	2	0	0	6	8
ERRS	2	0	0	7	9
Total	9	12	1	16	38

OPERATIONS

HHW and Bulk Asbestos Task Force (ESF-10)

As of August 18, 2022, EPA has received 90 signed ROE forms eligible for Phase 1 removal. On August 18, 2022, the EPA Collections Task Force completed Phase 1's at seven properties in Mora County. Safety continues to be an issue with increased rain and flooding.

EPA provides all Flood-related ROE forms to FEMA for eligibility determination. In general, FEMA's guidance indicates flood properties inside the burn scar footprint are eligible for Phase 1 while properties outside of the burn scar footprint would be evaluated by FEMA for eligibility. In addition, FEMA indicated that all non-residential private property (e.g., corporations, non-profits, etc.) are not eligible for the Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) Program covered under the current Mission Assignment tasking. Non-residential private properties should seek assistance under the Public Assistance Program.

In addition to EPA's ROE forms received, FEMA provided EPA a list of 29 priority target addresses, to expedite for Direct Housing installation. Daily updates are provided to FEMA and USACE at the end of the day for situational awareness in facilitating Phase 2 progression. As of August 18, 2022, EPA has completed Phase 1's on seven properties from the priority target list. FEMA and USACE continue to reach out to the priority target owners for obtaining signed ROE forms.

EPA is projecting to complete Phase 1 Collections on September 6, 2022, to allot for transportation and disposal of all accumulated wastes, demobilization of all resources, and project closeout documentation in meeting MA Completion Date of September 27, 2022. Some trailing costs are anticipated beyond the MA Completion Date, including but not limited to, the production of a final report and invoices. These costs covered under the current MA.

Drinking Water Task Force (ESF-3)

Under ESF-3 MA, FEMA requested the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a rapid assessment of the City of Las Vegas Water Supply System following impacts from post-fire debris flow and ash deposition.

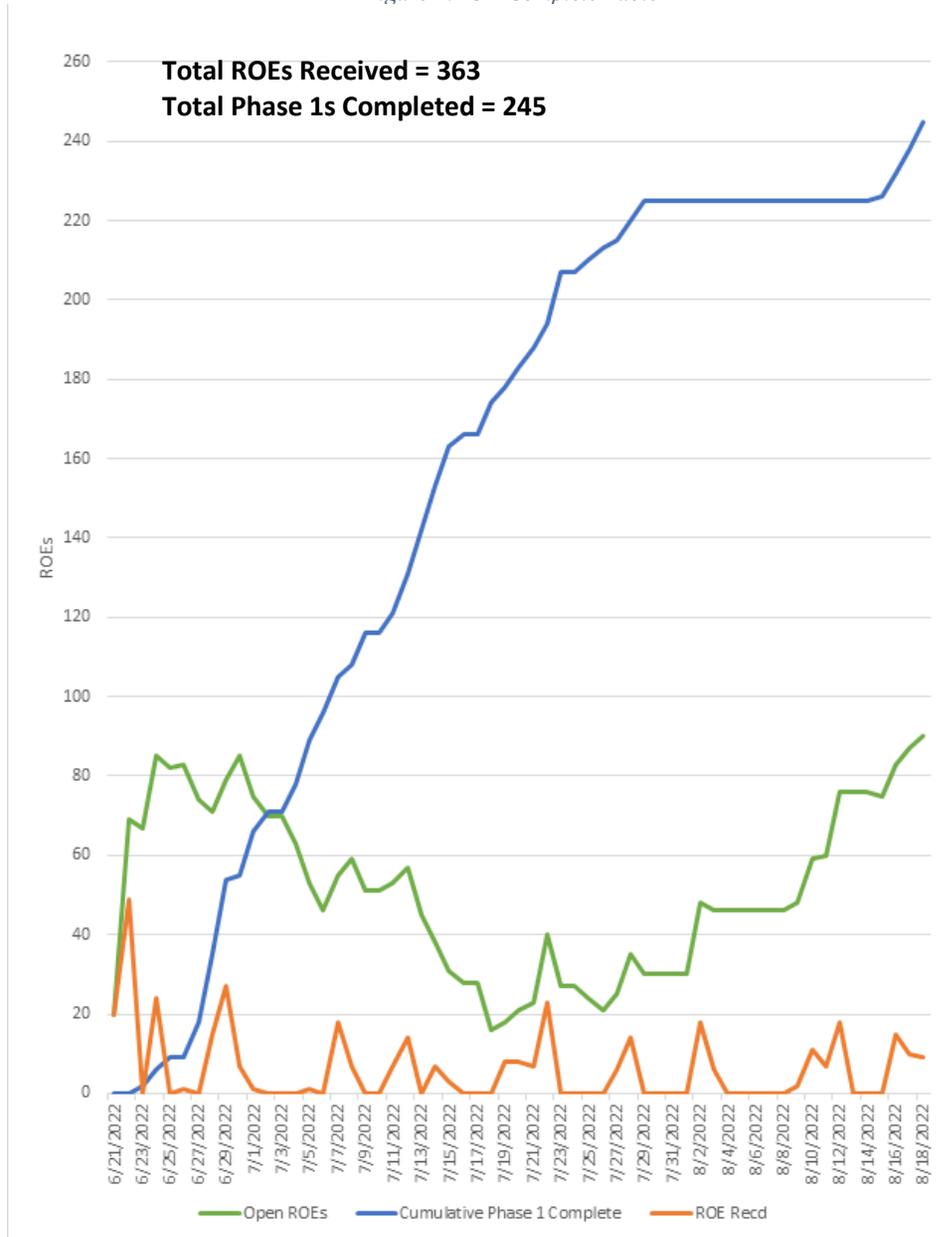
EPA Region 6 ESF-3 SME joined the multiagency Federal Emergency Water Task Force (FEWTF) assess the following three approaches:

1. Establish temporary emergency water capability with no more than a one-week supply in or near Las Vegas.
2. As requested by USACE, perform a rapid assessment of the Las Vegas Montezuma Water Treatment Plant to determine the plants current condition and degree of operation to treat existing and expected water quality in near future.
3. Assess the requirements and availability of a temporary water treatment plant.

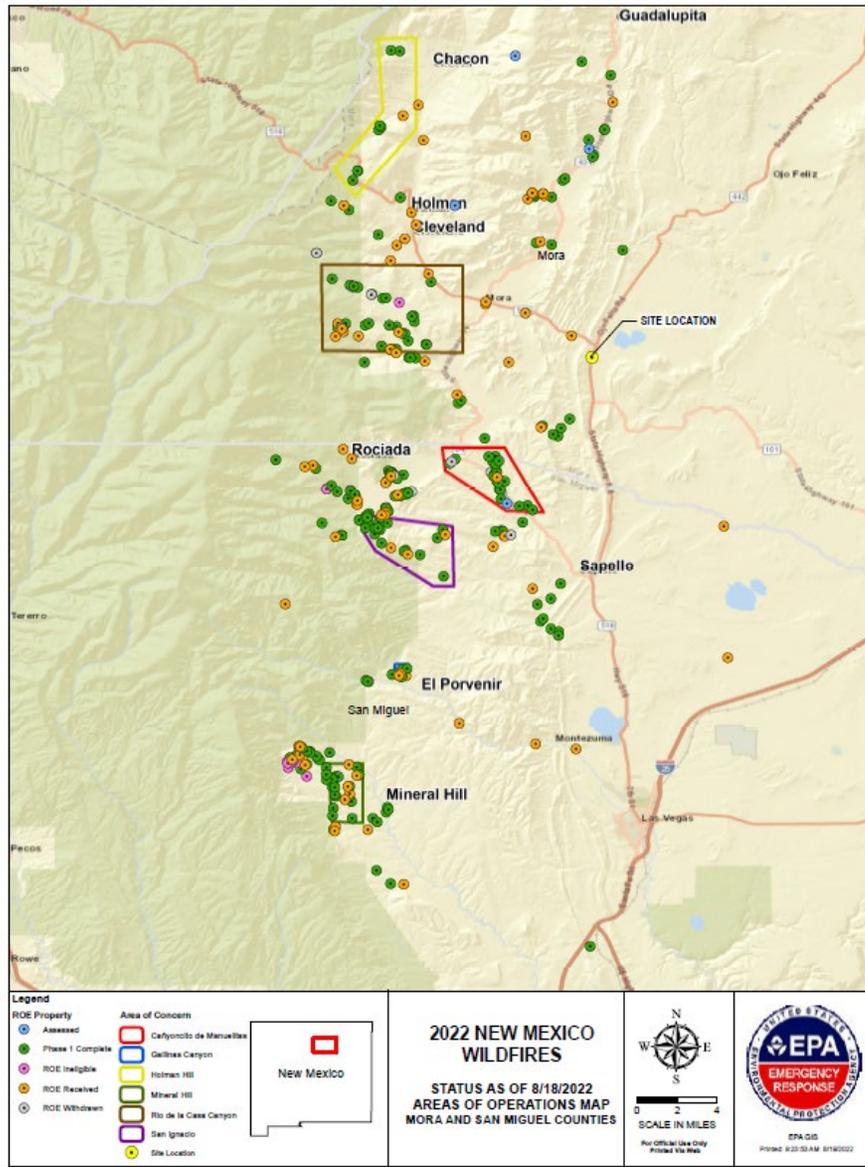
On July 27, EPA Region 6 ESF-3 SME presented findings of the rapid assessment report which included system overview, availability of water, the quality of water in the area, possible mitigation measures to decrease impact from the wildfires through deposition and runoff as well as providing recommendations for temporary emergency water capability and availability of a temporary water treatment plant. EPA Region 6 ESF-3 SME continues to attend meetings to address drinking water related needs.

<i>PROGRESS METRICS FOR 2022 NEW MEXICO WILDFIRE HHW COLLECTION</i>						
Current ROE Status	Mora		San Miguel		Total	
	August 18	Total	August 18	Total	August 18	All
ROE Received	8	121	1	242	9	363
ROE Withdrawn and Opt Outs	0	7	0	8	0	15
ROE Ineligible*	0	1	1	10	1	11
Unable to Access	0	0	0	2	0	2
Phase 1 Complete	7	70	0	175	7	245
Remaining ROEs	---	43	---	47	---	90

Figure 1: ROE Complete Table



MAP 1 – AREAS OF OPERATIONS MAP



PICTURES



Picture 1: Debris, Flooding, Washout - August 16, 2022



Picture 2: Impacted Property – August 16, 2022