



April 25, 2013

TO: Phil Rios, County Manager

FR: James Maxon, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Danger Report - Dry Weather Fire Plan

The Sandoval County Fire Department has been making numerous preparations in response to the current fire danger. The status of Sandoval County is documented in a SWOT Analysis below:

Strengths-

1. The fire department has been conducting annual wildland fire refresher trainings for all of our personnel. Sixty personnel have completed their refresher training.
2. Twenty new volunteer personnel were trained during the month of April for Basic Wildland Firefighting.
3. One older brush truck is being rehabilitated to place it back into service for the Placitas/Algodones area.
4. Additional wildland firefighting equipment has been purchased.
5. Meetings have been held with neighboring agencies such as Corrales, Albuquerque, and Bernalillo County, to coordinate resources and to create emergency plans.
6. Meetings have been held with target populations that are at high risk from wildland fires. A recent example is a meeting with the Girl Scout Camp in the Jemez Mountains.
7. Several tabletop exercises have been held in the last several months where different possible emergency scenarios were mitigated.
8. Several Pueblos in Sandoval County have adopted their own burn regulations with a successful outcome. Example: Jemez Pueblo

Weaknesses-

1. Fire department staffing levels and volunteer availability vary depending on time of day, location, or day of the week. For example there are four career firefighters on duty each day in the Southern part of the County. Career firefighters are committed to emergency medical calls majority of the time. Volunteer availability varies from 10% to 98% of the time depending on each fire district. In areas where firefighters are not immediately available extended response times can occur.

Opportunities-

1. The fire department is currently working on a plan to recruit additional volunteer firefighters in critical areas. The training of new volunteer firefighters takes approximately 1-2 years to complete.
2. The fire department is continually building strong working relationships with neighboring agencies.
3. Public education about fire danger and fire prevention needs to be increased.
4. Fuel reduction programs need to be increased.
5. It is anticipated that Sandoval County will enter into a burn ban during the month of May.
6. The Sandoval County Commission will have the opportunity to ban certain types of fireworks in the unincorporated areas of Sandoval County in near future.

Threats-

1. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released March 21st predicts a persisting drought nearly area-wide through the end of June.
2. Sandoval County residents that have been conducting agricultural burns for decades report erratic fire behavior because of the dry conditions.
3. Pueblos and parts of the Navajo Nation located in Sandoval County are not required to follow county burning regulations. The county is called for fire extinguishment when a fire gets out of control.
4. Significant fire potential predictions for Sandoval County can be seen in the diagram below:

