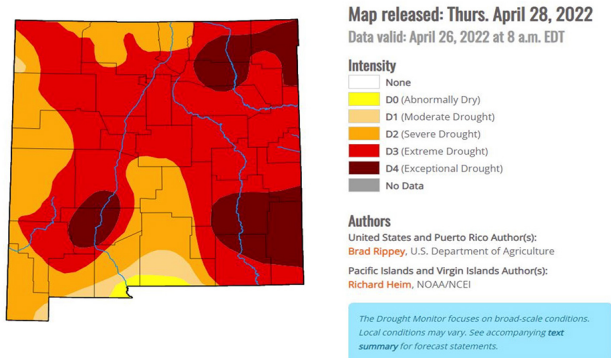


## Drought conditions worsen in Gallup area

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 20 May 2022 04:40

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## Extreme fire danger remains

Drought conditions in New Mexico have only gotten worse in recent weeks.

According to an article that was published on KOB 4's website on May 10, the Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fire has destroyed almost 204,000 acres of land. The fire started over a month ago.

Although Gallup and McKinley County haven't experienced any extreme fires, extreme and severe drought conditions still remain.

McKinley County's drought conditions put it in the D2 (severe) and D3 (extreme) zones on the Drought Monitor, which is put out by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The last monitor map was published on April 28.

"That line between severe drought and extreme drought fluctuates on a daily basis," Gallup Fire Marshal Jon Pairett explained to the city council during a May 10 regular meeting.

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According to Weather Underground, a website that provides long-range weather reports, McKinley County hasn't seen any rain since April 13, and that day it only rained .03 inches. It also rained on April 5, but that was only .04 inches.

Wind has also been a factor in the drought conditions. According to Weather Underground, on April 22, wind gusts got up to 52 mph.

Pairett said that the Gallup Fire Department had responded to 16 brush fires between March 1 and May 1, and five more fires in the past week.

However, Pairett also told the council that the fires they've been seeing in Gallup are quite different from the fire raging in Calf Canyon and Hermits Park.

"The good thing about the fires we've had so far is they've happened when the fire department hasn't been busy on EMS calls or other events," Pairett said. "A lot of them have come in during the evening or night so our firefighters are able to respond right away; they're able to get a quick attack on it."

Parrit said that the firefighters' quick response is part of the reason Gallup hasn't seen any large fires. The brush fires have not caused any damage.

As drought conditions continue, Parrit warned the council that a city ban on fireworks may be coming.

With a firework ban, only certain fireworks can be banned. Things like sparklers and smaller fireworks that don't go very high will not be a part of the ban.

Parritt said he would be coming back at a later time to get the council's approval of the ban if it is necessary for the Fourth of July.

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The county is also looking at the possibility of a firework ban for Independence Day. McKinley County Fire Chief Brian Archuleta presented the updated drought conditions to the county commissioners on May 10 as well. In an interview with the *Sun*, he said they would be making a final decision about the ban in June.

By Molly Ann Howell  
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