



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2025

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KCEC Wildfire Mitigation Update: May 15, 2025

Taos, NM - Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is taking proactive steps to reduce wildfire risks and safeguard local communities while managing the potential effects of wildfires across its service area. The Carson National Forest states that the fire status remains LOW to MODERATE. Nevertheless, KCEC maintains a high level of alertness as members should stay alert and aware due to the ongoing extreme drought conditions and strong winds in the region.

While North Central New Mexico received beneficial precipitation early in May, including rain and snow, this relief is not a solution to the ongoing year-long drought affecting local communities. Additionally, the heavy snowfall has put pressure on trees and infrastructure in more remote areas, as weakened trees pose a risk of falling onto power lines or structures, potentially igniting wildfires. KCEC urges members to report any hazards that may interfere with electrical lines or cause power outages, particularly in these areas. KCEC will continue to monitor and assess the system.

As dry and drought conditions persist in KCEC's service territory, members are advised to remain vigilant regarding potential wildfire threats. **On Monday, May 19, 2025**, KCEC will initiate protective device settings to non-reclose in response to these drought conditions. The cooperative is taking significant steps to prevent fires caused by electrical issues. Please be patient, as restoration times may be extended due to safety monitoring procedures in place.

"KCEC is committed to ensuring safety by activating all protective devices on non-reclose settings. KCEC is doing everything in its power to reduce wildfires in our area," states KCEC CEO Luis A. Reyes Jr "With high winds and extreme drought conditions, we want to be fully prepared."

KCEC continues to proactively perform tree trimming and infrastructure maintenance throughout the month of May. Below is a list of the areas where KCEC crews will continue performing maintenance on all circuits (main line and taps). Crews will continue tightening all hardware, which includes hotline clamps, transformer connections, cross-arm braces, and secondary connections to the weather head on service drops. Crews will also get fuse sizing on all taps, OCR sizes, and counts. We will also have a crew to get the sizes and counts of all OCRs installed at the Arroyo Hondo and Talpa Substations. Four OCRs were replaced with Hubbel units, Arroyo Seco CT (one at Hwy 522 at step-downs, one near the Anansi School), LVP (take off), and ER West (Placitas tap). The circuits that will continue in May are:

- Upper Red River
- Ranchitos Circuit (40% complete)
- Valle Escondido (25% complete)

- Taos (Tree Trimming Service Orders)
- Ute Park (10% complete)
- Lower Llano San Juan (60% complete) and Santa Barbara
- Los Pinos (30% complete)
- Ranchos Feeder (LC2) (30% complete)

Area(s) completed fully/partially:

- Tree trimming crew working on various service orders in the Taos area
- Patrol 69 kV from Questa to NA Substation is complete
- Petaca/Las Tablas Circuit (40% complete)
- Lake View Pines (55% complete)
- Twining Circuit (60% complete)

KCEC, Taos County, and the University of New Mexico (UNM) Taos continue to host a series of panel discussions on wildfire prevention in the region. The Enchanted Circle Wildfire Preparedness Series is designed to equip community members with essential resources and information to enhance their preparedness for potential wildfires. We encourage all members to engage and participate in order to better understand the efforts of local and state officials in wildfire mitigation.

Session 3: Post-Fire Lessons Learned

Date: May 29, 2025

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: UNM - Taos Bataan Hall

121 Civic Plaza Dr, Taos, NM

Panelists

- **Harold Garcia** - San Miguel County Commission Chair
- **Veronica Serna**- Mora County Commissioner, District 1
- **Gerald Romero** - District Manager, Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District
- **Martha Graham** - Source Water Protection Specialist, NM Rural Water Association
- **Les Montoya** - General Manager, Mora-San Miguel Electric Cooperative

Moderator

- **Staci Matlock** - New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute

As of May 15, 2025, the Carson National Forest Service reports that the fire danger level is **LOW**. The Carson National Forest is open to the public, but officials are actively monitoring the weather for potential restrictions. Those using the forest this summer are encouraged to take preventive measures to avoid starting a wildfire. Please help protect the forest and surrounding communities by following these [fire-safe practices](#).

We encourage you to join us for the upcoming sessions of the Enchanted Circle Wildfire Preparedness Series. Wildfires significantly threaten the northern New Mexico communities within the Enchanted Circle. These fires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries and can adversely affect residents, businesses, governmental entities, municipalities, tribal organizations, hospitals, and other anchor institutions. The more prepared our communities are, the more effectively we can mitigate and respond to the devastation that a wildfire may bring if it occurs in our vicinity.

Information from Taos County and the Town of Taos

"We have received numerous calls about small brush fires near highways and roads. Many of these incidents are linked to vehicles towing trailers with chains and idling for long periods. The chains can produce sparks, and overheated engines can ignite fires if they come into contact with arid brush. We advise everyone to exercise caution when pulling over to the side of roads or highways", says Eddie Joe Abeyta, Fire Chief for Taos Fire Rescue.

"Taos County is prepared for a wildfire. We take significant steps behind the scenes to ensure readiness for a wildfire or natural disaster. Attached are helpful resources to prepare residents," says Bobby Lucero, Taos County Emergency Management Director.

Members have access to proactive forest fire prevention resources and information. Taos County recommends having "go bags" ready in case of an emergency. A list of resources is available to assist residents of our communities.

KCEC Service Territory Essential Community Resources

[ENCHANTED CIRCLE WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS SERIES](#) - The Enchanted Circle Wildfire Preparedness Series is designed to equip community members with essential resources and information to enhance preparedness for potential wildfires.

[Taos County Wildfire Plaza Website](#) - Taos County Wildfire Plaza is a place for people to share news, information and resources related to forest and watershed restoration and wildfire risk reduction.

[Be Prepared for Wildfires – Ready.GOV](#) - Wildfires are unplanned fires that burn in natural areas like forests, grasslands or prairies. These dangerous fires spread quickly and can devastate not only wildlife and natural areas but also communities.

[Taos County Emergency Checklist Information](#)- The following checklists are helpful guides for stocking up on essential items and preparing for emergencies.

[HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WILDFIRES](#)

Wildfire risk reduction steps that can make your home safer during a wildfire

[Fire Prevention Programs](#) - Your Personal Wildland Fire Action Guide

[Ready, Set Go New Mexico](#)

This page has information about embers, insurance, Ready Set Go, and other aspects of fire prevention and education.

[Living With Fire page](#)

[Ready Set Go page](#)

These resources can help members prepare for wildfire events and provide steps homeowners can take to protect their properties. KCEC encourages members to review this information and take the necessary precautions for their families and homes. This guidance will also be beneficial when dealing with homeowners' insurance

applications or renewals. KCEC encourages members to contact family and friends in rural areas, as many individuals in our communities require medical assistance.

[KCEC Green Hydrogen Safety Assessment Project](#)

[KCEC Green Hydrogen Project](#)

[KCEC Microgrid Project](#)

KCEC owns and operates 20 solar arrays across its service area to ensure system reliability. This June, KCEC will begin constructing its second-largest solar array in Amalia, NM, adding 8.75 MW of solar generation and battery storage. Once completed, KCEC's total solar generation will be approximately 52 MW and 25 MW of battery storage.

KCEC has three battery storage microgrid projects scheduled to begin construction this year, located in Penasco, El Rito West and Taos Ski Valley. These projects will help support KCEC's electrical system during extreme weather events and emergencies.

On April 29, 2025, KCEC announced the launch of the KCEC Hydrogen Safety Assessment project in partnership with ENTRUST Solutions Group. This initiative aims to demonstrate the safety and various applications of hydrogen as a reliable source of electricity, focusing on Questa, NM, Penasco, NM, and the Town of Taos. KCEC is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to construct these hydrogen facilities, emphasizing safety and quality.

Once completed, these clean hydrogen, solar, and battery facilities will significantly enhance the sustainability and resilience of KCEC's entire electrical system, providing affordable, reliable, and safe energy generation. For more information on these projects, please visit kitcarson.com.

KCEC would like to thank Taos County, the Town of Taos, the Forest Service, NM State Forestry, the Taos County Chamber of Commerce, Taos Ski Valley, Taos Community Foundation and UNM-Taos for their input and collaboration.

For further information, please contact CEO Luis Reyes at lreyes@kitcarson.com or COO Richard Martinez at rmartinez@kitcarson.com. Visit us at kitcarson.com for more details.

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