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## Over 90,000 acres burned in Los Alamos fire

**(CNN)** -- The Las Conchas fire in New Mexico swelled to 92,735 acres burned Thursday, and strong winds threatened to be firefighters' greatest challenge moving in to the fifth day battling the flames.

"We have seen fire behavior we have never seen before," Fire Chief Doug Tucker told reporters Thursday.

Tucker said no fire was coming from the south and that Thursday the fire would keep moving north towards Santa Clara.

Officials also dispelled rumors that residents, who were worried about their homes, could return to Los Alamos.

"Folks right now are hurting us," said Police Chief Wayne Torpy Thursday. "Los Alamos County called the evacuation and Los Alamos County will be the one that repeals the evacuation ... You're going to erase the success of our evacuations."

Torpy also said that residents' homes had not been impacted by the fire.

However, the nearby flames will keep the Los Alamos National Laboratory closed through at least Friday, a statement on the lab's website said.

"What I witnessed today was an incredibly professional job by men and women who are risking their lives to save our community and this laboratory," Charles McMillan, the lab director, said Wednesday. "I could feel the heat of the fire on my face as I watched from the roof of our Emergency Operations Center."

The Los Alamos fire, which is officially called the Las Conchas fire, has forced nearly 10,000 people from their homes in the town.

Jerome MacDonald, operations section chief for the multi-state southwest area Incident management team, said fire officials flanked the fire on the east side Thursday in an attempt to curb high winds from the southwest.

Concerns were raised that the wildfire could put the Los Alamos lab at risk, as well as waste or other toxic materials stored at the site.

But Tucker said that the waste is stored in drums that are kept on a blacktop with no vegetation around and are safe from fire. If the fire should get too close to the drums, firefighters were ready to use foam to ensure that nothing would be released into the environment, he said.

The Las Conchas Fire began on private land Sunday and expanded into the Santa Fe National Forest and Jemez Ranger District, according to InciWeb, an online database that keeps track of natural disasters such as fires and floods.

The fire was 3% contained Thursday.

In a news statement released Wednesday, the Santa Fe National Forest and Valles Caldera National Preserve said that parts of both preserves would close to the public until the fire is more controlled.

Parts of the national forest have been placed under "stage III" fire restrictions, meaning all areas are off-limits for use unless otherwise posted.

The Las Conchas Fire touches the south border of the lab's 40-square-mile facility, and comes close to the west border, according to Tucker.

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez warned citizens to avoid using fireworks on the July Fourth holiday and the rest of the season.

The Las Conchas Fire is one of several burning in the region.

The Donaldson and Game Fires south of the town of Hondo and U.S. Highway 70 have merged into one fire that has consumed an estimated 43,290 acres and is 0% contained, according to the New Mexico Fire Information website.

Evacuations were ordered for Alamo Canyon Wednesday as the Donaldson fire continues to threaten parts of Lincoln County.

The Pacheco Fire continues to burn in the Pecos Wilderness, two miles north of the Santa Fe Ski Basin. It has scorched 10,000 acres since it began June 18.

The blaze was 24% contained Thursday, with the potential for growth considered low, according to InciWeb.

**CNN's Ed Payne, Molly Green and Craig Bell contributed to this report**

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