

Elk Fire Update

Thursday, October 24, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.



Rocky Mountain Complex Incident Management Team 1

Dan Dallas, Incident Commander



Information Phone: 307-303-7642

Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Email: 2024.Elk@firenet.gov

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/wybhf-elk-fire-2024>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornnf>

Information Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/2024ElkFire>

Special Notes: Agency Administrators in coordination with CIMT have developed a process to allow owners of recreational equipment such as campers to retrieve their personal property. To gain access to the closure area for this purpose, the following form must be filled out: <https://forms.office.com/g/P7vrvgQW5d>. The form will close at 9 am on Friday, October 25. Additional details regarding entry into the area, including timing of entry and process, will be emailed to those who will be allowed into the closure area.

The Elk Fire Incident Command Post move to the Sheridan County Fairgrounds will be completed today allowing for a centralized location in closer proximity to ongoing work. Motorists are reminded to drive with caution, follow posted speed limits, and be alert for firefighters traveling and working along roads. This includes U.S. Highway 14 where motorists should also expect travel delays as repair work is ongoing.

Current Situation: As expected, fire activity remained consistent with the past few days with no perimeter growth due to elevated humidity and recent precipitation. Firefighters took advantage of these conditions by continuing indirect fireline construction, extinguishing areas of heat on fire edges, and conducting suppression repair operations.

Today, fire behavior will once again be sluggish due to high humidity, cloud cover, foggy conditions, and precipitation. Due to wet slick road conditions, firefighters will use extra caution as they continue work of the last several days. This will include building toward further extension and strengthening of uncontained firelines while also focusing on suppression repair. The bulk of heavy equipment resources will be working to establish fireline along the southwestern edge by creating defensible space on the Red Grade Road and Forest Road 26.

Division A: This remote division is being observed with aircraft and remains unstaffed due to firefighter safety concerns associated with steep rugged terrain, heavy dead and down fuel loads, and slick road conditions.

Divisions Z, P, M, K, I: The fire is out in most of these divisions due to the grassy fuels, recent moisture, and elevated humidities. In the northwest corner, dozer line was constructed to connect contained and uncontained fireline. Firefighters worked to prevent additional fire spread to the north and further secure structures in the Red Canyon area. On the eastern side, suppression repair operations are nearly complete and have consisted of rehabilitating dozer lines by pulling topsoil and vegetation debris across them and placing earthen water control features on slopes. These efforts minimize soil erosion and promote vegetation growth in the future. Within these divisions, there were two primary areas of concern where excessive heat was located in close proximity to fireline, Tongue Canyon Road and Rapid Creek Road. Firefighters were successful in mopping up these heat sources. Today, firefighters will assess yesterday's efforts and strive to complete remaining tasks. Excess resources will be reprioritized to other parts of the fire, released to other incidents, or receive days off.

Division H: Additional heavy equipment arrived yesterday to support expansion of defensible space along the Red Grade Road and Forest Road 26. These efforts will create a wide fireline while maintaining vegetative tree cover known as a "shaded fuel break." This work will continue north over the next several days and is planned to connect with Highway 14.

Divisions D, F: Indirect fireline construction was completed along Forest Road 15. In other parts of these divisions, firefighters worked to improve firelines and remove vegetation debris aided by a chipper. Suppression repair occurred on dozer lines around Burgess Work Center and Hate Creek. These operations will continue today.

Weather, Fuels, and Fire Behavior:

Overnight, humidity was approximately 100% as much of the fire received some rain or snow. These conditions will persist through this morning with afternoon temperatures warming above 50 degrees, humidity remaining high and light winds with gusts about 20 mph. Today, fire activity will remain minimal throughout the day due to the increased moisture levels. On Friday and over the weekend, weather will warm and dry promoting burning with some visible smoke. Another front will move through early next week.

Evacuation Notices:

A *Ready* Evacuation status exists for several areas in proximity to the Elk Fire. For additional information about evacuation status, go to Johnson County and Sheridan County respective websites: Johnson County Emergency Management’s Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JohnsonCoWYEMC> and Sheridan County Emergency Management website www.tinyurl.com/2s38bcc5. You may also contact Sheridan County Sheriff’s Office (307-672-3455) or Sheridan County Emergency Management (307-752-2174).

Closures and Advisories:

A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place over the Elk Fire. Wildfires are a no-fly zone for unauthorized aircraft, including drones. **If you fly, we can’t.** For more information, visit <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org>.

US Highway 14 between Burgess Junction and Dayton is open, restrictions are in place for some commercial vehicles based on weight and size. Red Grade Road and County Road 89 from Dayton to Beckton Junction are closed. County Road 335 is closed from the intersection of County Road 335 and Brinton Road to the west. Additional information may be obtained at <https://www.wyoroad.info/>.

Bighorn National Forest closure Order No. 02-02-06-24-08 remains in effect. The order and map can be viewed here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/bighorn/alerts-notice> .

Elk Fire Statistics:

Size: 96,370 acres | Containment: 52% | Total Personnel: 537 | Location: West of Sheridan, WY
Reported: September 27, 2024 | Cause: lightning

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