

Elk Fire Update

Saturday, October 26, 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: A community meeting is planned for 6 p.m. Monday, October 28th, at the Sheridan Junior High School, located at 500 Lewis Street. The meeting will be recorded and posted to Facebook and virtual connection will be available through Facebook live streaming at: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornnf>.

Today only, individuals who received authorization by submitting a request form will be entering the National Forest closure area to retrieve camper trailers and other personal property or check on their cabins. Please drive carefully, especially where firefighters are sharing the roadways.

Current Situation: Containment rose to 73% yesterday as firefighters continued progress on both line construction and suppression repair efforts. Suppression repair is sizeable as more than 155 miles of dozer lines were constructed to stop fire spread when it was actively burning and growing. Over 65 miles have been completed so far. Suppression repair is the first phase of wildfire recovery and is an important component to repairing damage and minimizing soil erosion. The second and third phases of post wildfire recovery are emergency stabilization through Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER), followed by Long-Term Recovery and Reforestation, respectively. BAER is ongoing and consists of doing rapid assessment of burned watersheds to identify and act on imminent post-wildfire threats to human life, safety, property, and critical natural or cultural resources on forest lands. Long-term recovery and reforestation include taking non-emergency actions to improve fire-damaged lands that are unlikely to recover naturally such as reforestation, restoring burned habitat, or treating noxious weeds.

Today, smoke will be visible due to the warmer and drier conditions. Firefighters will be working areas that show smoke and continuing to secure the fire perimeter where necessary. Suppression repair will be ongoing and includes backhauling unneeded supplies and equipment. Weather conditions will be advantageous for road access and operations overall as firefighters work to complete indirect line construction and suppression repair in advance of the incoming winter storm arriving Monday.

Division A: No change; aircraft are monitoring this division as it is unstaffed.

Divisions Z, P, M, K, I: Further division consolidation occurred yesterday with Z, P, and M now being one division. Given the likelihood for snow early next week, firefighters will be striving to complete as much outstanding suppression repair operations as possible before the storm arrives Monday. Crews will continue to work into the fall as possible, and any work not completed will resume in spring once conditions allow the safe return of firefighters and heavy equipment access.

Division H: Fuels reduction operations along the Red Grade Road and Forest Road 26 are progressing. Heavy equipment resources are directed to this division as work is completed on others areas of the fire. Operations will continue today.

Divisions D, F: Suppression repair and chipping operations were ongoing throughout most of the division. Firefighters continued to secure indirect fireline along Forest Road 15. These operations will resume today.

Weather, Fuels, and Fire Behavior:

Weather conditions will warm even more today, reaching the mid-70s in lower elevations and the upper 50s at high elevations. Humidity will be low and in the 20% range possibly dropping into the teens. Winds will be light, similar

to yesterday, with gusts up to 22 mph. Increased smoke will be evident from more active fire behavior, compared to previous days. Fine fuels have dried with yesterday's warm temperatures and will carry some fire where heat has been retained. Overall, fire spread will be minimal because of residual moisture content in both vegetation and soils (especially in shaded areas and north facing slopes) from storms over the last week.

Evacuations:

All evacuations for the Elk Fire have been lifted.

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>.

Red Grade Road is closed. US Highway 14 between Burgess Junction and Dayton is open, restrictions are in place for some commercial vehicles based on weight and size. Additional information is at: <https://www.wyroad.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: 96,955 acres | Containment: 73% | Total Personnel: 453 | Location: West of Sheridan, WY
Reported: September 27, 2024 | Cause: lightning

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