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Elk Fire Update – October 6, 2024

Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team 3

Casey Cheesbrough, Incident Commander

Date Reported: Friday, September 27, 2024

Cause: Undetermined

Size: 72,998

Containment: 0%

Total Personnel: 597

Location: Approximately 6 miles northwest of Dayton, Wyoming

Key Messages: Smoke is settling over the Elk Fire area from fires further to the west. This is expected to continue and is likely to decrease fire activity today. This smoke may also impact air operations as helicopters need a minimum of one mile visibility to operate on wildland fires.

Last night's operational shift found heat coming from a structure on the eastern side of the fire; heavy equipment was used to remove burning hay inside a barn. The fire was extinguished outside of the structure.

An overnight flight was able to provide more precise mapping capabilities, resulting in a new fire size of 72,998 acres.

Current Situation:

Structure protection work will continue on the northwestern side of the fire in Little Horn Canyon and crews will be looking for favorable conditions to burn unconsumed vegetation south of Hwy 144. On the eastern side of the fire, crews will continue to extinguish areas of heat along established firelines; that area has been holding with no further fire progression past the firelines.

Crews will continue structure protection work in the subdivisions along US HWY 14 and patrol and mop up any heat sources around structures. Structure protection tactics have been utilized to prepare the Big Goose Water Treatment facility for any fire that may move into the area. Efforts are continuing to mitigate fire damage to the Big Goose Creek watershed, which feeds the water treatment facility.

Fire crews continue structure protection work in the Burgess Junction area; this work includes multiple structure preparation techniques such as removal of vegetation near structures, construction of fireline, and placement of hose and sprinklers where possible.

Firefighter and public safety remain the top priority. The tactics used to suppress the fire will be determined by the terrain, fire and weather conditions, and medical response time with a focus on implementing plans and tactics that have a high probability of success.

Closures and Evacuations: The newest evacuation map can be found at the Sheridan County Emergency Management website, [Sheridan County \(sheridancountywy.gov\)](https://sheridancountywy.gov). US Highway 14 remains closed from Dayton to Burgess Junction. Please contact the Sheridan County Sheriff's Office at 307-672-3455 or Sheridan County Emergency Management at 307-752-2174 for more information on evacuations and road closures.

The Bighorn National Forest Closure has been expanded to include the closure of Red Grade Road. Please view the updated order on the Bighorn National Forest website, [Bighorn National Forest - Alerts & Closures \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov).

Weather & Smoke Information: Today is the start of a warming, drying trend over the fire area as a high pressure system moves into the area. Winds are expected to be light and terrain-driven over the course of the day. Smoke that is anticipated to move into the area from fires further to the west may cause smoke shading and keep temperatures lower than the forecasted highs ranging in the mid 60s to low 70s.

It is anticipated that the Elk Fire will continue to put up a smoke column; please go to the AirNow website (<https://www.airnow.gov/>) for smoke information.