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Elk Fire Update – October 7, 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: 10%

Total Personnel: 680

Location: Approximately 6 miles northwest of Dayton and 6 miles southeast of Dayton, Wyoming

Key Messages: The fire is now 10% contained. The added containment is along the northeast edge of the fire, to the north of Dayton. Efforts on the southern end of the fire are focused on taking actions to get ahead of fire movement and protect communities, as well as municipal watersheds in the Big Goose drainage, that are potentially threatened by the fire. Crews will be working using a variety of tools, such as structure protection and fireline construction, to prepare for future potential fire movement.

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

Structure protection work will continue northwest of the fire in Little Horn Canyon and subdivisions along US HWY 14 between Dayton and Burgess Junction. They will be patrolling and mopping up any heat sources around structures. Structure protection is accomplished through a variety of methods such as removal of vegetation near structures, construction of fireline, and placement of hose and sprinklers where possible. On the eastern side of the fire, firefighters will continue to extinguish areas of heat along established firelines. Crews will also continue to patrol the area that is now contained.

South of the fire, crews are implementing strategies intended to protect homes, communities, the Sheridan watershed, and key infrastructure. The work includes developing new fireline on Red Grade Road near Bighorn, using heavy equipment and several fire crews. Structure protection tactics have been utilized to prepare the Big Goose Water Treatment facility for any fire that may move into the area. Efforts continue to minimize fire effects to the Big Goose Creek watershed, which feeds the water treatment facility.

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.

Approximately 700 cattle were transported off the fire area this morning. This was possible through the collaborative efforts of this community and agencies supporting the fire.

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. See today's new release regarding temporary access to Red Grade Road for cabin owners. 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 will continue to bring warm and dry conditions to 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 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.

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