



Elk Fire Update – October 9, 2024

Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team 3
Casey Cheesbrough, Incident Commander

Date Reported: Friday, September 27, 2024

Cause: Lighting

Size: 75,969

Containment: 16%

Total Personnel: 889

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

Key Messages: There will be a community meeting—particularly for residents of Story and Big Horn—Wednesday, October 9, at 7:00 pm at Big Horn High School, 333 WY-335. Attendees will get an update on the fire and evacuations. They will also have an opportunity to ask questions and have one-on-one conversations with agency representatives and fire managers. The meeting will be recorded and posted to the incident's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@2024ElkFire) and the Bighorn National Forest's Facebook Page (Facebook.com/bighornnf).

At 3:00 a.m., due to high, gusty winds and low humidity, fire behavior increased significantly northwest of the Big Goose Water Treatment Plant. Nearby resources working the night shift—one dozer, one hotshot crew, and eight engines—responded to the area. The weather today will be warmer, drier, and the fire will likely be more active. Numerous aircraft are assigned to the incident and will be conducting water and retardant drops.

Current Situation: On the fire's northern side, a hotshot crew conducted additional firing operations and air operations dropped fire retardant yesterday off the 144 Road. Today, the crews will continue to prepare the 144 Road and conduct more firing operations to protect the Little Bighorn Canyon. That area of the fire is active and in steep drainages that are producing smoke.

Containment on the northeastern side of the fire increased from 10 percent to 16 percent yesterday. A containment line in a wildland fire is a barrier that prevents the fire from spreading. It can be a natural barrier, like a river or road, or a constructed barrier, like a trench dug by firefighters.

On the southeastern and southern parts of the fire, mop up and patrolling continues in the Crystal Springs area. Firefighting crews will continue to build additional control lines and prepare areas for potential low-intensity, strategic firing operations that would protect the watershed and associated water-treatment plant structures. In the southern portion of the fire, road graders are working alongside firefighting resources on Red Grade Road, and structure protection in the Poverty Flats area will continue today.

On the western side of the fire in the Burgess Junction area, structure protection is in place. Firefighters remain in place to protect structures and engage the fire if necessary. There will be heavy equipment in the area today prepping the 15 Road. Strategic firing operations may be conducted today if weather conditions are favorable.

Weather & Fire Behavior: Unseasonably hot, dry conditions will peak on Wednesday. Winds will be from the southwest with gusts up to 20 mph expected. Vegetation is extremely dry and receptive to burning. Fire activity and smoke production are likely to increase on the fire's western and southern sides. For air-quality and smoke information, refer to the AirNow website: airnow.gov.

Evacuations and Closures:

The Sheridan County Sheriff's Office downgraded the following zone from Go to Set evacuation status level on Tuesday: Slack Road at the Montana border and then in a southwesterly direction to the northeast corner of the Kerns Elk Refuge then in a southern direction to the Forest Service boundary. Refer to the evacuation-status map and news release on the Sheridan County Emergency Management website: tinyurl.com/2s38bcc5. You can also call either the Sheridan County Sheriff's Office (307-672-3455) or Sheridan County Emergency Management (307-752-2174).

On Tuesday, the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) reduced the road closure on US Highway 14 north of the Antelope Butte Ski Area and US 14A east of Lovell. To accommodate access to Hunt Area 40 outside of the Elk Fire closure areas west of Burgess Junction, the Wyoming Highway Patrol moved two staffed closures to milepost 85.6 (Hunt Mountain Road/FS10 on US 14A) and milepost 38.3 (Granite Pass/Hunt Mountain Road/FS 10 on US 14). View the map here: wyoroad.info. Motorists will encounter barricades with no access on US 14A at Forest Service Road 14 (Sheep Mountain/Devils Canyon) and FS 15 (Dayton Gulch) located within the Forest Service Elk Fire closure. The Bighorn National Forest, WYDOT, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department ask motorists and hunters to be mindful of firefighting equipment in the area and familiar with the boundaries of the Elk Fire.

Bighorn National Forest lands around the Elk Fire are closed under [Order 02-02-06-24-08](#). The order and map can be viewed on the forest's alerts web page: fs.usda.gov/alerts/bighorn/alerts-notice.

Evacuation Shelter: An emergency shelter has been established at the fairgrounds in Sheridan and can accommodate numerous people, campers, and animals. To make arrangements for people or animals, call 307-752-2174 or 307-683-6965.

Elk Fire Information:

Phone: 307-303-7642 (8 am to 8 pm)

Email: 2024.Elk@firenet.gov

Linktree: linktr.ee/2024ElkFire



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