

NEWS RELEASE: Sheep Herder Hill Complex Fire
Friday, September 14, 2012, 10:30 a.m.



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*****PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED*****

Friday, September 14th at 5 p.m.

Location: Casper City Hall, City Council Chambers 200 North David

Firefighters prepare for near Red Flag Conditions

Casper, WY – Windy and dry weather is expected today putting firefighters on guard as they continue to complete containment of the Sheep Herder Hill Complex Fire. Todd Pechota, Incident Commander for the Rocky Mountain Incident Management Team B said, “Today will be a good test for us” as the temperature and winds are expected to increase this afternoon and for the next several days. Firefighters have made good progress on the two fires which comprise the complex. The Sheep Herder Hill and Elkhorn fires have burned a combined 15,493 acres. The Sheep Herder Hill Fire is 70 percent contained and the Elkhorn Fire is 100 percent contained.

While many structures have been saved, 36 residences and 22 outbuildings are confirmed as destroyed and two residences have been damaged. The process of assessing damage will continue today and officials will notify affected property owners. Owners displaced by the fire may call Emergency Management (307) 235-9205 to leave information on their property location and how they can be contacted.

Evacuations are still in effect for approximately 150 homes, with another 750 residences on advisory alert. The Red Cross evacuation center at the armory has closed, but will reopen if needed. Casper Mountain, Garden Creek, Circle Drive/Coal Mountain are closed. People are cautioned to remain out of the fire area until restrictions are lifted. Citizens can be cited for interfering with fire operations if they are within the closed area. Islands of unburned fuel within the fire perimeter will continue to burn and produce smoke and flames for some time.

Today firefighters will concentrate on improving firelines and holding the fire within the current perimeter. Fire activity may increase this afternoon as wind gusts of up to 25 mph are predicted. Crews will continue to work on the west and northwest flank of the fire which is not totally contained.

Agencies assisting with the fire include Natrona County Fire District, Casper Fire-EMS, Casper Mountain, Mills, Evansville, Bar-Nunn Fire Departments, Wyoming Army National Guard, Natrona County Emergency Management, Natrona County Sheriff's Department, Wyoming Medical Center, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Wyoming State Forestry Division, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Forest Service, Casper-Natrona County Health Department and Natrona County Medical Reserve Board.

Fire stats at a glance:

Start Date: Sunday, September 9, 2012

Cause: Under investigation

Acreage Burned: 15,493

Percent Contained: 70%

Structure information: 36 Residences , 22 Outbuildings Destroyed
2 Residences damaged

Structures/outbuildings threatened: 853

Personnel: 330 **Injuries:** 0

Crews: (5) Type 1 and (1) Type 2

Aviation: (1) Type 1 Heavy lift helicopter
(2) Type 3 light helicopters
(2) Air Attack aircraft