

# Estes Park Trail Gazette

Friday edition

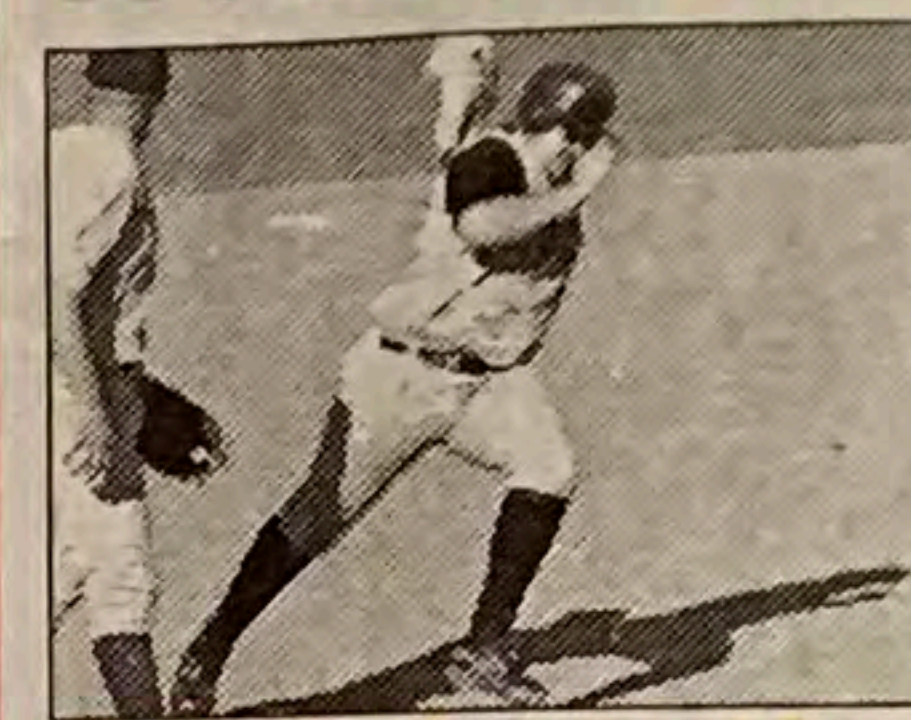
June 16, 2000

Estes Park, Colorado

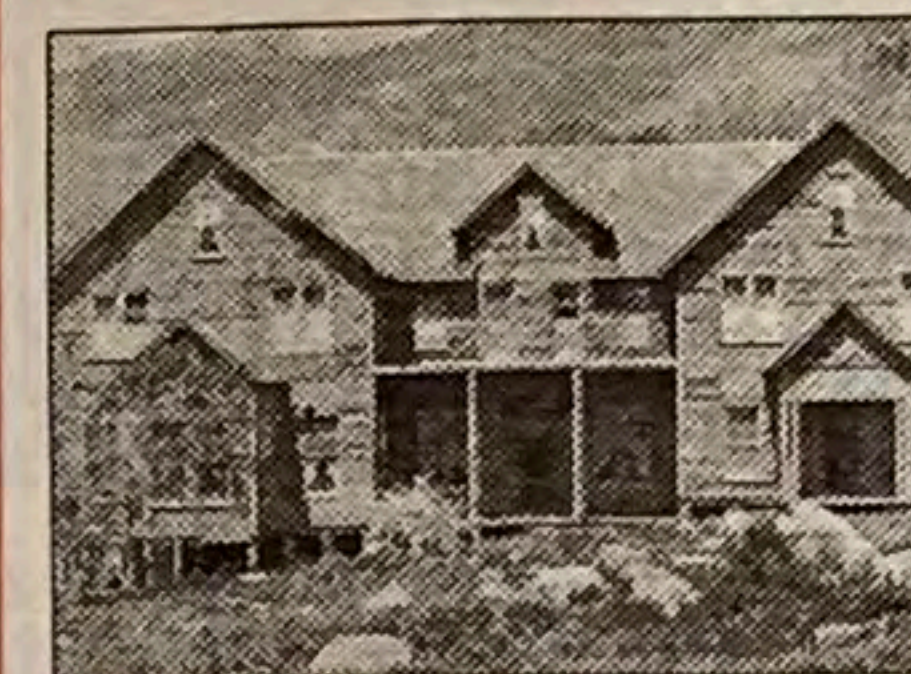
www.eprail.com

Volume 30, Number 97 50¢

Inside:



Sports/page 11



Community/page 6



Photo by Travis Behning

This is all that remains of a home Wednesday on Storm Mountain Road after falling victim to the Bobcat Gulch wildfire.

## Tinderbox

### Bobcat Gulch inferno continues attack

By TRAVIS BEHNING

Wednesday brought more warm temperatures and calmer winds to the Front Range and the area affected by the Bobcat fire as firefighters tried to get a handle on the fire that devastated nearly 3,000 acres near Bobcat Gulch and Cedar Springs.

The fire that started from a small campfire on Monday was mostly contained on Storm Mountain on Wednesday, but it continued to rage near Masonville, Eden Valley and Loveland.

Firefighters and Larimer County sheriff's department officials speculated that between five and 10 structures had been burned in the blaze that charred the ground and displaced more than 120 residents near Drake.

A Boulder firefighter, Don Whittimore, said he saw four structures himself that had been burned to the ground.

Al Ohms, a sergeant with the sheriff's department, said spotters in planes reported there were six structures burned.

And Carl Chambers, a hydrologist with Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forests, said he knew of 14 structures that burned within the entire perimeter of the blaze.

An Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department tanker truck was stationed near Bobcat Gulch to extinguish hot spots and to protect other houses.

At the incident command post on Storm Mountain Road, sheriff's deputies said several hundred firefighters were fighting

### More inside:

- Local hero helps out/page 2
- Benefit concert set/page 2
- Where to find fire updates online/page 2
- Advice from Town fire official/page 2
- Safety tips to protect your home from wildfires/page 2
- Fire ban on/page 10

the fire.

Animal protection personnel spent most of Wednesday retrieving pets that were still in homes, Ohms said.

Mitch Thomas, a lieutenant with the sheriff's department, said "things should start to become a little more streamline" as firefighters get a handle in the Bobcat Gulch area.

Ohms and his staff escorted residents in groups to their homes on Wednesday.

The residents were given approximately one-and-a-half hours to feed animals and gather belongings.

The residents were allowed to take their

own vehicles to their homes.

Donations and food are being collected by the Red Cross.

People wishing to donate money and food can call (970) 226-5728.

#### Fire still ablaze

As of Thursday morning, reports from firefighters indicated the fire that made its way to Masonville late Monday and Tuesday, shifted and was headed more north and northeast away from Masonville.

The reprieve from high winds firefighters experienced on Wednesday was short-lived as more high winds entered the area on Thursday.

Wind gusts were recorded to be between 60-70 mph late Thursday morning.

Damage estimates reached \$405,000 as of Thursday.

However, firefighters did have some success in containing the fire on Wednesday near Masonville.

With more than 400 fire and rescue personnel helping fight the Bobcat fire and more than 100 fire engines, firefighters had contained approximately 15 percent of the wildfire.

However, Chambers said firefighters were expecting high winds to increase fire activity once again.

He said the fire was making its way to Buckhorn Canyon, and the Forest Service issued a voluntary evacuation order for County Road 27 between Masonville and Stove Prairie Road.

See Fire rages: Page 10

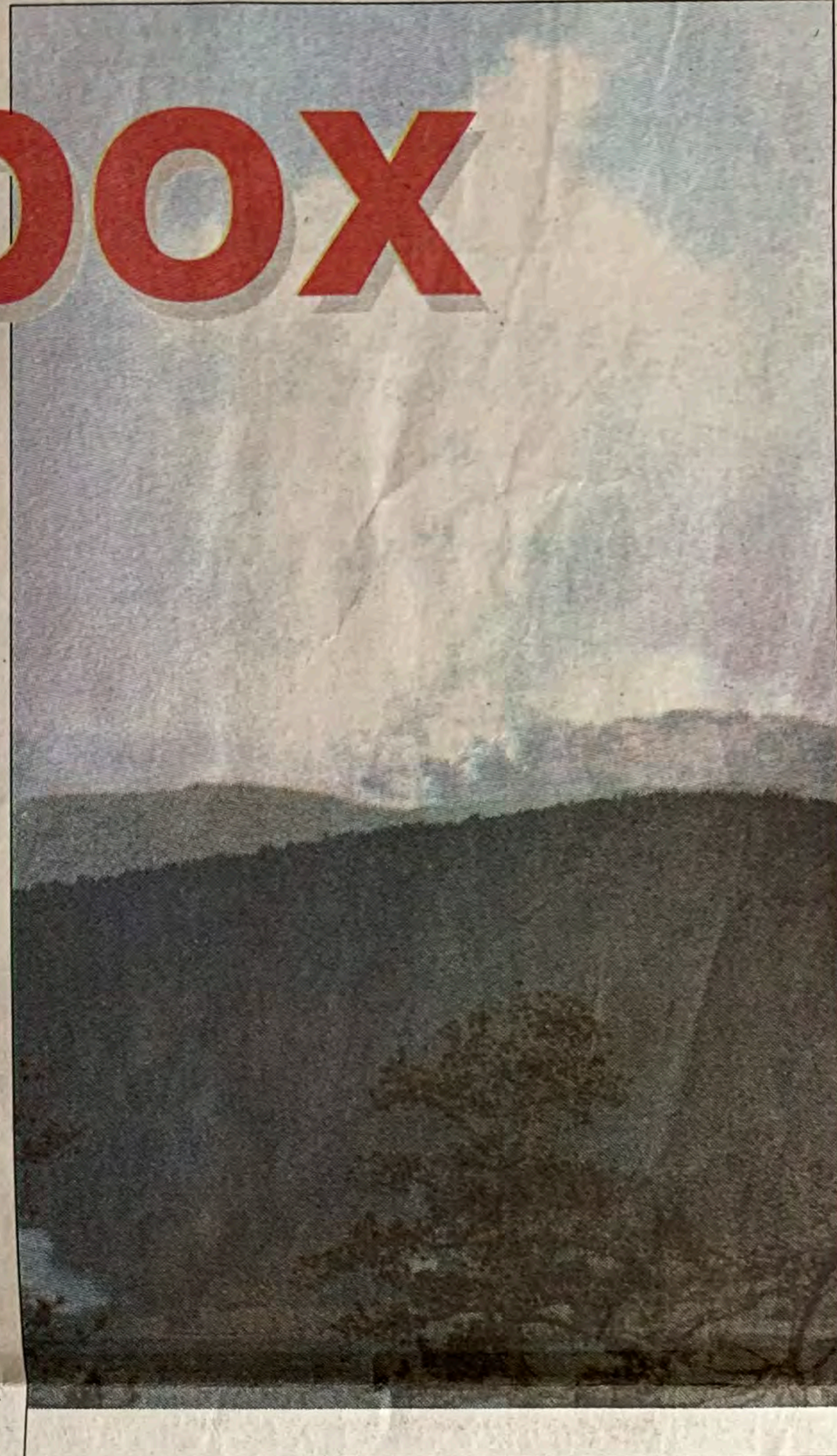


Photo by Travis Behning

The view from Storm Mountain shows the plume of smoke rising from the direction of Masonville.

### Shelters expanded to meet need

By CLARA PETTEM

The progression of the Bobcat Gulch Fire has prompted the American Red Cross to open a second shelter to assist displaced residents.

Residents of Green Ridge Glade, Sunrise Ranch and Masonville areas have been asked to temporarily leave their homes and stay at the shelter at Loveland High School, 920 W. 29th St., Loveland.

The shelter at Walt Clark Middle School, 2605 Carlisle St., Loveland, remains open as well.

The Red Cross will provide free shelter, food and basic personal needs for those who check into the shelters for as long as needed.

To check on a family member or for information, call (970) 226-5728.

#### Donations

The American Red Cross is accepting monetary donations for those affected by the Bobcat Gulch Fire.

It will not accept clothes or food due to Larimer County Health Department regulations. The money will be used for food, clothing, prescriptions and other needs.

To donate, drop off or mail checks to the Centennial Chapter of the American Red Cross, 120 Saturn Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Or, donations may be made

See Shelters: Page 10