

# Northeast Region Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

Restoring Resilient Landscapes - Creating Fire Adapted Communities - Responding to Wildfires

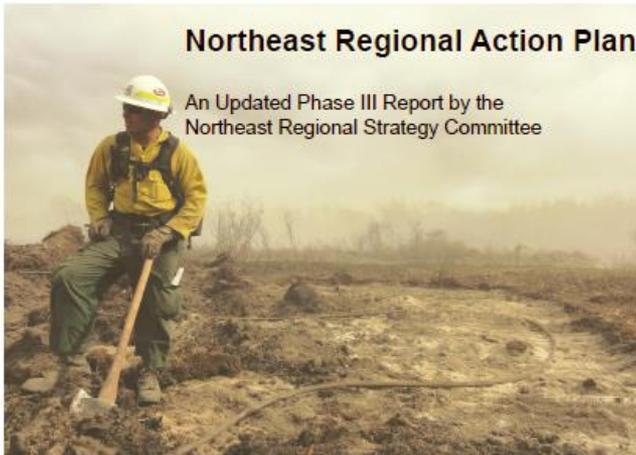
## The Cohesive Strategy in the Northeast U.S.



### The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

#### Northeast Regional Action Plan

An Updated Phase III Report by the  
Northeast Regional Strategy Committee



Forest  
Service

Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry

NA-PR-01-15

April 2015



**September 2019**

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## A brief history of the Cohesive Strategy



**Cohesive Strategy Vision: *To safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire.***

A sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and red glow across the sky. The sun is partially obscured by a thin layer of clouds. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a tall, thin evergreen tree stands on the right side. The background shows a range of mountains under the same sunset sky.

# The FLAME Act

2009 Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act directs Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to develop a Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

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## A brief Timeline of the Cohesive Strategy

### PLANNING

- 2009 FLAME Act
- 2010 CS Vision, 3 Goals, Collaborative, Science-based approach
- 2011 WFLC, WFEC, CSSC, RSCs, (alphabet soup) formed
- 2011-2014 3 Phases: National and Regional Analyses, Assessments & Action Plans
- 2014 National Strategy and Action Plan (Approved in April 2014)
- 2015 NE Regional Action Plan Updated/Published

### IMPLEMENTATION

- 2015 New WFLC Priorities, NSC formed, and Executive Mgr. hired
- 2016 Regional Priorities established
- 2017-19 Work on 4 priorities continues

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## Three Biggest Challenges

### ONE

Landscapes affected by overgrowth, fire, insects & disease

### TWO

Increasing population in the wildland urban interface

### THREE

Increasing risks to firefighters

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## The Wildland Fire Problem...

- Is not just a federal issue
- Is not just a state issue
- Is not just a local issue
- Is not just a fire service issue



**Northeast Region**

## **Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy**

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# Cohesive Strategy Vision

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*Safely and effectively extinguish fire  
when needed; use fire where allowable;  
manage our natural resources;  
and, as a Nation,  
live with wildland fire.*

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## The Three National Cohesive Strategy Goals

**Goal #1 – Restoring & Maintaining Fire Resilient Landscapes**



**Goal #2 – Creating Fire Adapted Communities**



**Goal #3 – Responding to Wildfires**



**Science**

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## The Cohesive Strategy Organization



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## A Way of Doing Business



USFWS Regional Fire Planner Rick Vollick meets with partners to view the road clearing project. Photo credit: Catherine J. Hibbard/USFWS

- Framework for a culture of **“working better together”**
- Collaboration is the key

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## Northeast Regional Strategy Committee

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - U.S. Forest Service – Eastern Region/Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry
  - U.S. Forest Service – Northern Research Station
  - U.S. Forest Service - NIMO
- U.S. Department of the Interior
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs
  - Fish and Wildlife Service
  - National Park Service
- U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security/FEMA
- U.S. Dept. of Commerce/NOAA
- Intertribal Timber Council
- National Association of Counties (NACO)
- Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMSFA) **20** States & DC
- MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
- Maine Emergency Management Agency
- **4** Regional Forest Fire Compacts
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Dovetail Partners, Inc.
- Forest Guild
- **5** Joint Fire Science Exchanges
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- MA National Guard
- Northeast Forest & Fire Management, LLC
- National Volunteer Fire Council (NFVC)
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

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## Northeast Regional Strategy Committee Priorities for 2019

At the January 2018 Face-to-Face Meeting in Portland ME, the NE RSC agreed to form 3 new priority work groups.

These groups include the:

- Prescribed Fire Coordination Work Group
- Wildfire Risk Assessment and Planning Work Group
- Engaging Local Fire Departments Work Group
- These are in addition to the existing Northeast LANDFIRE Coordination Work Group



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## Northeast RSC Priority

**Engaging Local Fire Departments Work Group** - The purpose of this work group is to increase awareness of the WUI problem by local fire departments and encourage them to help implement the 3 goals of the Cohesive Strategy in their communities.

This group is composed of experts from:

- NFPA
- IAFC
- NVFC
- FEMA
- state and local fire agencies and departments

*Plymouth Fire Chief Ed Bradley and DCR Chief Fire Warden Dave Celino discuss the prescribed burn at Myles Standish State Forest Wednesday, May 9, 2018.  
[Wicked Local Staff Photo/Alyssa Stone]*



# Wildfires Happen in the Northeast

**A lot!**

**10 year average (2008-2017)\***

- **Number of wildfires: 11,093**
- **Number Acres: 124, 561**

\* **Source:** [Eastern Area 2017 Activity Report](#)

# History of Significant Northeast-Midwest US Wildfires

Year	Size	Name	Area	Notes
1871	1,200,000 acres	Peshtigo Fire	Wisconsin	Killed between 1,200 and 2,500 people and has the distinction of being the conflagration that caused the most deaths by fire in United States history. It was overshadowed by the Great Chicago Fire that occurred on the same day.
1871	2,500,000 acres	The Great Michigan Fire	Michigan	It was overshadowed by the Great Chicago Fire that occurred on the same day.
1881	1,000,000 acres	Thumb Fire	Michigan	Killed 282 people
1894	160,000 acres	Hinckley Fire	Minnesota	Killed 418+ people and destroyed 12 towns
1903	464,000 acres	Adirondack Fire	New York	
1918	250,000 acres	Cloquet Fire	Minnesota	In total, 453 people died and 52,000 people were injured or displaced, 38 communities were destroyed
1947	175,000 acres	The Great Fires of 1947	Maine	A series of fires that lasted ten days; 16 people killed. Destroyed 851 homes and 397 seasonal cottages, leaving 2,500 people homeless.
1963	183,000 acres	Black Saturday Fire	New Jersey	400 buildings destroyed and 7 people killed.
1964	5,500 acres	Miles Standish fire	Massachusetts	26 structures lost
1980	25,000 acres	Mack Lake Fire	Michigan	44 homes lost
1995	7,000 acres	Sunrise Fire	New York	Long Island
2005	3,400 acres	Cottonville Fire	Wisconsin	9 year-round residences, 21 seasonal homes and at least 60 outbuildings were completely destroyed, but an estimated 300 buildings were saved.
2007	18,000 acres	Warren Grove Fire	New Jersey	Forest fire in the New Jersey Pine Barrens caused by a flare from an F-16 jet. Destroyed 4 homes, damaged 53 homes, injured 2.
2007	18,000 acres	Sleeper Lake Fire	Michigan	
2007	76,000 acres	Ham Lake Fire	Minnesota	BWCA, Minnesota, Canada; No fatalities, caused by campfire
2011	93,000 acres	Pagami Creek Fire	Minnesota	East of Ely, MN due to drought, lightning
2012	2,000 acres	Brookhaven Blaze	New York	Long Island
2012	21,000 acres	Duck Lake fire	Michigan	136 structures lost
2013	7,499 acres	Germann Road Fire	Wisconsin	destroyed 104 structures (23 of them residences)
2016	8,000 acres	16 mile fire	Pennsylvania	Pocono Mts, suspected arson fire
2019	11,600 acres	Spring Hill Fire	New Jersey	Penn State Forest, human caused

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## Estimated Losses from Wildfire in the NE

### What is the most common cause of wildfires?

- As many as 90 percent of **wildland fires** in the United States are caused by humans. Human-caused fires **result** from campfires left unattended, the **burning** of debris, negligently discarded cigarettes, and intentional acts of arson.
- In 2016, a total of 4,312 structures were destroyed by wildfires, including more than 3,000 homes and more than 70 commercial buildings.

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## What is the Wildland-Urban Interface?

Citizens are moving farther into “natural” areas to take advantage of the privacy, natural beauty, recreational opportunities and affordable living. Developers are building neighborhoods to accommodate the influx.

As a result, fire departments are fighting fires along the **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)**, defined as areas where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire.



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## Estimated Numbers of Fire Departments in the Northeast & Midwest

There are 27,229 fire departments listed with the National Fire Department Registry. This is about 91 percent of all U.S. fire departments. **52% (14,159) are in the Northeast and Midwest U.S.\***

Of the fire departments registered:

- 9 percent are career.
- 5 percent are mostly career.
- 26 percent are mostly volunteer.
- 71 percent are volunteer.



\* Source: FEMA/USFA

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**Local fire departments have the potential to actively support and help implement all three goals of the National Cohesive Strategy.**



Massachusetts DCR Chief Fire Warden Dave Celino checks in with division commands. There are multiple chains of command during a prescribed burn and no person is in charge of more than seven resources at a time. [Wicked Local Staff Photo/Alyssa Stone]



Wildland firefighters douse flames from their truck as smoke clouds visibility at Myles Standish State Forest Wednesday, May 9, 2018 during a controlled burn. [Wicked Local Staff Photo/Alyssa Stone]

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**What are the benefits of more fire department involvement in wildland fire management for the NE/MW?**

Goal 1: Resilient landscapes – with proper training and equipment, fire departments can work with wildland fire management partners to help plan and execute prescribed fires and other fuel treatments to help protect communities.

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## The Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership: Collaboration for a Resilient Landscape (NY)



Ignition operations during the first burn at a NY State Park  
(©C. Lee/ TNC)

Major Partnership members—include: *The Nature Conservancy, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and Mohonk Preserve*

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**What are the benefits of more fire department involvement in wildland fire management for the NE/MW?**

Goal 2: Creating fire adapted communities – fire departments are often leaders in their communities and can facilitate the development of local risk reduction plans (such as CWPPs), and help implement wildfire protection programs such as Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise USA™.

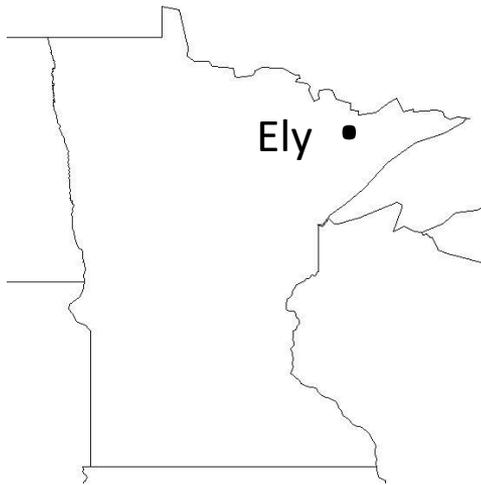
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## Mashpee (MA) Collaborative



## **FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES LEARNING NETWORK ELY, MINNESOTA**



**Firewise Event  
&  
Chipper Day**



# Northeast Region Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

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**What are the benefits of more fire department involvement in wildland fire management for the NE/MW?**

**Goal 3: Safe and Effective Wildfire Response** – fire departments, especially in the NE are often the first responders to wildfire incidents. Due to limited resources, many fire departments don't have the necessary training and equipment to engage more complex fires in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Increased engagement with wildland fire management agencies has the potential to increase the knowledge and ability to more safely engage wildfires and work with the other wildland fire management partners on all aspects of the Cohesive Strategy.

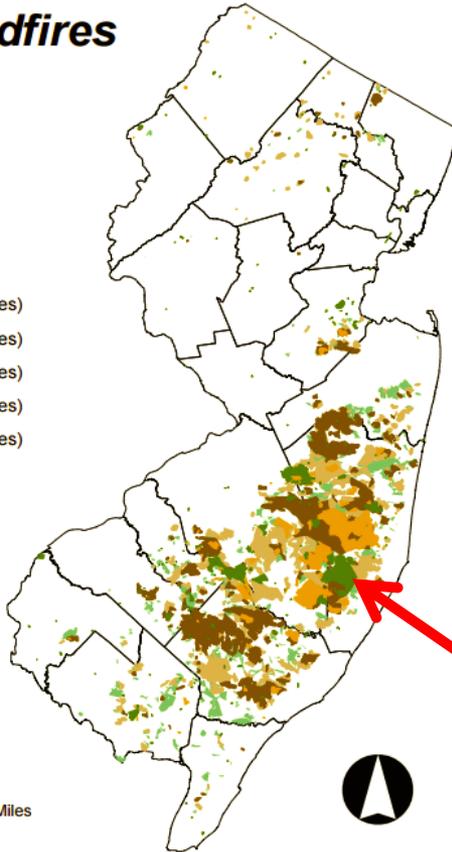
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## Major NJ Wildfires 1924 - 2016

### Legend

- 1924 - 1940 (315,736 acres)
- 1941 - 1960 (347,356 acres)
- 1961 - 1980 (301,583 acres)
- 1981 - 2000 ( 96,693 acres)
- 2001 - 2016 ( 55,640 acres)
- County boundaries



**Warren Grove Wildfire, May 2007  
17,000 + acres**



**NJ Forest Fire Service**  
Geographic Information Systems



NOTE: Major wildfires are those 100 acres and greater in size. Not all wildfires are shown.

## **In the New Jersey Pine Barrens: Barnegat Township's Fire Adapted Community**



*The 2007 Warren Grove Wildfire (15,000 acres) moves toward Barnegat. Photo: NJ Forest Fire Service/Kevin Burke*



*Above: Wildfire burned right to the brink of the mobile home community of Brighton at Barnegat. Photo: NJ Forest Fire Service*

# Sustainable Jersey® Wildfire Preparation Partnerships



LEARNING NETWORK



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**What partners and sources of information are available to assist fire departments in becoming more involved in the Cohesive Strategy?**

- NFPA
- IAFC
- NVFC
- State Forestry Agencies
- FAC Learning Network
- FEMA/US Fire Administration
- US Forest Service, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry

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## What tools and resources are available to assist fire departments in becoming more involved in the Cohesive Strategy?

- Smokey Bear (USFS and State Foresters)
- CWPPs (USFS and State Foresters)
- Firewise USA™ (NFPA)
- Ready, Set, Go! Program (IAFC)
- Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC)
- Fire Learning Network (TNC)
- Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP) NFVC

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## For More information:

For more information on the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, please visit:

- <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/>,
- <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/wildland>
- <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>
- <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Wildland-Urban-Interface>
- <http://www.northeasternforests.org/>