

NORTHEAST REGIONAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE (NE RSC) 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

Who We Are: Northeast Regional Strategy Committee (NE RSC), a regional coordinating entity, chartered by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), is the only regional wildland fire management forum in the Northeast-Midwest to exchange ideas, maintain a collaborative environment among many partners, and focus on developing mutually beneficial strategies and problem-solving.



[Northeast RSC website](#)

ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT SUMMARY

This accomplishment report for 2023 contains a set of highlighted examples that illustrate what implementation of the **National Cohesive Fire Management Strategy** and **Northeast Regional Action Plan** looks like across the 20-state Northeast-Midwest region. There are many more examples that could be shared, but time and space do not permit inclusion of all of them.

This report organizes these wildland fire management stories by how they contribute to the three Cohesive Strategy goals, WFLC and NE RSC priorities, as well as some overarching contributions to Cohesive Strategy implementation across the region.

The highlighted accomplishments contained in this report are drawn from a variety of sources and publications provided to or brought to the attention of the NE RSC Coordinator. Links to the source information are included in each accomplishment report item. Any errors or mischaracterizations of the provided information is solely the responsibility of the NE RSC Coordinator.

The NE RSC is chartered by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), supported administratively by the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMSFA), and funded by a grant from the USDA Forest Service.





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➤ **RESTORING LANDSCAPES**

FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE IN MASSACHUSETTS



Situation: Wildland firefighters with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) literally fight fire with fire in the form of “prescribed fire” - more commonly known as a “controlled burn”. By burning up dried branches, needles, leaves & debris in a controlled way, it reduces the risk of an accidental wildfire raging out of control after years of these types of “rules” building up on the forest floor or scrublands. DCR Chief Fire Warden Dave Celino explains the process of a prescribed burn done in May in Plymouth, MA.

Action: Plymouth, MA has a history of catastrophic wildfires due to volatile pine barrens and shrub oak fuels. To help educate the public in Massachusetts and beyond, Dave Celino, Chair of the NE RSC and DCR Chief Fire Warden, and his DCR team produced this short YouTube video that was used to explain the prescribed fire process used in the area.

Result: In this short video, Dave explains how prescribed fire is used to reduce the wildfire risk to communities around Plymouth, MA, help restore and maintain ecosystems, and provide training opportunities for both state wildland fire personnel, but also local departments.

Link for further information [Massachusetts DCR and Prescribed Fire Use Video](#)

MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST, PARTNERS REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK



Situation: The Mark Twain National Forest, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy in Missouri and several agencies, helped restore the forested landscape while providing essential fire training through prescribed burns in the Show Me state.

Action: The Nature Conservancy-sponsored Prescribed Fire Training Exchange, or TREX, held Feb. 27 through March 9, aimed at improving interagency collaboration on these projects. It also served to reduce fire risk to local communities by removing excess vegetation that could help fuel a wildfire, as well as improve habitat.

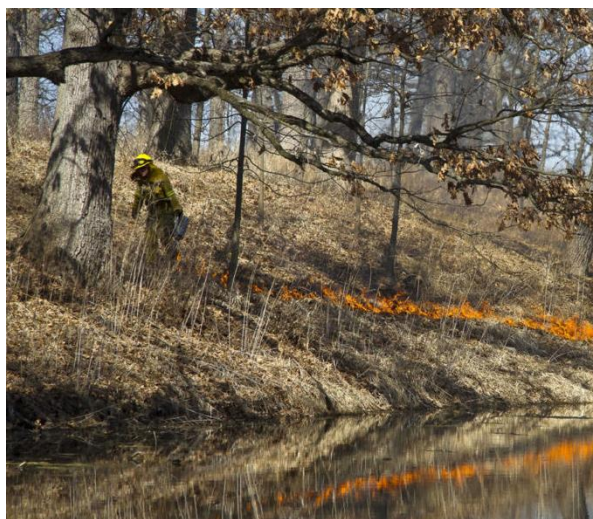
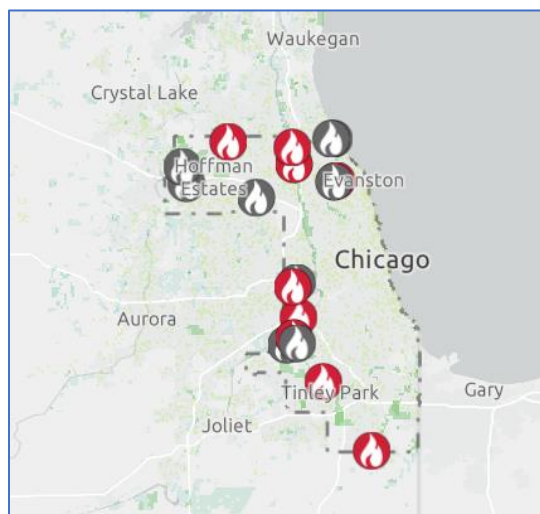
Participants burned a total of 15, 868 acres of vegetation, mostly on the Mark Twain National Forest. The remaining prescribed fire acreage occurred on The Nature Conservancy, Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri DNR State Parks lands; just over 1,000 acres.

Results: Ryan Gauger, The Nature Conservancy's fire and stewardship manager for the state of Missouri, said trainees came from nonprofits, state agencies, federal agencies and contractors across the country. Thirty students, plus six dedicated instructors, participated in the training operation. Participating organizations included Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Prescribed Fire Council, National Park Service and USDA Forest Service Eastern Region.

The prescribed fire training work took place in the Missouri Ozarks and is part of a four-year, cross-boundary grant for \$1,439,346 in federal funding and \$270,880 in funds and in-kind costs. The grant funds work on both state and private lands. Gauger said they plan to hold one TREX each year.

Link for more information: [Mark Twain NF and Partners](#)

PRESCRIBED FIRE IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT OF THE FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY, IL



Prescribed Fires in the Forest Preserves of Cook County, IL



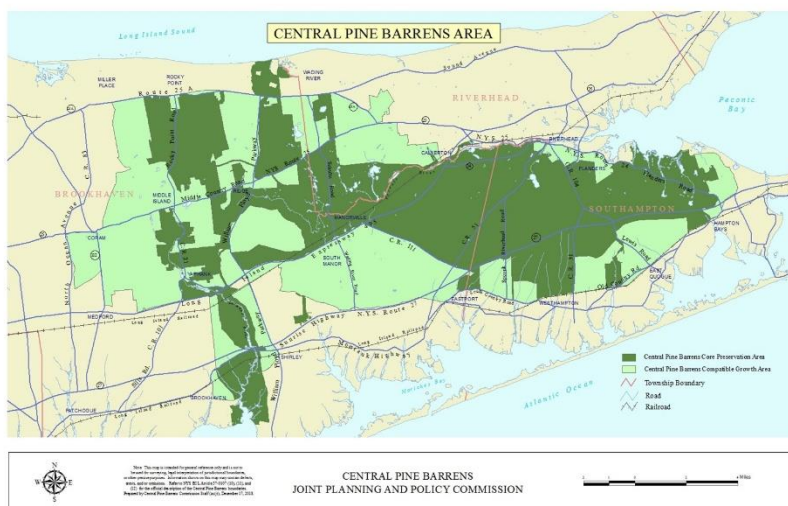
Situation: Prescribed burning in the Forest Preserves of Cook County, IL, one of the most-populated counties in the U.S., requires extensive planning, training, and execution by certified personnel. Their equipment is modern and well-maintained, and their safety track record is exceptional.

Action: Every spring and fall, the Forest Preserves of Cook County conducts prescribed burns across hundreds of acres throughout the preserves. Prescribed burns are considered a land manager's most cost-effective tool available for managing our fire-dependent natural communities.

Result: They help control invasive shrubs and trees while promoting germination in native plants that have adapted to benefit from fire. Without fire, buckthorn, honeysuckle and other aggressive non-native species will spread across local habitats and shade out native plants. The Forest Preserves of Cook County has one of the largest and most successful urban prescribed burn programs in the country.

Link for further information: [Forest Preserves of Cook County](#)

PRESCRIBED FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN THE CENTRAL PINE BARRENS OF LONG ISLAND



Situation: The Central Pine Barrens consists of approximately 105,000 acres of land. The ecological communities found in the Central Pine Barrens are part of a globally rare ecosystem, one of only a handful of Pine Barrens ecosystems found in the northeastern United States. As the Central Pine Barrens is a fire-prone and fire-dependent ecosystem, prescribed fire is the most important and effective management tool to help mitigate wildfires while improving this globally-valued and locally-distinct ecosystem.

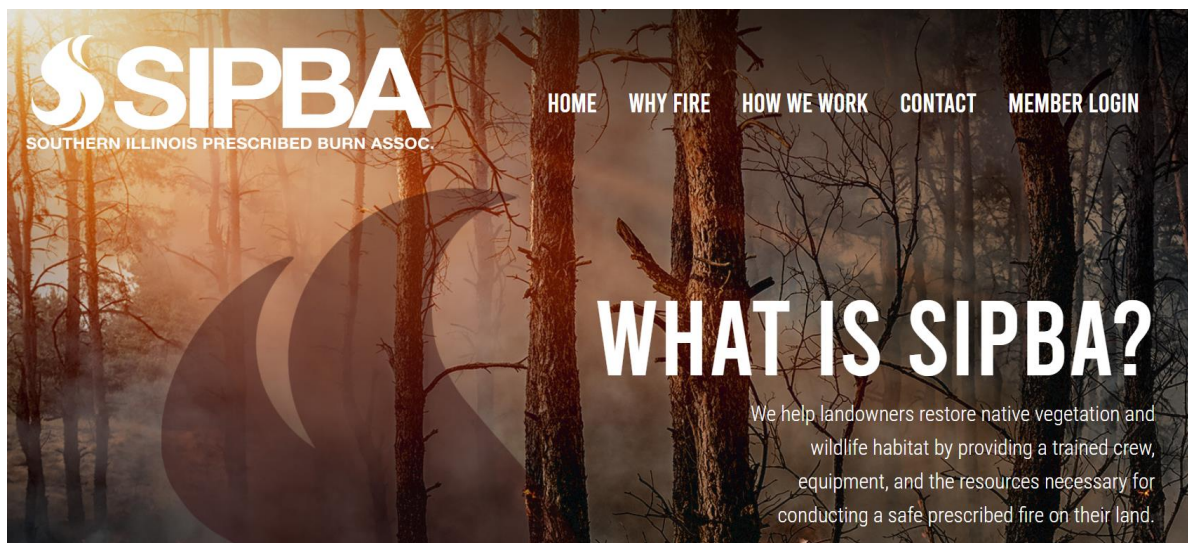
Actions: In 2018, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation allocated \$1.25 million to the [Central Pine Barrens Commission](#), which facilitated the creation of this interagency prescribed fire program for the region. Using prescribed fire to mitigate the risk of wildfire is an effective and encouraged tactic identified within the Central Pine Barrens Commission's Land Use Plan as it is a tool successfully implemented, often used and widely supported by numerous agencies and landowners around the country and the world.

In January 2021, the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Prescribed Fire Management Program plan was released to implement an interagency collaborative program focused on the safe and effective use of prescribed fire as a vital management tool within the Central Pine Barrens to help ensure public safety and ecological health.

Result: The Commission is facilitating the implementation of the program, working alongside local communities, fire departments, private and public landowners and state and federal organizations to bring an effective and safe program to the CPB and its residents.

Link for further information: [Central Pine Barrens Prescribed Fire Management Program](#)

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION IS A MODEL FOR THE NE-MW REGION



Situation: Many private landowners, government agencies, and conservation groups had the shared goal of using prescribed fire to restore native plant and wildlife habitat within the southernmost 11 counties of Illinois. SIPBA was designed to overcome liability concerns and provides training and equipment to crews of volunteers that assist their neighbors with prescribed burns on private land.

Actions: In 2006, multiple agencies, conservation groups, and private landowners came together to form a prescribed burn association whose mission is: *To overcome the barriers preventing landowners from using prescribed fire, including liability concerns, lack of training and equipment, limited resources and the absence of a crew.* The US Forest Service and Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation provided grant funding to help get SIPBA started.

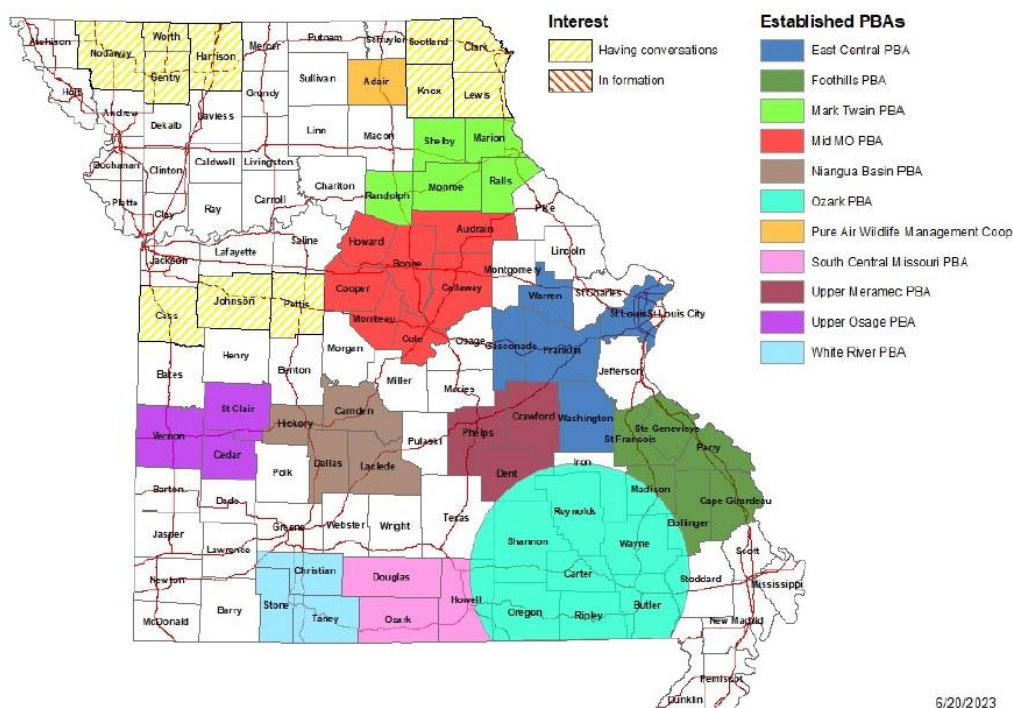
Result: Landowner members of SIPBA receive: 1) Professional guidance and assistance with burn preparation, 2) Quality training in every aspect of prescribed fire management, 3) Access to specialized prescribed burn equipment, and 4) Assistance on burns from experienced and well-trained crews.

Thanks to the success of SIPBA, landowners in Southern Illinois have the equipment, expertise, and assistance to safely and effectively conduct prescribed burns, restoring over 1000 acres of habitat each year.

Link For Further Information: [SOUTHERN ILLINOIS PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION](https://www.sipba.org/)

PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATIONS (PBA) ARE GROWING AND BURNING IN MISSOURI

Missouri Prescribed Burn Associations



6/20/2023



Situation: The Missouri Prescribed Fire Council is dedicated to promoting and protecting the responsible use of prescribed fire as a natural resource management tool in Missouri. Part of its mission is to “*encourage the development and establishment of local prescribed fire associations*”. A Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) is a group of landowners and other proactive citizens that form a partnership to conduct prescribed burns. Association members pool their knowledge, manpower and equipment to help other people in their association conduct prescribed burns.

Action: The Missouri PFC has developed a dedicated section on their website with resources to help anyone set up a prescribed burn association (PBA).

Result: The first PBAs were established in 2015 when funds were acquired through NWTF grants, local QF Chapters and the Missouri Department of Conservation to provide burn equipment and help facilitate landowner efforts. As shown on the map above, there are currently 11 PBAs in Missouri with about that many again talking about forming one in the state.

Link for more information: [Missouri Prescribed Fire Council](https://www.missouri-pfc.org/)

➤ **FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES**

WHO'S YOUR HERO? FINDING COMMUNITY LEADERS IN FIRE-ADAPTED NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA



Situation: In Northeastern Minnesota, residents are surrounded by southern boreal forest and an abundance of freshwater lakes. That's why they've chosen to live there. Some folks think they don't have a wildfire problem, but their landscape faces similar wildfire risks as other parts of the country. One hundred years of fire suppression, insect infestation, and an increase in intense wind-throws are just a few of the things contributing to the elevation of wildfire risk. Trying to figure out what to do to decrease wildfire risk and then figuring out how, actually, to decrease it can be disheartening and overwhelming to a private landowner.

Action: A multi-generational group of folks decided to cooperate in doing their part to help their properties be more wildfire resilient and to mentor others who have similar goals.

A group of friends formed this co-op group a year ago with a focus to help each property owner (four couples & two teenage daughters) with three goals:

- Assess each property for wildfire resiliency
- Create a management plan and an approach to make the properties more wildfire resilient
- Work together to do the work of clearing, brushing, burning, and hauling on each property.

Result: The properties range in size from 5 to 20 acres. The property owners are always in charge of what happens on their land; they provide leadership, define the goals and a work-plan for the day, and facilitate a debrief at the end of the day to evaluate what went well (and what didn't) so they can build and improve on what they learned. They also delineate manageable blocks to work on for each session. In 2022 they assessed, planned and worked on each property 2-3 times.

Link for more information: [FAC Network - Minnesota Blog](#)

FIRE IN THE BOG: CRANBERRY FARMING IN THE NEW JERSEY PINE BARRENS



Editor's note: William (Bill) Brash is president of the [New Jersey Fire Safety Council](#) (NJFSC) a statewide organization working to create community fire adaptation and resiliency, and a member of FAC Net. Tom Gerber is the B1 Section Firewarden for the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, and owner of the Quoexin Bogs cranberry farm in the Pine Barrens region of the state.



Situation: The New Jersey Pine Barrens is a fire-adapted ecosystem composed predominantly of pitch pine, Virginia pine, and some shortleaf pine; with an understory of scrub, blackjack and post oaks; and huckleberry, highbush blueberry and mountain laurel in the shrub layer. This 1.1 million acre forest has been shaped by fire since the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier 10,000 years ago.

The original human occupants of the Pine Barrens are the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, inhabiting present-day New Jersey, Delaware, southeastern New York and eastern Pennsylvania. Lenni-Lenape means "Original People" or "Common People." Archaeologists have found evidence that Indigenous peoples have lived in this area for at least 12,000 years, and that fire has long been used as a land management tool. The name of Tom's cranberry farm, Quoexin Bogs, comes from the Lenni Lenape word meaning "little." Prescribed fire is a common management tool used to maintain healthy cranberry bogs.

Action: Tom Gerber, owner of Quoexin Bogs, a 1,000-acre working cranberry farm in Medford, NJ, is a 4th generation cranberry grower and 3rd generation Forest Fire Warden. Today, Tom performs annual prescribed burning activities on the farm, creating a unique outdoor classroom where practitioners can view the results of 100 years of periodic prescribed burning on the same forest.

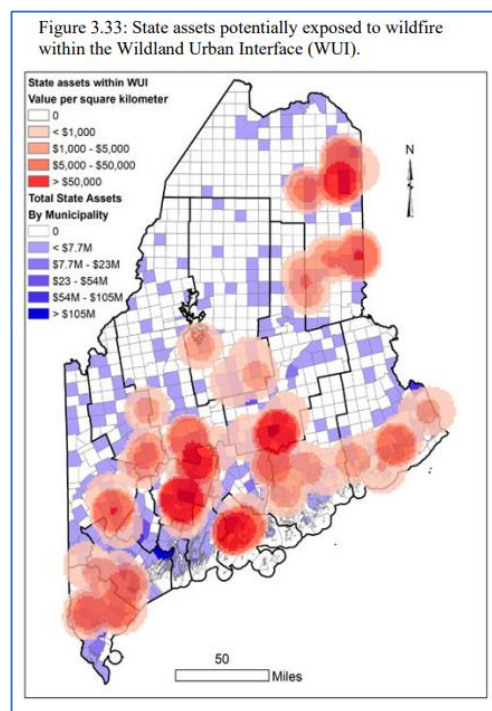
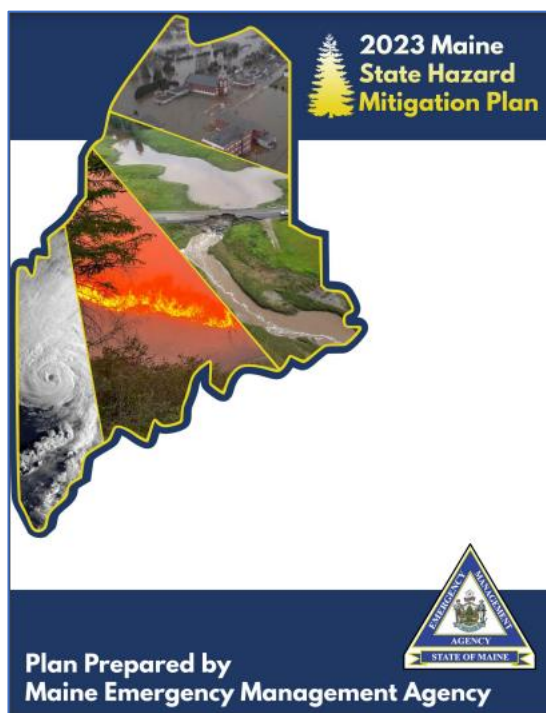
Result: In April of 2023, FAC Net hosted its annual member workshop in the Pine Barrens, taking a special trip to Quoexin Bogs to hear Tom's story and see the positive effects of a long-term prescribed fire regime.

Link for more information: [New Jersey Cranberry Bog and Prescribed Fire](#)

2023 MAINE STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN APPROVED



Situation: The State of Maine has recently completed its update State Hazard Mitigation Plan. It includes a significantly improved wildfire risk section. The Maine [wildfire hazard and vulnerability sections](#) were significantly informed by the [NE-MW Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal \(NE-MW WRAP\)](#), a product developed in a highly collaborative approach facilitated by the NE RSC over the last several years.



Action: Maine is the first state in the NE-MW Region to successfully use this new tool in updating the wildfire sections of their State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Result: The 2023 Maine State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) was formally approved by FEMA in September 2023.

Link for more information: [Maine State Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)

OSHKIGIN SPIRIT OF FIRE



[Oshkigin Spirit of Fire DovetailPartners Youtube](#)



Situation: For thousands of years in the Great Lakes Region, Native Americans used fire intentionally to manage the ecosystems they lived in. Their stories are a critical piece of information to gain a deeper understanding of the role of fire in the upper Midwest region.

Action: There is a short film, Oshkigin: Spirit of Fire highlighting this deep, reciprocal relationship with the land and the role fire plays in that relationship. This story is told by Ojibwe Wildland firefighters, Fond du Lac elder Vern Northrup and Damon Panek.



Also see, Understanding Oshkigin Spirit of Fire, A discussion with Vern Northrup and Damon Panek, available at: [Understanding Oshkigin Spirit of Fire...](#)

Result: The Arrowhead Fire Adapted Communities program which receives leadership from Dovetail Partners, has been gathering and sharing important resources such as these videos to help expand the knowledge and awareness of the many perspectives and resources to help communities become more fire adapted. Other partners that support this effort include the Superior National Forest, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Tribal Nations, various county and local government agencies, and other environmental nonprofits.

Link for more information: [Oshkigin Spirit of Fire](#)

INFORMING CITIZENS: WISCONSIN DNR'S FIRE MANAGEMENT DASHBOARDS



**WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**



Situation: Wildland fire management in Wisconsin prioritizes the protection of human life, property and natural resources from unwanted wildfires while strategically using prescribed fires to enhance our natural communities and the ecosystems we manage. Education, safety and training programs and an extensive network of partners are utilized to suppress, manage, and prepare for fires statewide.

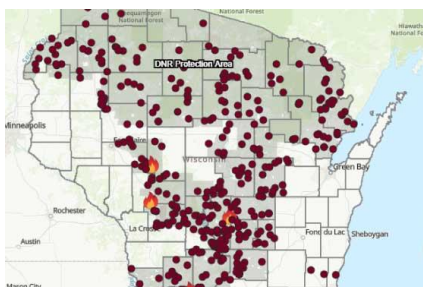
Action: To help inform and education the citizens of Wisconsin about wildfire and prescribed fire, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has developed a set of dashboards to provide an interactive map-based approach to see the latest and historic wildfire and prescribed fire activity across the state.

Result: The dashboards below show information about wildfires and prescribed fires across the state. They include real-time and historic data.

WILDFIRE DASHBOARD

See statewide real-time and historic wildfires. Take a closer look at the specifics of emerging wildfires, including acres burned, causes, weather conditions and more. You can also select date ranges or locations to view the number of wildfires and acres burned. Wildfire data are available from 2012 to present.

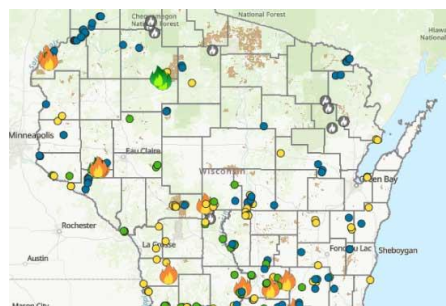
LAUNCH WILDFIRE VIEW



PRESCRIBED FIRE DASHBOARD

See planned, real-time and historic prescribed fires. You can view the specifics of any prescribed fire conducted on DNR land. You can also look at prescribed fires within specific date ranges or locations. Prescribed burn data are available from 2019 to present.

LAUNCH PRESCRIBED FIRE VIEW



Link for more information: [Wisconsin DNR Fire Dashboards](#)

➤ **WILDFIRE RESPONSE**

NORTHEAST FIRE COMPACT SENDS SUPPORT TO QUÉBEC WILDFIRES



Situation: Six New England states and New York established the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Compact—also called the Northeast Compact—in 1949. The Compact provides a means for member states to cope with wildland fires that may become too intense for a single member state to control. Currently, the Northeast Compact members include seven states—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York—and five provinces—Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland-Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. The Compact also includes the Fire Department of New York City, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. National Park Service.

Action: The NFFPC sent support with multiple crews, overhead and equipment to Canada to help battle wildfires in Québec. The Compact's support is in addition to hundreds of other firefighters from across the United States.

Result: The NFFPC has again demonstrated the value of the Compact in efficiently sharing resources across boundaries including international boundaries. Personnel involved also receive valuable training and experience that they bring back to benefit their home units as well.

Link for more information: [NFFPC Supports Quebec Wildfires](#)

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

“When you know who you are; when your mission is clear and you burn with the inner fire of unbreakable will; no cold can touch your heart; no deluge can dampen your purpose. You know that you are alive.”

– Chief Seattle



Situation: In August 2023, a mission and a sense of purpose aligned to make history. These men and women represent the first all Tribal/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Type 2 Initial Attack crew ever to mobilize from the Midwest Region.

Action: The crew was deployed to an incident in Northern California and was comprised of Tribal and BIA employees from White Earth, Leech Lake, Bois Forte, Mille Lacs, and the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin.

Result: This crew formation and deployment is a tangible example of collaborative efforts to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and response capacity in the Midwest for Tribal, state, and national benefits.

Link for more information: [MNICS - History in the Making](#)

MASSACHUSETTS FIREFIGHTERS GO TO CANADA TO COMBAT WILDFIRES



Situation: more than 120 wildfires were burning In Quebec, Canada since the beginning of June. The wildfires have sent clouds of smoke across the Northeast, covering New York City and New England with a smoky haze. Canada made multiple requests for assistance via the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact.

Action: Firefighters with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation deployed on a 14-day trip to Quebec to help fight wildfires that have burned at least 19.5 million acres since early June.

The Massachusetts-based group headed to Canada under the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact. That agreement, created in 1949, joining firefighters from all six New England states and New York with five provinces in eastern Canada to control and extinguish wildfires, said Dave Celino, chief fire warden for the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Result: This first group returned after two weeks battling blazes and a second crew of 21 firefighters left July 5 to Canada assisting with the fires. *"DCR is committed to doing everything we can to protecting our natural lands for generations to come and today's deployment of these 11 DCR firefighters to help our friends and partners in Quebec is part of that commitment," said DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo. "These are extremely well-trained and dedicated firefighters whose skills are much needed, and whose help, we know is enormously appreciated."*

Link to more information: [Massachusetts firefighters head to Canada to fight wildfires](#)

NEW JERSEY FOREST FIRE SERVICE COMMENDS COOPERATING AGENCIES WITH AWARDS AMID BUSIEST WILDFIRE SEASON IN MORE THAN A DECADE



On left, Greg McLaughlin, Administrator and Chief of the Forest Fire Service



Situation: A new nationwide analysis of weather conditions during the past 50 years by the nonprofit Climate Central found that the annual number of days with a high risk of wildfire has increased by 10 days in northern New Jersey and four days in southern New Jersey. The 2020 New Jersey Scientific Report on Climate Change notes that wildfire seasons are expected to lengthen, and the frequency of large fires will increase due to hot, dry periods that will result from increasing temperatures.

Action: To date in (September) 2023, the Forest Fire Service has responded to 1,034 wildfires which have burned 17,979 acres in New Jersey. Fourteen of these fires were considered to be major wildfires burning in excess of 100 acres, making 2023 the busiest fire season in more than a decade.

Result: To mark the historic fire season, the Forest Fire Service presented the Interagency Cooperators Award to six interagency partners *“for distinguished service during the extraordinary event of wildfires in New Jersey, Spring 2023.”*

“Without the cooperation of our interagency partners the Forest Fire Service’s job would be immensely more difficult,” said Greg McLaughlin, Administrator and Chief of the Forest Fire Service. *“Celebrating these interagency partners is a reminder that preventing wildfires and keeping the public safe requires the support and commitment of many people and departments.”*

Link for more information: [New Jersey Forest Fire Service Awards](#)

➤ REGIONAL COLLABORATION INITIATIVES

NORTHEAST-MIDWEST REGIONAL PRESCRIBED FIRE SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Madison, WI, August 29-31, 2023



Situation: The NE RSC recently hosted the first **NE-MW Prescribed Fire Science & Management Workshop** in Madison, WI (August 2023). This workshop was the first of its kind in the region, was developed by the NE RSC prescribed fire coordination work group, and provided a unique, broad regional collaboration opportunity for prescribed fire practitioners, managers, and scientists.

Purpose: To help advance implementation of the [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#) in the 20-state Northeast-Midwest region, especially the restoration and maintenance of resilient landscapes.

Action: A workshop was planned and held for all wildland fire management partners across the 20 state NE-MW region to share region-wide, science-based, fire ecology information oriented toward expanding and maintaining the use of prescribed fire across all landscapes, jurisdictions, and fire-dependent ecosystems.

Result: The workshop was attended by over 250 people representing federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, NGOs, universities, consultants, and private landowners. Due to this workshop's success, a 2nd NE-MW Prescribed Fire Science & Management Workshop is being planned for August 2024 at the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, NY.

Link for more information: [2023 NE-MW Prescribed Fire Science & Management Workshop](#)

NE RSC SUPPORTING REGIONAL PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL COORDINATION EFFORTS



Northeast-Midwest Regional Prescribed Fire Council Coordinating Group



Situation: The mission of the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils (CPFC) is: *“To promote the use of prescribed fire for enhancing public safety, managing resources, and sustaining the environment “BY” establishing and maintaining a viable coalition of state and local PFCs that provide encouragement, education, leadership, and coordination of the appropriate use of prescribed fire.”*

In 2020, the CPFC partnered with the 3 Cohesive Strategy RSCs, to form Regional Prescribed Fire Council Coordinating Groups to focus on forming a PFC in a state if one did not exist and assisting prescribed fire councils in each region with addressing barriers and increasing their effectiveness.

Action: To reach out to current PFCs in the region, the NE RSC, along with the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils (CPFC), has co-sponsored **Regional Prescribed Fire Council Networking Forums** periodically throughout the year to address desired topics with subject matter experts. In cooperation with the WFLC RSCs, the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils is hosting these virtual networking forums to *“identify priorities and needs that will expand the scope and scale of prescribed fire councils at the state and national levels.”* To date, the NE RSC and RPFCCG have put on 9 Networking Forums with more planned for the coming year.

Result: The NE-MW Regional Prescribed Fire Council Coordinating Group has been very successful and effective in reaching out to state PFCs with several states forming, restarting, or beginning the process of forming their own PFC.

Link for more information: [NE-MW Regional Prescribed Fire Council Coordinating Group](#)

Northeast Region Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

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



NE RSC LEADING THE WAY TO COORDINATE AND EXPAND PRESCRIBED FIRE TRAINING ACROSS THE 20-STATE REGION



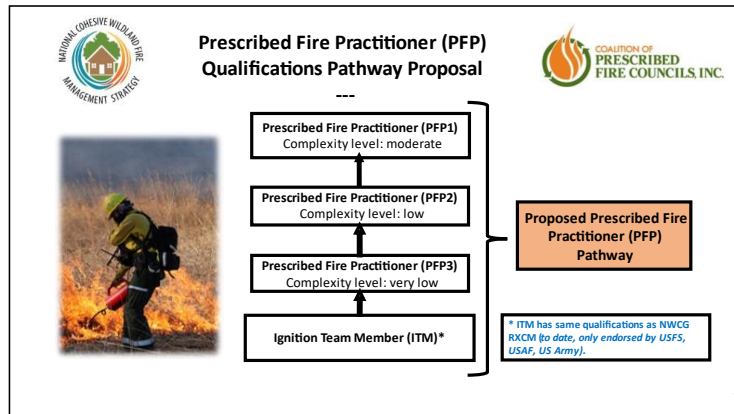
Situation: The NE RSC Prescribed Fire Coordination Work Group is the NE RSC's longest serving work group, approaching 10 years of action, and has produced many resources and initiatives to advance the use of prescribed fire in the region. This work group has conducted several regional surveys designed to understand and respond to the needs of the prescribed fire community in the region. One such outcome of these surveys has been a focus on training delivery and coordination.

Action: This group has secured two US Forest Service Eastern Region (R9) Cohesive Strategy grants to fund a prescribed fire training coordinator, Zach Prusak, who is leading the effort to coordinate training across the region, set up needed courses, set up training portal, and convert some in part or total to virtual formats to cut costs and expand the training opportunities to all partners. The NE RSC helped acquire a second US Forest Service R9 Cohesive Strategy grant for Tall Timbers to hire staff to help set up a virtual NE-MW Regional Prescribed Fire Training Center.

Result: As significant number of training courses have been converted to a hybrid format and delivered to an increasing number of trainees across the region from many organizations. Coordination has occurred with multiple training partners including the four regional Fire Compacts, Joint Fire Science Exchanges and Consortiums, the 20 NE-MW states, Tall Timbers, Prescribed Fire Councils, and many others.

Link to more information: [NE RSC/Resilient Landscapes](#)

PARTNERSHIP FORMED TO ADDRESS A PRESCRIBED FIRE CERTIFICATION BARRIER



Situation: An alternative pathway to attain prescribed fire practitioner certification is needed because:

- There is a significant lack of trained prescribed burners to meet the current prescribed fire treatment needs to help restore and maintain landscapes and reduce wildfire risk to communities, let alone meet the projected need of at least 5 times the current accomplishment levels.
- The current qualified prescribed fire workforce is mainly comprised of wildland firefighters who are primarily trained for and frequently deployed to suppress wildfires across the country, almost year-round – often during the optimal prescribed fire windows.
- Prescribed fire training and qualifications requirements are not consistent or accepted among all the federal, state, local, tribal, NGOs, private ownerships and across jurisdictional boundaries without specific interagency agreements that must be developed and maintained.
- There is no nationally recognized training, qualifications, and experience ladder and certification system available to most current and potential prescribed fire practitioners outside of government agencies, without obtaining wildfire suppression assignments, especially for low to moderate prescribed fire complexity levels.

Action: A formal request for change (RFC) was submitted to NWCG in April 2023. This new pathway would provide a set of standards and means for current and potential prescribed fire practitioners from all entities, including federal, state, and local agencies, State agencies, Tribes, NGOs, contractors, and private landowners, to be able to obtain nationally recognized prescribed fire practitioner qualifications without having to obtain wildfire suppression assignments which is a significant barrier to expanding the prescribed fire workforce and the ability to easily share resources across jurisdictions.

Result: Pending with NWCG

NEW NE RSC CLIMATE ADAPTATION/WILDFIRE RISK WORK GROUP FORMED



Situation: State Foresters and other leaders in the NE-MW region have expressed the need for better information needed to respond to public and media inquiries about the effects of wildfires regionally and nationally, particularly in the face of recent events driven by climate change. Wildfires in the NE-MW region are not generally as newsworthy as many of the large wildfires nationally in the past decade, especially in the West including the Camp Fire in 2018, significant wildfire smoke events from Canadian wildfires, and the Maui Fire in 2023. Significant wildfires are also not new to the 20-state NE-MW region, including some of the largest catastrophic wildfires in US history.



Action: A new NE RSC work group has just been formed to learn more about and share climate change adaptation strategies as they apply to addressing wildfire risk in the NE-MW. Engage conventional and non-traditional partners to discover priorities and solutions, and develop tools tailored to our region, to assist agencies and organizations in communicating and addressing increasing wildfire risks.

Result: The first task for this NE RSC work group will be to develop a communications kit to provide climate change adaptation strategic messages to wildland fire leaders, managers, fire departments, and media as they apply to addressing wildfire risk in the 20-state NE-MW. This communications kit could include helping communities identify, understand, and promote wildfire risk reduction through increased knowledge about community resilience planning tools, hazard mitigation actions, and smoke avoidance and adaptation strategies.

Link for further information: [The NE RSC Website](#)



The Northeast Regional Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Committee Roster



- U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - U.S. Forest Service – Eastern Region State & Private Forestry
 - U.S. Forest Service – Northern Research Station
- U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - National Park Service
 - Bureau of Land Management
- LANDFIRE
- U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security/FEMA/US Fire Administration
- U.S. Dept. of Commerce/NOAA
- Dept. of Defense
- Army National Guard
- Intertribal Timber Council
- National Association of Counties (NACO)
- National Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils
- Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMSFA) **20** States
- MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
- Maine Emergency Management Agency
- 4 Regional Forest Fire Compacts (Northeast, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, Big Rivers)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)/ FIRE Learning Network (FLN)
- Dovetail Partners, Inc.
- Forest Stewards Guild
- 4 Joint Fire Science Exchanges (Lake States, North Atlantic, Oak Woodlands, Tallgrass Prairie & Oak Savanna)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Star Tree Wildfire Protection LLC
- Timmons Group
- National Volunteer Fire Council (NFVC)
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

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