

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM

Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry—Division of Forest Fire Protection



FIRE PROGRAM

At a glance:

- 16 million acres of forest lands protected
- 10 million acres of Wildland-Urban Interface
- 1,000 Volunteer Forest Fire Wardens
- 373 fire-qualified employees

MISSION

The wildland fire program safely and effectively manages wildland fire to enhance and protect life, property, and natural resources for the public benefit within Pennsylvania.



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

2020 Wildfire Season

Pennsylvania's 2020 wild-fire season started off early, with a large number of fires in February. As the spring season progressed, weather conditions changed and numbers dropped. Fall fire season was relatively active, recording over three times the ten-year average. The largest wildfire reported occurred in November and totaled just over 800 acres.

Statistics

- 1,508 Wildfires
- 3,021 Acres Burned
- 99.5% of Wildfires were Human Caused
- 17 Structures Destroyed
- 12 Injuries, 2 Fatalities
- 10-year average: 750 wildfires for 3,500 acres.



Above: The Seven Pines Wildfire started on November 7, 2020 in Monroe County and burned 812 acres. Personnel from the PA Game Commission, the National Park Service, NJ Forest Fire Service, and local volunteers provided significant assistance. Photo courtesy Matt Reed.

Wildfire Prevention & Mitigation

- Nationally-recognized Firewise USA™ Communities for 2020 include the following: Big Bass Lake (Dist 11), Hemlock Farms (Dist 19), Penn Forest Streams (Dist 18), and Treasure Lake (Dist 09).
- Fifty (50) wildfire prevention activities and events were conducted by volunteers and employees over the course of 2020. The constraints placed upon the wildfire prevention efforts by COVID-19 mitigation measures limited the amount of our traditional public-contact programs.

Type 3 Incident Management Teams

- 48 DCNR personnel provided support to Community Based Testing sites from March-June
- 2 testing centers set up and maintained for several months
- Several truckloads of supplies delivered

Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grants

145 Volunteer fire organizations were awarded grants totaling \$741,735 to purchase wildland firefighting PPE and firefighting equipment.



Above: DCNR staff assisting PA National Guard and others at a Community Based Testing Site in Montgomery County. Photo courtesy John Hecker

2019 Arthur N. Creelman Memorial Award

Congratulations to Bill Corbin of Bald Eagle Forest District, who received the 2019 Arthur N. Creelman Memorial Award for his work in wildfire prevention throughout the mid-state area. Great Job Bill!

Fire Cache

- 100,000 items received
- 70,000 items issued
- 23,000 delivery miles
- Cache supported mobilization of crews, engines, overhead, and training as well as the acquisition and distribution of COVID-19 PPE.

Federal Excess (FFP/FEPP)

- Over 1000 items valued at \$1.5 million were obtained through the federal excess programs for distribution to local fire departments.

Wildland Fire Crew



2020 was a historic year for wildfires throughout the nation. Assistance provided to our partners in other states:

- 5 Twenty-Person Hand Crews
- 2 Type 6 Wildland Fire Engines
- 71 Single-Resource Overhead Assignments
- 172 Total Resources Assigned

Despite significant risks and challenges, all personnel were able to return safe and sound.

PA-PAS Engine 601 on the August Complex, Tehama County, California in late August. Photo courtesy Matt Reed.



Williams Fork Fire, Colorado, July 2020. Photo courtesy John Hecker.

Air Operations

- 7 wildfires supported
- 8,200 gallons dropped
- 19 hours flight time
- 34 hours flown for fire reconnaissance

Wildland Fire Training & Qualifications

- 25 classroom training sessions
- 456 students completed classroom courses
- 164 students completed online training courses
- 373 students completed refresher training, RT-130
- 61 Position Task Books Issued
- 44 Position Task Books Completed

DCNR Radio

- Installation of new P25 radio equipment continues. Approximately one-half of the Department has been converted by the end of 2020.
- The entire Department is scheduled to be converted by July 1, 2021.

Prescribed Fire

- The Prescribed Fire Program was shut down in early spring and again in the fall due to COVID-19 safety concerns.
- Prior to the shut downs 15 prescribed burns covering 526 acres of DCNR lands were completed.



Prescribed fire on the Tioga State Forest, November, 2020. Photo courtesy Brian Plume.

Search and Rescue

- 26 searches reported in 2020
- 16 individuals located, the other 10 self-extracted.
- DCNR personnel and cooperators invested 1,077 hours in Search and Rescue
- Zero fatalities!

Thank You!

DCNR would like to thank everyone who assisted the wildland fire program in 2020, especially our valuable network of volunteers. We could not succeed without your dedication and service!



More Information

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www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Wildfire

2020 Pennsylvania Wildland Fire Leadership Award

Congratulations to Jim Stiteler, Forest District 17, on his selection as the 2020 recipient of the PA Wildland Fire Leadership Award. Jim is a Type 2 Planning Section Chief and Burn Boss and a contributor on the national and local level. Great job Jim!