



The Official Publication of the Forest Fire Wardens  
protecting Penn's Woods from wildfires.

# The Forest Fire Warden News

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry

## Interesting Times

There is an old expression or saying that goes something like “may you live in interesting times” that I always thought was an expression of good will but is intended to be ironic. In this context, “interesting times” are complex, turbulent, or worse. At this point, I am hard-pressed to think of a better way to describe the past 18 months. Interesting times indeed. Many of us would be more than happy to go back to the simpler, boring old days we all enjoyed in 2019!

Despite all the challenges wrought by a global pandemic, our wildland fire program has continued to meet the challenges put in front of it. Spring fire season in 2021 was more active than previous years. We went through a relatively dry March and April that resulted in a higher-than-average number of wildfires reported for those few months. As of early August 2021, there have been 1,300 wildfires burning 2,837 acres reported by our Forest Fire Wardens and employees. This is over double the 10-year average of number of wildfires reported. Acres burned is just slightly below average. While some of this increase is certainly a result of your hard work at increasing wildfire reporting, there is no question that conditions were significantly drier this spring, especially in western and northern areas of the Commonwealth.

Our organization has fared well because of investments in preparedness, training, and equipment have allowed us to be ready to face whatever challenges come along. During times of emergency, it has been heartening to see that training investments have given our wardens and employees a background in incident management and leadership that allows them to not only function but thrive in these turbulent times. I hesitate to speculate what the fall will bring, hopefully we get some more frequent precipitation and some relief from the pandemic, but no matter what comes I am confident our organization will be prepared and ready to respond to the best of our abilities. In my position, I couldn't ask for anything more.

Thank you and stay safe!

**Michael D. Kern, Chief Forest Fire Warden**

### ***Division of Forest Fire Protection Personnel***

Josh Wells  
*MACC Assistant Center  
Manager*

Diane Schmidt  
*Administrative Assistant*

Charlie Choplick  
***Logistics and Finance  
Section Chief***

Rick Temple  
*Fire Cache Manager*

Terry Smith  
*Special Investigator*

Brian Pfister  
*Wildfire Prevention  
Specialist*

Jesse Geiman  
***Communication  
Section Chief***

Teresa Hunker  
*Radio Telecommunications  
Specialist I*

Dan Kauffman  
*Radio Telecommunications  
Specialist II*

Matt Reed  
***Operations and Planning  
Section Chief***

Mike Becker  
*Qualifications and Training  
Specialist*

Todd Breiningner  
*Prescribed Fire  
Specialist*

Chad Northcraft  
*Incident Management  
Specialist*

Katie Dildine  
*Fire Operations  
Technician-East*

Jason Williams  
*Aircraft Operations and  
Safety Specialist*

---

## 2020 Creelman Award

Warden James Edwards is a Pennsylvania Forest Fire Warden with a passion and devotion to wildfire prevention.

He was awarded the 2020 Arthur N. Creelman Memorial Award, which recognizes extraordinary effort in wildfire prevention in Pennsylvania.

James has been a Pennsylvania Forest Fire Warden since 2002 and is active with wildland fire response, suppression, reporting, investigation, training, and prevention throughout the past 18 years.

An active member of the Union City Volunteer Fire Department, James has trained and mentored many of the firefighters on his warden crew.

He consistently maintains communications with the Cornplanter Forest District and is always eager to assist when needed.



During the spring of 2020, James was faced with a challenge. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he was unable to attend programs or events which have always been public and interactive.

By early summer, James noticed an increase in wildfires within the Erie County area, and soon Erie County was in a drought watch.

James took the initiative and started contacting meteorologists at television stations, which led one local

station to broadcast the current fire conditions in their daily weather report, informing the public to use caution while burning outdoors.

None of these connections would have been possible without James' relentless pursuit of finding a way to spread the fire prevention message during a pandemic.

James was persistent and found an avenue to spread the fire prevention message within the local region during a difficult and unprecedented time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

His efforts went above and beyond the normal job duties of a Pennsylvania Forest Fire Warden.

The long-term effect is a growing relationship with the news station, and an additional outlet to spread the wildfire prevention message well into the future.

Congratulations Warden Edwards!

**Cecile Stelter, District Forester, Cornplanter Forest District**

---

## Burning for a Purpose

I often get the question, "why are your guys burning that?" from people. My answer is usually "to meet certain objectives that will improve the health of the forest for future generations." Every time we conduct a prescribed fire it is for a purpose, not just because people like to burn things with drip torches.

So, what do I mean when I say that we are burning to make the forest healthier? Some of the objectives could be to knock back the invasive species so that the young native trees have a better chance of outgrowing them. Many times, we burn to promote oak trees, since they are important for lumber and wildlife. Oaks have a big tap root and much of the energy early on goes into establishing the downward root growth instead of top growth. When fire goes through the stand many of the seedlings are top killed and the oak will have the advantage over the less desirable species and grow faster due to the well-established tap root, hopefully making it the dominant tree in the stand in the future. Also, many of the undesirable trees have a thin bark and are easier to kill with prescribed fire.

Another objective of prescribed fire is site preparation. The goal is to use fire to expose mineral soil, so the seeds and acorns have a better chance to root into the soil instead of laying on top of the leaf litter.

If you are looking at a grass unit, the objective is to reduce the thatch layer for healthier grass and reduce woody species. In this case fire does a job that mowing

cannot. These herbaceous openings provide nesting, singing, breeding, hiding, and feeding/hunting grounds for many species of birds.



Probably the reason of most interest for this group is burning for fuel reduction. To meet this objective, we want to get rid of the fuels under our terms (correct fuel and weather conditions) instead of when a wildfire is approaching a value at risk. Fuel reduction around communities is something that has been gaining momentum over the years all over the country.

These are just a few of the reasons that we use prescribed fire in Pennsylvania. Usually, the main goal of burning is to provide a healthier forest for wildlife and future generations. So, the next time someone asks, "why are they burning the forest?" you can tell them "to promote a healthier forest for your grandchildren and future generations."

**Todd Breininger, Prescribed Fire Specialist, DFFP**

---

### **Jason Barret**

#### **Volunteer Forest Firefighter**

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania's forest area covers approximately 58 percent of the Commonwealth's land area, totaling around 16.8 million acres. With this vast amount of forest area, there is always a chance for forest fires. In 2020, Pennsylvania recorded over 1,500 forest fires, which is a 20-year high. These forest fires burned over 3,000 acres of forest, killed two people, injured 12, and destroyed 17 structures.

To fight these forest fires, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) teams with volunteer forest fire associations throughout the state.

Jason Barrett, a Highway Draftsman Designer for PennDOT, Engineering District 3, is one of these volunteer forest fire fighters.

Since 2001, Jason has volunteered with the Tiadaghton Forest Fire Fighters Association (TFFFA) and in April of 2017, he became a Pennsylvania Forest Fire Warden.

To become certified as a volunteer forest fire fighter, one must take a minimum of 56 hours of classroom training and 4 hours of live fire training. Each year volunteers are required to take an 8-hour refresher training course and pass a physical fitness test of walking 2 miles with a 25-pound backpack or weighted vest in 30-minutes without running. Most of the training is provided and paid for by DCNR. Over Jason's 20-years of service, he has logged over 800 hours of training.

Since 2001, Jason has responded to numerous forest fires throughout the Commonwealth. During the fire season, he is likely to carry his fire equipment with him in the event of a call. This equipment can cost thousands to maintain. As a fire warden, Jason is likely to also carry additional equipment such as radios, hand tools, chain saws, leaf blowers, and additional personal protective equipment.

When asked if there was one memory that stands out from any of these experiences, Jason replied. "I have a lot of memories over the past 20-years. The memory that stands out the most was a night spent at the narrows in Cedar Run (Brown Township, Lycoming County). The forest fire was burning so hot that the rocks on the side of the mountain would roll down onto Route 414 and melt through the asphalt. It was like something you would have seen in a movie and something I will never forget."

Jason began volunteering with TFFFA after his father-in-law (who has been a volunteer for 55 years and a warden for 30) asked him to take the forest firefighter training. He would like to remind everyone that forest fires are something everyone can prevent.

A seven-year employee with PennDOT, we would like to thank Jason and all first responders for your service.

DCNR reported that 99.5 percent of the forest fires in 2020 were caused by humans.

**- Article reprinted with permission from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**



## Figure it Out

"My confidence level drops, and my anxiety level rises with every mile I travel west." Cruising the interstate at 80 mph across western North Dakota, I spoke those words into the hands-free microphone in the cab of my F-150. On the other end of the line was Gerald, a coworker I'd met on my first day with the bureau. We'd been friends ever since that day and he'd called to wish me luck on this assignment. Because this wasn't a normal assignment; this was an opportunity fifteen years in the making. The Idaho Department of Lands made a state-to-state request to Pennsylvania – send an Incident Management Team.

We have a good team – I kept reminding myself that. Not because I doubted it, I simply needed to alleviate my apprehension. We knew our jobs, knew what was expected, knew what it took to succeed, but this was a big step. In the past, we had the entire pool of state resources to pull from, to back us up, to support us. This time we were on our own, and there wasn't a one of us who didn't know it.



There was a bit of scuttlebutt on the ride out, talk of how Idaho might send us to the Cougar Rock Complex – ten fires currently managed by a Northern Rockies Type 2 IMT – and split the fires up between our team and

another Type 3. But that was a highly complex incident, and my stomach twisted into knots at the thought of managing 500 personnel. Fortunately, another Type 2 team was found, and we were redirected to the Snake River Complex, which was larger than one hundred thousand acres.

Snake River was the perfect incident for us to cut our teeth. Sure, it was certainly the biggest fire a PA team had ever taken on, but we'd all been on larger fires, and this one was contained on three sides. While Operations had his hands full protecting structures, building line, and burning out islands, the rest of the team started digging deep. We were out of our element, and there were more than a few utterances of "I'm not qualified for this". But the long and short of it was, we were qualified, and every member of the team had what took to get the job done, they'd just never done it in that environment. Over the next few days, things got smoother. Figure It Out became a team motto and comfort levels rose. We could see the incident wrapping up shortly, and we were far more confident in our abilities, but we soon found out that our confidence would be tested yet again.

Three more days – that's what we determined it would take to close out the incident and hand it back over to the local unit. But as fate would have it, we only had a day and a half. The Great Basin Type 2 team on Cougar Rock was timing out, and Idaho had no other option than to send our team to take over. We weren't finished at Snake River, but we were being pulled off for a higher priority. Not only the team, but nearly all the resources were going, too – crews, engines, iron, showers, support tenders and all. How could we be expected to hand this incident back before our work was done? And how could we possibly demob and reassign all those resources in the time we had left? Anxiety levels jumped, tempers flared, and moods darkened. Figure It Out. We did.

We had some help at Cougar Rock, though. A short team of six from Maine was assigned to the northern half of the complex, where Cobbler Spike Camp was situated two hours from ICP up long, twisting, gravel logging roads. We were responsible for providing logistical support to not only the base camp, but also to the resources at Cobbler, as well as covering Finance and Resources for the entire complex. Not to mention that our team of ten members was taking over the incident from a team of sixty. I began to hear the familiar phrases from our first day or two at Snake River again – "we're out of our depth" and the like. I was not convinced, not after seeing what the team accomplished just a few days ago.

Everyone was pushed to the limits of their experience and knowledge, then beyond those limits. Need to get 250 hot meals to Cobbler Spike? Figure It Out. Have 30+ pieces of heavy equipment demobing on the same day, and won't come back to camp for inspections? Figure It Out. Satellite internet company leaves in the middle of the night, so you have no internet connectivity in the morning? Figure It Out. Ice vendor and disposal service both decide they won't make the trip to Cobbler anymore? Figure It Out. Lose half of your operational resources to a new start forty miles away? Figure It Out.

After a few days of figuring it out, again, the team got into the groove. "We can't handle this" turned into "We got this". And when the Maine team timed-out, demobed, and we took over their responsibilities, there wasn't even a hiccup. Trying to run an incident with two separate teams comes with its own set of challenges, we discovered, so things actually ran a bit more efficiently. We were down to about 200 personnel now, from the 450 we started with. We could see the light at the end of the tunnel, and spirits were high.

Three more days – then we would transition back to local resources and an ad hoc IMT to close it out. Of course, at that three-day mark we hit another snag, and this one could derail the entire operation. Three personnel from a single crew at Cobbler Spike tested positive for COVID-19. By this point we'd transitioned from a large camp supporting a small camp at Cobbler, to a small camp supporting a large one – nearly all of the operational resources were located at spike, and we held our breath waiting for an outbreak. Fortunately, the efforts we made to minimize exposure from the beginning appeared to work, because the outbreak never came, no more cases.

The last couple of days were a bit of a whirlwind – demobing, breaking camp, and cleaning up everything left behind from a Type 2 IMT. Out-briefing with IDL was smooth, and the team was congratulated for jobs-well-done, then we settled in for the long drive home.

Sure, it felt great to be appreciated by the home unit, to receive that stellar team performance evaluation. But that's not what I'll remember most about the assignment. The success of the team did not solely come from the prior experience of the team members, nor did it come from each member's ability to adapt. Certainly, those factors played key roles, but in my opinion the team succeeded because they were pushed beyond what they thought they could do. Not completing a task wasn't an option, there was no more help, we couldn't call for more resources from a neighboring forest district or get logistical assistance from the host district. We worked

together and supported each other. When someone thought they couldn't get something done or needed help, the others were there to offer help and encouragement. Every member exceeded their own expectations and learned from the experience, and I think every member has a new perspective on the Type 3 Incident Management Team.

I try to live my life learning something new every day, even if it's only learning the definition of a word I'd never before heard. I certainly learned more on this assignment than on any other, and probably more than several put together. It was a unique experience of which I am grateful and humbled to have had. When asked if I'd do it again, I immediately want to respond, "in a heartbeat", but I hesitate to make that statement for one reason – If I go, someone else does not. We need other team members to get this experience. We've opened a door and paved a way for the PA Bureau of Forestry Incident Management Team to evolve beyond what its founders ever believed it could be. It's time to continue stepping forward and help our other team members Figure It Out.

**Matt Reed, Operations and Planning Section  
Chief, DFFP**

---

## **Wildland Fire Learning Portal**

For two decades wildland firefighters looking for information about wildland fire training opportunities or information about a geographic area training center would visit the National Wildland Fire Training website. As with much of the computer technology around us, the software running the National Wildland Fire Training website became outdated and was no longer able to function effectively or securely. As a result, the information and functions of the old website were migrated to the new Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP). The WFLP or learning portal as it is sometimes referred to became active in January 2020.

### **What is the Wildland Fire Learning Portal?**

The learning portal is an interagency enterprise learning management system rather than a traditional website. Agency training officers use the platform to manage, deliver, and evaluate wildland fire training or learning activities. A team of wildland fire training stakeholders worked on the development of the learning portal for over two years and will continue to do so as new functionality is sought.

## **What can be expected when you visit the Learning Portal?**

When you visit the learning portal, you will see a log-in page. This is because the portal is a learning management system designed to provide interactive content and modern functionality for training delivery.

## **How are Geographic Area Training Centers using the Learning Portal?**

All geographic area training centers will use the learning portal to post course schedules, selection rosters, and logistical information pertinent to their training centers. Migration of specific course content into the portal is ongoing. Numerous courses around the nation are being delivered in the portal at the local, geographic, and national level. The National Training Centers, the National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI), the Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC), and the Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program (WFAP), are also using the portal to deliver training sessions.

## **How is the Bureau of Forestry using the Learning Portal?**

To date the Bureau of Forestry has utilized the learning portal to deliver the virtual portion of the 2021 RT-130, Annual Fireline Refresher to nearly 500 of Pennsylvania's wildland firefighters, both employees and volunteers. Prior to the 2021 Basic Field Exercise held on the Rothrock Forest District in early June, approximately 40 students used the learning portal to take part in online delivery of training materials typically taught in a classroom setting as an effort to reduce potential COVID-19 exposure. During the Mid-Atlantic Wildfire Academy held in McHenry, MD in mid-June, Bureau of Forestry employees delivered a virtual S-230 (Crew Boss) to students from several agencies and states. It is the intention of the Bureau of Forestry to continue to explore and develop future opportunities to deliver various courses through the learning portal.

## **Do I need to create an account in the Learning Portal?**

Visitors to the learning portal can log-in as a guest to view Geographic Area Training Center schedules and on demand self-enroll courses. To enroll in and attend a course utilizing the portal, an account or log-in profile will need to be created. After an account is created students will be able to enroll and attend self-enroll courses. Certain courses within the learning portal have prerequisites and selection criteria requirements. A student will need to be selected and enrolled to see any content. As a result, creating an account will not automatically give access to this type of course being delivered or housed on the portal.

## **Learning Portal Account Setup**

Creation of a learning portal user account requires a valid email address. The email address **MUST NOT** be a sensitive personal email, meaning it is used for banking, healthcare correspondence, etc. Commonwealth employees are encouraged to use their Commonwealth email. Non-Commonwealth employees are encouraged to create an email account used solely for learning portal business. If a non-government email is used it will take 1-2 business days to process the account request. Do not try to request a duplicate account using a different email address as this will delay the account creation process and will likely result in both accounts being deleted. Once an account is requested, the learning portal will send an automated email asking for confirmation of the provided email address. Confirmation must be made before the account will be created. If two business days pass without receiving the confirmation email, check the spam or junk email folder. Sometimes the confirmation email is directed to this folder. To begin user account setup, go to <https://wildlandfirelearningportal.net/>

## **NWCG 310-1 Firefighter Core Training on the Learning Portal**

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) of which Pennsylvania through the National Association of State Foresters is a cooperating member has established standardized minimum training requirements for individuals engaged in fighting wildland fires within the United States. Current minimum training requirements for wildland firefighters include:

- L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service
- S-130, Basic Firefighter Training
- S-190, Introduction to Wildland fire Behavior
- IS-100, Basic Incident Command System, ICS-100
- IS-700, Introduction to National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The required NWCG courses (L-180, S-130, S-190) have been uploaded and are accessible through the learning portal as on demand self-enroll courses. With the upload of these courses to the learning portal, the use of the NFA Online platform previously utilized to deliver these courses has been discontinued. S-130 is a blended course when taken through the learning portal. This means the online component of the S-130 can be completed through the learning portal but there is also a required field exercise associated with the course. Following completion of the S-130 online component students must contact a forest district to register for an S-130 field exercise. Students will need to provide the field exercise instructor with a copy of the certificate issued through the learning portal following completion of the online component before a certificate will be issued for



completion of the entire S-130 course. L-180 and S-190 are delivered entirely online when taken through the learning portal. A copy of the certificate issued through the learning portal at the completion of these courses should be provided to the Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor or Fire Forester in the student's local forest district. The Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor or Fire Forester will then request the Division of Forest Fire Protection issue an NWCG certificate for each course. This step in the process will allow more effective tracking of training hours.

### **Mike Becker, Qualifications and Training Specialist, DFFP**

---

## **2021 McNamara Award**

I'm proud to announce that Brian Pfister is the recipient of the 2021 McNamara Award!

The Eugene F. McNamara Fire Prevention award is given annually to an individual or organization who has provided outstanding service in wildfire prevention within the 20 Northeast and Midwest states. At the 23rd annual meeting of the Forest Fire Supervisors the award was created and named the Eugene F. McNamara Fire Prevention Award to honor the life of Eugene F. McNamara "Mr. Fire Prevention" and his commitment to wildfire prevention on a state, regional and national level. He received many fire prevention awards including the Silver Smokey in 1972.

Eugene was an employee of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry for many years serving as the State Fire Supervisor from 1966 through his retirement in 1984. He served as the Chairman of the Northeast Forest Fire Control Supervisors during 1968 – 1969. The annual award is in the form of two plaques. A large plaque is on display at PA Bureau of Forestry Headquarters in Harrisburg and has brass plates listing each year's recipient and is inscribed:

### **Eugene F. McNamara "Mr. Fire Prevention" Award**

To honor an individual or organization that has provided outstanding service in the field of fire prevention.

A second plaque is presented to the recipient who is dedicated to wildfire prevention work and exhibits the spirit of prevention that symbolizes Eugene.

Brian's work with Remote Automated Weather Stations, NFDERS, NWS, and other cooperating agencies has given him the capabilities to produce daily situation reports as well as observed and forecasted fire danger maps that

help our agency determine fire staffing levels as well as inform the public of potential wildfire risks throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

These products are updated daily during our Spring and Fall fire seasons and distributed to essential fire staff, cooperating agencies as well as posted to the DCNR, Bureau of Forestry website for public awareness.

Brian also utilizes data from our fire reporting system to create fire occurrence maps which increases awareness to fire problem areas by specific fire cause. This information assists in determining funding distribution for fire prevention as well as firefighting equipment needs.

Mr. Pfister utilizes the data from these maps as well and believes in concentrating prevention efforts on the areas of high concern; in PA our leading wildfire cause is debris burning. Brian has led and assisted with the production of multiple fire prevention items in the attempt to combat this issue.



Brian is also currently leading the way in developing an integrated detailed "fire scene" solution which will be utilized by wildland fire investigation staff in the field to help them produce a high quality, professional detailed crime scene diagrams of wildfire origin/spread which will be utilized to recuperate costs associated with negligent behavior resulting in wildland fires as well as prosecute those responsible for criminal acts of arson, our second leading cause of wildfires.

This work may not be "typical" fire prevention, but it does in fact increase Pennsylvania's awareness, helps us

better prepare, helps us enforce wildfire laws, therefore ultimately leading to less fires.

Congratulations Brian!

Brian joins the ranks of the following folks from PA in receiving this prestigious award:

1991 - Arthur Creelman  
1998 - Paul Sebasovich  
2004 - Glen Bell  
2007 - Steve Cummings  
2013 - Rick Meintel  
2018 - Terry Smith

**Charlie Choplick, Logistics and Finance Section  
Chief, DFFP**

---

## Suppression Aircraft

Within Pennsylvania, we use two different types of aircraft for fire suppression, and they are both very different animals. What we have sitting at the tanker bases are Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs) and at remote helipads, we have three Helicopters (one is a Type 2, which can support larger missions and two are Type 3). While there is no specific, hard set time to use either aircraft over another, we do have some differences between the two for different objectives in a mission. Either can be used in situations when the fire is threatening structures and to help suppress the fire's spread.

SEATs are used to drop retardant onto the fire to buy the resources time. They can also give the resources feedback as to what the fire is doing because they have a pretty good bird's eye view. Tankers can drop 800 gallons of retardant at a time. They can drop more than Helicopters but must return to the base to get more retardant (usually we can get them turned around quick).



The other useful thing that air tankers can do is change the level of their drop, and split loads. There are four levels that the gate can open: Level 1 is for grass and light fuels, the gate doesn't open far; level 2, then level 3, and level 4 is wide open for heavy timber/fuels. Splitting loads means that they close the gate when about half of the retardant is left in the hopper. This can be used to your advantage to hit different spots on the fire.



Helicopters are useful to combat hot-spotting, reconnoiter the fire, walk resources into a fire that they can't find, or help map the fire. They can also maneuver in areas that tankers cannot. The Type 3s can drop 90 gallons of water at a time, while the Type 2s can drop 300 gallons at a time and can load from a water source closer to the incident than an airport.

**Katie Dildine, Fire Operations Technician -East,  
DFFP**

---

## 2006 - So Far Away

The fire program in the state has come a long way in 15 years. Looking back over my time involved with the fire program: when I started, the Incident Management Teams were just forming, Type II hand crews were pretty much how everyone went out west, we did not recognize any in-state experience for task books, and only a handful of people moved past Squad Boss with national qualifications and even fewer moved past Crew Boss. Now looking at the program, it's as if it grew too big for the environment that it was in and is expanding in multiple areas rapidly like a wildfire itself.

To some the fire program may not look like it has changed much in that time frame or even appear to have shrunk - if you're looking at a straight count of number of staff. The reality is though, we are doing more now



with the resources we have then has ever been done. The personality types of the people performing all this tends to not draw attention to everything the people involved have accomplished.

I could write about how all the aspects of the fire program are growing, but the one I want to highlight is the Incident Management Teams. Mainly because this is one of my program areas. Each person involved with fire could write a similar article with the focus on their area and have enough for another article.

For the last few years, we have talked about sending our Type III Incident Management Team out west to run a fire for another state. Yes, we had sent teams to run some all-hazard incidents, and I think that was what was needed to take the next step to running fires. This year it happened.

The main thing that needed to align was the timing of people with certain qualifications. It just so happens that when the call came this year that alignment was in place. We were able to roster a nationally qualified Type III Team - command and general staff plus some other positions - and send them to Idaho, with the equipment they would need (thanks for the stuff PEMA) to manage a fire for up to twenty-one days. That's just awesome. Now shortly after we rostered it, we lost one of the general staff due to personal reasons, but that did not hinder the team. They did what all teams do when they need a slot filled and floated the position out to the nation to see if someone that was qualified could fill the slot and moved forward.

The reason for our wildland fire crew program is so we can take the experience gained out west and bring it back to use in the state. I cannot speak directly on the experience gained by the team but a quote from one of the team members was "we have created a bunch of team members that will look at most incidents in Pennsylvania and say that's not that bad, we can handle that."

That's what our program is all about. We have seen that come into play over and over again in the past few years. We are often called upon to assist with managing incidents of all kinds throughout the state. It's taken a lot of work from a lot of different people to get to where this program it is today. Who knows where we will be in another 15 years? National Type II Team?

**Chad Northcraft, Incident Management Specialist,  
DFFP**

# PREVENT WILDFIRES, FOR THE LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS.





## **The Forest Fire Warden News**