

## Firefighters Glad for Park's Earlier Actions Prince William Forest Park, Virginia National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction

In 2004, park staff began a multi-year hazardous fuel reduction and wildland-urban interface mapping project. The work paid off when a fire broke out in March 2006. Firefighters and command staff found less flammable material in key locations and important interface information at their fingertips.

The fire was reported about 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 27 near the Oak Ridge Campground. Park staff immediately responded. Then Prince William County Fire Department brought several engines on scene. Within hours, assistance came from nearby NPS sites in the National Capital and Northeast

Regions. Dry conditions and driving winds fed the fire and it continued to spread. The next day, additional NPS and USDA Forest Service firefighters arrived. On Thursday, March 30, the fire was declared contained at 318 acres.

Since 2004, Park staff had removed dead and standing brush within 50 feet of any roadbed or park boundary line. This hindered the fire's ability to spread even farther. Park staff, including interns with the Student Conservation Association, had also assessed and mapped the potential wildfire danger to many houses along the park boundary using WHAM, the Wildland Hazard Assessment Methodology. With information from that, command staff quickly confirmed that the fire threatened no homes.

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*Sign impacted in B-Loop Fire -March 2006. NPS photo by Rocky Schroeder.*