



## **Fire Management Plans Approved for Hatcheries in Northeastern States**

MASSACHUSETTS - Between October 2004 and February 2005, Marvin Moriarty, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Regional Director, approved brand new fire management plans for 10 of the 12 national fish hatcheries in the region. The plans define how the hatcheries will suppress wildfires or manage prescribed burns and debris-pile burning to protect nearby communities, as well as natural and cultural resources.

The national fish hatcheries (NFH) that have new fire plans, as well as the towns they affect are:

**Virginia:** Harrison Lake NFH affecting the wildland urban interface communities of Harrison Lake and Wayside;

**Massachusetts:** Richard Cronin National Salmon Station affecting Sunderland; North Attleboro NFH and Berkshire NFH, affecting North Attleboro, Monterey and New Marlborough;

**Maine:** Craig Brook NFH, affecting East Orland, and Green Lake Northeast Fishery Center Complex affecting Ellsworth;

**West Virginia:** White Sulphur Springs NFH affecting White Sulphur Springs;

**Pennsylvania:** Allegheny NFH affecting Warren;

**New Hampshire:** Nashua NFH affecting Nashua; Pittsford NFH affecting the wildland urban interface communities of Chittenden and Mendon;

**Vermont:** White River NFH affecting the wildland urban interface communities of Windsor and Pittsfield.

The U.S. Department of the Interior requires an approved fire management plan for any areas with burnable vegetation. The region's fire management staff stepped in to help the Northeastern hatcheries satisfy that requirement. During a two-year period, the region's fire management coordinator, fire management officers and others met with hatchery staff to gather information for the plans. Those visits also prompted the region to clarify regional guidance on burning debris piles.

Because the approved fire plans are now in place, the Service awarded more than \$50,000 in Rural Fire Assistance grants in 2004 and 2005 to several local fire departments. The money was used to buy brush truck tires and rims, hoses, and portable tanks as well as personal protective equipment and weather instruments, and pay for training.

Developing the plans involved collaboration between the Service's fisheries and refuges divisions, and local entities, including Hampshire College, the Western Center for Sustainable Aquaculture, the University of Massachusetts Extension, and Berkshire Hatchery Foundation.

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