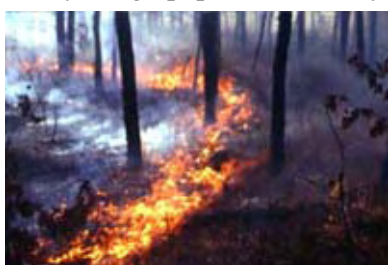




East Plains Fireshed Management Plan New Jersey 2006

The New Jersey Pinelands constitute a fire-adapted forest ecosystem that depends on wildfire for reproduction and to control fuel buildup. This forest community is one of the most hazardous wildland fuel types in the nation. Pinelands fires burn extremely hot and spread rapidly. New Jersey's high population density has created land-use pressures in which more people are moving



Prescribed fire is used in the New Jersey Pinelands to reduce hazardous fuel loads. Photo courtesy NJ Bureau of Forest Fire control

from urban areas to build homes in rural wildland areas. With more people living in and enjoying the state's wildlands for recreation, the number of fire starts and the seriousness of their consequences is increasing. A potentially explosive combination is created when the factors of hazardous wildland fuels, residential home development, and an increased risk of human-caused ignition come together under extreme fire weather conditions.

To address this hazardous situation, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service has used National Fire Plan funding to develop and implement the East Plains Fireshed Management Plan. This plan covers approximately 90,000 acres and six municipalities within the Pinelands of Ocean and Burlington Counties. The plan is a collaborative mitigation effort with local, State, and Federal partners that include New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection agencies; the Pinelands Commission; U.S. Air Force; New Jersey Air National Guard; the Garden State Parkway Commission; Ocean and Burlington Counties; and local municipalities. The plan calls for mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed burning to reduce accumulated fuels in the Pinelands and adjacent to the Warren Grove Bombing Range. In addition, the plan provides for the construction and maintenance of fire lines, fire roads, and fuel breaks. National Fire Plan funds are also available to communities through a grant program to develop and initiate Firewise education, hazard mitigation, and wildfire risk education programs.

With the assistance of National Fire Plan funding, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service has used prescribed fire on more than 600 acres in the fireshed. Mechanical thinning has been used to maintain and construct 221 miles of firelines and fuelbreaks along roadways in Stafford and Bass River Townships. These fuel reduction projects reduce the pine canopy cover along roadways and reduce the potential for crown fires and the spread of wildfire into adjacent developments. The Community Wildfire Hazard Assistance Grant Program has been utilized by 50 applicants within the East Plains Fireshed to complete projects totaling \$150,000 in this high priority area.

For more information contact:

Billy Terry, Assistant Director
USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry
Newtown Square, PA 19073
(610) 557-4145 (4154 – Fax)
bterry@fs.fed.us