

National Fire Plan

High Tech Fire Weather Stations

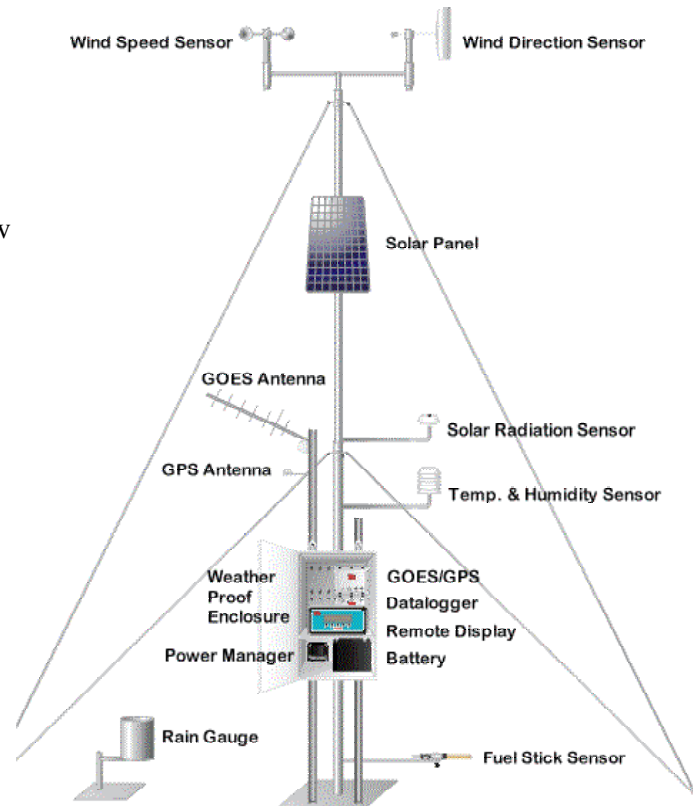
Ohio

2002



"These new stations will give us more coverage than we've ever had before," said John Crockett, Assistant Fire Management Officer on the Wayne National Forest. Crockett was on site with Kevin Morre, Fire Supervisor and Rick Maier Federal Excess Property Administrator for the State of Ohio at Chillicothe last month when the first of five new weather stations was erected in southeast Ohio.

"These weather stations are very high tech, everything is electronic," explains Crockett, "and with five more stations up, we should have excellent data on temperature, precipitation, dewpoint, wind speed and direction, humidity, and fuel moisture throughout the Wayne National Forest area." The remaining stations will be put up this fall by FTS, Forest Technology System, LTD, a company out of Canada that manufactures the Remote Automation Weather Stations (RAWS) purchased by the State of Ohio.



The National Fire Plan funded the grant to the State of Ohio Division of Forestry from Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry to purchase the weather station. Five of the stations the State purchased will be in southeastern Ohio. One will be near Cleveland in the north part of the state for a total of six stations. The Wayne National Forest has assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the stations.

Crockett explains that actual maintenance is not done on site, "The Wayne will have people go and swap out the parts on the stations and send them in to Boise, Idaho. The actual maintenance will be done through a cooperative partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, which sends the parts back to swap out again when the next maintenance is needed."

The State of Ohio, the Wayne National Forest, and the National Weather Service can access the data collected by the new weather stations. Until the station was erected at Chillicothe, the only station in the area was at Dean State Forest north of Ironton.

"Having a broader base of information will allow us to build our data base for historical weather patterns," Crockett explained. "We'll know more about the variations in weather across the forest area." He anticipates using the new data to update the firefighter pocket cards the Wayne NF developed as a result of the 30-mile fire incident.

Crockett concludes, "Information from these stations will become part of our daily briefings during fire season and will be used during prescribed burns to help us make better decisions."