



National Fire Plan

Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment

Connecticut Dry Hydrant Installation Program

■ The Challenge

- Despite its status as the fifth most densely populated state, Connecticut is 59% forested.
- Population shifts to suburban and rural living is straining public services, including fire protection.
- Rural fire departments are struggling with a multitude of problems: escalating costs of mandated equipment and training, aging structures and apparatus, poor local funding, and member retention.
- Water supply and delivery, critical to fire suppression, is a growing problem for rural departments.

■ The Solution

- With GIS technology, specialists used National Fire Plan Hazard Mitigation funds to identify 9 high-risk wildland urban interface zones with inadequate water supplies.
- The Division of Forestry provided a 50/50 cost share for dry hydrant installations, up to a maximum of \$1,000 in funds or in kind services. The Division of Forestry pool-purchased hydrants.

■ Resulting Benefits

- Fire departments are lowering their ISO ratings by using NFP funds to install dry hydrants.
- The Dry Hydrant and related programs are increasing the number of cooperative projects with Fire Departments that traditionally have not worked with the Division.
- Technology transfer about hydrant installation, urban interface issues, and rural wildland suppression has grown.
- Elected officials and local commission members such as Inland Wetlands and Planning and Zoning, as well as private homeowners and business owners, are more aware of rural fire issues.
- Local newspaper media are recognizing Fire departments for their efforts to enhance community protection.



The Scotland Volunteer Fire Department installs a dry fire hydrant

■ Sharing Success

- To date, 53 hydrants have been installed and cost shared with 33 fire departments.
- Another 49 dry hydrants will be installed in high-risk communities by May 2003.
- Total cost (NFP funds) of the program when completed will be \$102,426. In kind match from rural fire departments is \$60,213.
- The average cost, including in-kind services match, per dry hydrant installation was \$2,267.
- Approximately 90,000 acres of land in 9 high-risk urban interface zones have better protection (based upon 1 mile radius).
- Fire protection for rural homes, businesses, and municipal buildings has greatly improved.

Providing and maintaining dependable water supplies to ensure fire protection in high risk urban interface zones and communities is a growing challenge for rural fire departments.

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