



National Fire Plan

Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment

Maine-Enhancing Preparedness to Reduce Fire Risk

■ The Challenge

During the last five years, 3,555 wildfires have consumed 5,966 acres of Maine's forests. Development continues to create hazards in the wildland urban interface in central and southern Maine.

In January of 1998, an ice storm devastated 11 million forested acres in central and southern Maine. Two inches of ice broke branches and limbs, split tree trunks, and uprooted trees. The storm left forests littered with woody debris—fuel that would readily feed a forest fire.

■ The Solution

The solution centered on enhancing preparedness and capability to respond by obtaining better fire equipment, increasing training opportunities, improving rural water delivery and providing better fire weather information:

Fire Equipment- Hundreds of rural volunteer fire departments need better equipment for wildfire suppression and personal protection.

- More than half of Maine's towns have benefited directly from the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program.
- Dozens of towns have received equipment such as water tenders and engines through the Federal Excess Property Program.
- 76 towns were awarded grants to install dry hydrants.

Training- Training will reach a new level this year when the state hosts its first Wildfire Academy. Trainees can choose the basic firefighter course or more advanced courses.

Weather Information-

- 22 *Rainwise* weather stations were purchased and placed at strategic locations around the State.



Maine Forest Service pilot prepares to drop water on August 2002 wildfire

■ Resulting Benefits

- More high quality weather data that is easily captured and shared via the state's new automated system.
- More dry hydrants in the state's wildland urban interface.
- Improved mutual aid among adjoining towns.
- Reduced wildfire acreage and cost/acre.
- Reduced property loss and damage.
- Safer wildland firefighters and public.
- Better-trained and equipped firefighters with improved initial attack capabilities.
- Improved communication, cooperation and mutual aid among state, local, federal, and other cooperating agencies.

■ Sharing Successes

Fire weather data collected from the new stations is shared with interagency cooperators and Forest Fire Compact members such as the National Weather Service, USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and neighboring States. Fire danger information is posted to the agency's website daily.

For more information, contact:

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