

Rural Fire Protection Task Force

The Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force

The Challenge

In Vermont, there are 231 volunteer fire departments and 6,250 volunteer firefighters who must be prepared to respond to the many structural, vehicle, and wildland fire incidents as well as emergency medical calls. Increasing state population and the expansion of Vermont's wildland urban interface strains the capabilities of the volunteer system to protect lives and property in their response areas. The Vermont Rural Fire Protection (RFP) Task Force helps these volunteers to improve the quality of their fire protection services.

The Solution:

The RFP Task Force is a sub-committee of the Rural Conservation and Development Councils in Vermont and is partnered with the Vermont Department of Forests, Recreation and Parks to assist the state agency in improving rural fire protection. Its goals include: assessing the statewide needs for improved fire protection; linking fire protection with economic development to create a coordinated fire protection strategy; facilitating financial and technical assistance to address fire protection needs; developing guidelines for community fire protection plans; improving communications among fire safety interests; and developing fire safety programs and distributing educational information and materials. The Task Force has been instrumental in providing a wildfire equipment grant program for fire departments and in developing rural water supply throughout Vermont.

Benefits:

Since 1998, the RFP Task Force has developed 33 rural water supply plans, conducted 22 workshops for volunteer fire departments to assist communities in improving their Public Protection Classification rating, and developed a public outreach for Vermont communities to educate the public about dry hydrants and firewise landscaping. The RFP Task Force has used



The Bridgewater VT Fire Department conducts a flow test on a dry hydrant installed in a pond.

Photo courtesy Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force.

Volunteer Fire Assistance funding provided to the state from the US Forest Service Northeastern Areas State and Private Forestry to provide a Wildfire Equipment Grant Program for 63 VFDs in Vermont. This program has made approximately \$51,000 in equipment available to communities in need. The task force has also utilized National Fire Plan funding to install 64 dry hydrants in areas of the state in critical need for water supply for firefighting purposes.

Sharing Successes:

In addition to utilizing the federal grant funding to benefit local fire protection efforts, the task force has also been successful in obtaining state of Vermont legislative funding to support the rural water supply systems. The task force recognizes that fire is a threat to human safety, but is also a threat to the economic stability of the rural economy. It is committed to economic development through improved fire protection and recognizes that this results in increased security for businesses and farms and can result in dramatic insurance savings for all.

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Fire and Aviation Management

The Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force is dedicated to assisting local fire departments in reducing the risk of injury, loss of life and property, and to improving the safety and welfare of the community



USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry

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