



The Forest Fire Warden News

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry

Respond, Suppress, Report – The Basic Duties of All Forest Fire Wardens

In my position, I have the privilege of hearing many people's opinions, both solicited and otherwise, on what the forest fire wardens of this state should or shouldn't be doing. Given the broad spectrum of this advice from practical to otherwise, I think it is important to examine the actual duties of Forest Fire Wardens as legislated in this Commonwealth.

There are several basic duties specifically assigned to local forest fire wardens that are contained in the Pennsylvania Statutes. These duties are listed in Title 71, Section 1340.302 and were approved by the legislature in 1995 as part of Act 18 of that year which created the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. These duties can be summarized with three words: *Respond, Suppress, Report*

Respond – Local Forest Fire Wardens are to respond to all wildfires of which they have knowledge. This means that you should have a method of obtaining information on wildfires and responding appropriately. This can be done with local fire departments or through your local forest district. Many districts have specific guidance on how, when, and where local wardens in the forest district are expected to respond to wildfires. It is extremely important to have a discussion and understanding of how your role as a warden fits in with the local district.

Suppress – After responding to a wildfire, your next task is to suppress the wildfire. On most wildfires in Pennsylvania, cooperation with other first responders from the local fire departments and/or the Bureau of Forestry will be required through the Incident Command System. You may be asked to function in many capacities from Incident Commander to firefighter, but your core duty is to ensure that the wildfire is safely suppressed.

Report – You will need to report all wildfires suppressed by you to the local forest district. Initially, be prepared to notify the local forest district by phone when you are responding. After the fire is over, timely submission of a Warden's Report of Wildfire is essential. Even if you respond as a member of a local fire department, you are still a fire warden and need to report any wildfires that you go to. Reporting lets us know that a wildfire occurred, that you responded, and it also allows the Bureau of Forestry to inform others that wildfires are occurring and that the whole organization is doing its job.

When performing the above duties, please remember that all local fire wardens work under the direction and at the behest of the District Forest Fire Warden. All forest districts have systems and procedures in place for how the local warden organization is to function. Frequent and open communication with the fire staff of your local forest district can prevent many problems from occurring and is the best way to perform your duties.

One final item that I have yet to mention is wildfire prevention. Often, it has been said that it is much easier to prevent wildfires than fight them. Although our laws do not mandate that every local warden participates in prevention, it is something that the Bureau of Forestry is mandated to do and it is one other area where many fire wardens make an extensive contribution to our collective efforts. There are numerous opportunities to contribute to the wildfire prevention effort. Prevention can be as simple or complex as you want it to be; talking to your neighbors and family about wildfire prevention can go a long way toward our goals of protecting lives, property, and natural resources in this state.

Michael D. Kern, Chief Forest Fire Warden

*Division of Forest Fire
Protection Personnel*

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Chief Forest Fire Warden

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Special Investigator

Rick Temple
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Diane Schmidt
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Katie Thomas
*Fire Operations Technician
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2017 Forest Fire Wardens Weekend

This year's Wardens Weekend will be held at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove the weekend of June 23 -25. Nominations are due May 5th, 2017; contact your district office register. There will be 3 curriculums offered this year:

Curriculum F, which will consist of the Basics of being a Fire Warden, the Wildland Fire Observations & Origin Scene Protection for First Responders (FI-110) course, and the Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service (L-180) course.

Curriculum P, which will be presented by the Wildfire Prevention Action Team. This course will cover the new and updated electronic WHiP manual and covering various Wildfire Prevention Programs that Fire Wardens can conduct.

Curriculum S will primarily consist of the Firefighter Type 1 (S-131) course and will also provide students with some pointers on estimating fire size.

Nominations are due by May 5th and registration is limited to 100 students. Fire Wardens and Support crew members are welcome.

Any Warden that has not had the FI-110 should sign up for this course, as it is a requirement of being a Pennsylvania Forest Fire Warden.

2017 VFA Grant

The U.S.F.S has not yet informed us of the amount of funding they will provide for this year's Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant but they have eluded that it should be similar to the \$571,000 awarded in 2106. The program will remain unchanged from previous years with a maximum grant award being \$7,500. Information on the 2017 grant can be found on our website at

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/wildlandfire/vfd/VFAGrants/index.htm>

When an Incident Changes from a Type 4 to a Type 3, Other Things Change Too!

Most incidents in Pennsylvania are at the Forest District level and are considered Type 4 incidents. At that level, WARDEN REPORTS are submitted to the Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor or Fire Forester at the Forest District responsible for the wildfire after the incident is over so costs can be entered into the Wildfire Reporting System.

When incidents become too large or too complex for the local Forest District, one of DCNR's Type III Incident Management Teams is deployed to assist the district with suppression efforts. When an incident evolves from Type 4 to Type 3, lots of other things change too!

When Cooperators assist with a Type 3 incident, they need to **check-in AND demob** with the Planning Section **AND** the Finance Section. There are forms that you will now need to use to report ALL the information you normally put on your Warden Report. These forms will need to be submitted to the Finance Section **EVERY DAY**. These forms are called Crew Time Reports (CTRs) and Shift Tickets. Anyone in the Finance Section can show you how to complete these forms if you don't already know how.

The information you enter on these forms will be entered into the computer. When you demob from the incident, ALL the information will be summarized and printed on an OF-286 or an OF-288. It will be YOUR responsibility to make sure all the information is on the form(s) because after you leave an incident, no additional information will be able to be added. Make sure the information is correct and complete.

Cooperators will sign the form(s), and all resources will be paid from these forms. There will no longer be a need to submit a Warden Report after-the-fact for a Type 3 Incident. You will continue submitting Warden Reports for all local Type 4/5 incidents.

If you find yourself on a Type 3 Incident, please do not be afraid to stop by the Finance Section and ask questions if you need help, or just to say Hi!

Robin Register, Finance Section Chief (FSC3), BOF Green Team

Wildland Fire Awards

The **Arthur N Creelman Memorial Award** for extraordinary effort in the area of wildfire prevention for the year 2016 was awarded to the Mapleton Fire Department in Forest District 05 for their extensive community wildfire prevention activities.

The Annual District **Wardens Helping in Prevention Award** for 2016 was bestowed upon Forest District 06. The Gallitzin volunteer Forest Fire Wardens' expansive promotion of and participation in wildfire prevention programs is exemplary.

The Division of Forest Fire Protection established the **Pennsylvania Wildland Fire Leadership Award** in 2015 at the request of field staff to recognize outstanding wildland fire leaders. I am pleased to announce that John Berst has been selected to receive the 2017 Pennsylvania Wildland Fire Leadership Award. John was formerly the Chief of the Division of Forest Fire Protection until his retirement in 2005. Since 2005, John has remained active in the regional and national wildland fire organization and currently serves as Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Forest Fire Protection Compact. In this role, he provides leadership and technical assistance to the Compact states, coordinates day-to-day Compact business, and also represents the member states of the Compact to the Eastern Area Coordinating Group and the national-level Alliance of Forest Fire Compacts. John is well-respected by his peers and is a worthy recipient of the award.

Fire Danger Signs

We drive past them every day. Fire Danger Signs. Do we take notice of today's fire danger? It's often the primary means by which we communicate to the public the local potential for wildfires. Do we consider the effectiveness of the sign if it's not maintained regularly?

As forest fire wardens, we're keenly aware of the conditions present during a "fire day". Low humidity and increased winds in spring and fall combine to rapidly cure Pennsylvania's wildland fire fuels. Updating Fire Danger Signs to reflect current conditions helps get the **word** out to the public to enable them to avoid potentially igniting a wildfire. It's only a few words they see. Whether Low, Moderate, High, Very High, or Extreme, those few words assisted by Smokey Bear, announce Today's Fire Danger to hundreds of thousands of citizens across the Commonwealth.



Fire Danger Adjective Rating

Low - Fuels do not ignite readily from small firebrands. Fires in open cured grasslands may burn freely a few hours after rain, but woods fires spread slowly by creeping or smoldering, and burn in irregular fingers. There is little danger of spotting.

Moderate - Fires can start from most accidental causes, but with the exception of lightning fires in some areas, the number of starts is generally low. Fires in open cured grasslands will burn briskly and spread rapidly on windy days. Forest fires spread slowly to moderately fast. The average fire is of moderate intensity, although heavy concentrations of fuel, especially draped fuel, may burn hot. Short-distance spotting may occur, but is not persistent. Fires are not likely to become serious and control is relatively easy.

High - All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from most causes. Unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. High-intensity burning may develop on slopes or in concentrations of fine fuels. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are attacked successfully while small.

Very High - Fires start easily from all causes and, immediately after ignition, spread rapidly and increase quickly in intensity. Spot fires are a constant danger. Fires burning in light fuels may quickly develop high intensity characteristics such as long-distance spotting and fire whirlwinds when they burn into heavier fuels.

Extreme - Fires start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious. Development into high intensity burning will usually be faster and occur from smaller fires than in the very high fire danger class. Direct attack is rarely possible and may be dangerous except immediately after ignition. Fires that develop headway in heavy slash or in conifer stands may be unmanageable while the extreme burning condition lasts. Under these conditions the only effective and safe control action is on the flanks until the weather changes or the fuel supply lessens.

25 Years Ago – 1992 – The Forest Warden News



Arthur N. Creelman, Chief Forest Fire Warden

New Chief Forest Fire Warden

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of Forestry has a new Chief of the Division of Forest Fire Protection and Chief Forest Fire Warden. Arthur N. Creelman has been promoted from Chief of the Services Section of the Division of Forest Fire Protection to the position of Chief Forest Fire Warden. Mr. Creelman succeeds John H. Bitzer, who served as Chief from 1984 until his retirement in 1991. Mr. Creelman, who is originally from the Cambridge, Massachusetts area, graduated in 1961 from the University of Massachusetts with a BS degree in Forest Management. He began working for the then Department of Forests & Waters in Emporium, Pennsylvania, in 1961. He served in the U.S. Army for two years at the White Sands Missile Base in New Mexico and returned to Emporium to work as a management forester. In 1970 Mr. Creelman was promoted to Fire Prevention Specialist in the Division of

Forest Fire Protection. In this position he was very active in forest fire prevention both within Pennsylvania and outside the state. In 1980 he was promoted to Chief of the Services Section of the Division. Mr. Creelman is the sixth forester to hold the position of Chief Forest Fire Warden since the Forest Warden Act was passed in 1915. He is committed to fire prevention and the protection of natural resources of the Commonwealth. While working in the Division, Mr. Creelman has been recognized for his fire prevention efforts. In 1991 he received the Golden Smokey Award (the only one awarded that year) and the E. F. McNamara Award for Wildfire Prevention, both national awards. Mr. Creelman received one of five national Smokey Bear Plaques awarded in 1978. He is a member of various regional and national fire prevention working teams. Mr. Creelman and his wife Sara have a daughter, Lori, and a grandson. The Creelmans reside in Boiling Springs. Mr. Creelman is looking forward to his continued work with the Forest Fire Wardens of Pennsylvania and will strive to continue the great work of his predecessors.

50 Years Ago – 1967 – The Forest Warden News

Fire Prevention – Our Main Objective

Our main responsibility as Fire Wardens under the law is to Prevent Forest Fires. Our secondary responsibility is to suppress the forest fires that we do not prevent. You may feel that you sense a change in emphasis in the Division Program in the foregoing paragraph. This is not so. The Division has always stressed that the basic philosophy of Forest Protection is Fire Prevention. However, when you compare the attractiveness and usefulness of new fire suppression equipment, the spectacular airtanker program, and the challenge of stopping the spread of a wildfire, fire prevention may seem to be rather tame. Frankly, I feel that the prevention

of forest fires is as much or greater challenge than fire suppression. To develop an effective prevention plan taking into consideration the behavioral patterns of people, the trends of fire occurrence and to successfully implement this plan to achieve the desired results is a challenge second to none. Selling forest fire prevention is the hardest job we have in our forest protection program. Each year we spend much time in presenting prevention programs to organized groups such as Boy Scouts, Service Clubs, Sportsmen's Clubs, Garden Clubs and Civic organizations. How about the large number of citizens who use and benefit from our natural resources and are not members of an organized group? In some cases this is the person who causes our greatest problem in forest fires. To present the prevention message to this individual we must go to him. It may be in the forest where he recreates, in the garden at home where he relaxes, or at the local gas station where he has his car serviced. The main point is that we must take this important message to him. Once we have accepted the basic philosophy of this personal approach we must do some self-analysis. Our personality and our approach will do much to influence the success or failure of our prevention education efforts. When we are aware of these important facts the "sales talk" should be made by pointing out the obvious benefits to the individual, the community, the State and the Nation in forest protection. Remember, he may not be as interested or as aware of these things as you are. Take the time to explain the basic philosophy of conservation. Does this program take time? Certainly it does, but not as much as you may think. If every one of our 3800 volunteer Fire Wardens, and 17,000 volunteer crew members talked about forest fire prevention to one new person each day at the end of one year we would have "Preached Prevention" to 7,500,000 persons. In less than one and one half years each person in the State would have personally received the message. Why don't you start your part of the program today?

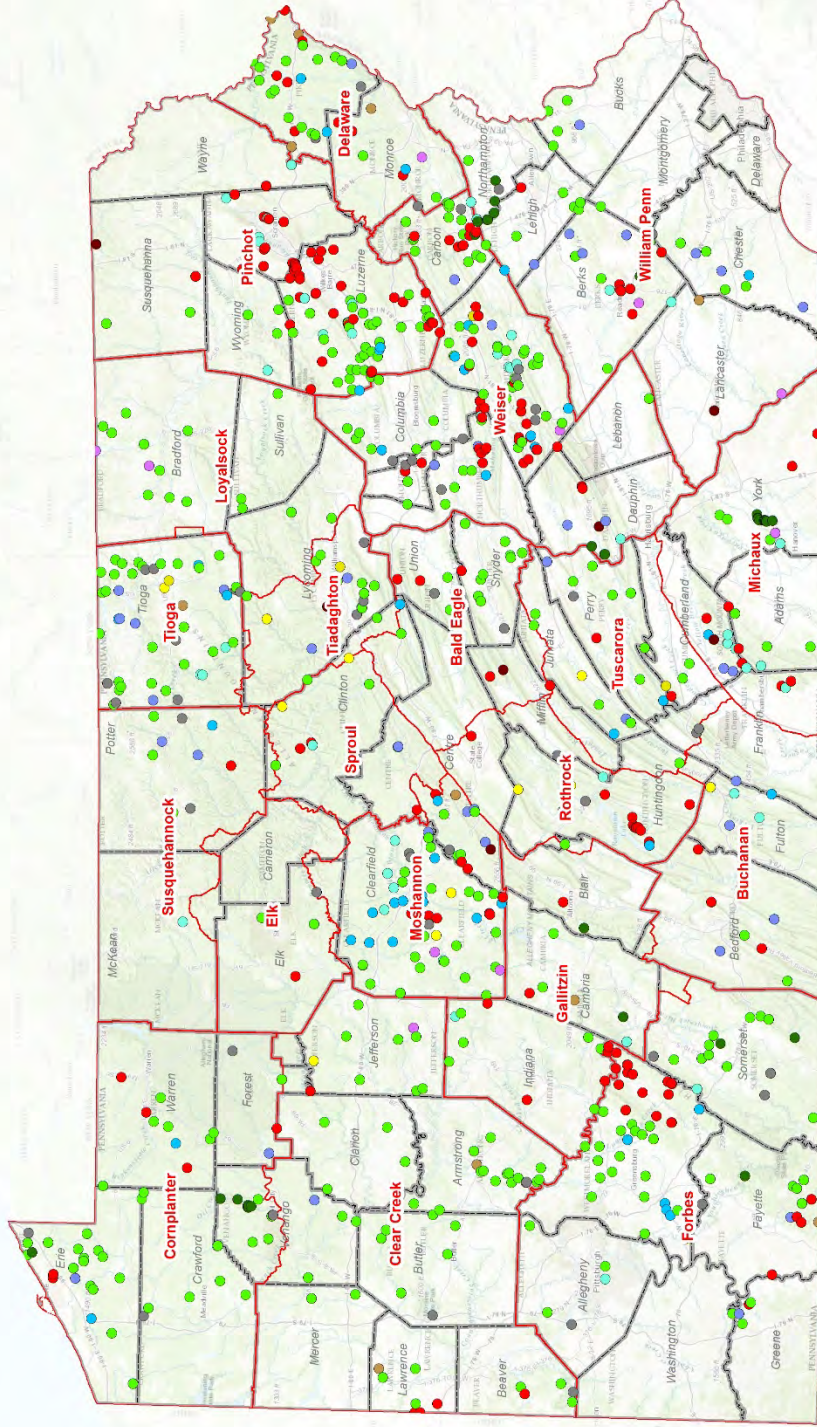
E. F. McNamara, Chief Division of Forest Protection

2016 Pennsylvania Wildfire Statistics

District	Spring		Fall		Total			
	# fires	Acres	# fires	Acres	# fires	Acres	% Total # Fires	% Total # Acres
01	22	24	17	17	39	41	4.6%	0.3%
02	10	359	5	69	15	427	1.8%	3.5%
03	15	63	9	86	24	149	2.8%	1.2%
04	66	709	19	217	85	927	10.0%	7.6%
05	17	22	6	64	23	86	2.7%	0.7%
06	12	55	5	6	17	60	2.0%	0.5%
07	8	5	12	23	20	28	2.3%	0.2%
08	54	178	5	5	59	183	6.9%	1.5%
09	49	156	19	29	68	185	8.0%	1.5%
10	7	12	3	103	10	115	1.2%	0.9%
11	89	377	13	35	102	412	12.0%	3.4%
12	18	30	3	20	21	50	2.5%	0.4%
13	2	1	2	101	4	102	0.5%	0.8%
14	48	131	11	18	59	149	6.9%	1.2%
15	6	82	4	13	10	95	1.2%	0.8%
16	33	138	19	37	52	175	6.1%	1.4%
17	39	78	9	55	49	133	5.7%	1.1%
18	111	116	32	19	143	135	16.8%	1.1%
19	34	8686	3	4	37	8690	4.3%	71.3%
20	16	47	0	0	16	47	1.9%	0.4%
Total	656	11268	196	921	853	12190		

Cause	Spring		Fall		Total			
	# fires	Acres	# fires	Acres	# fires	Acres	% Total # Fires	% Total # Acres
Camp Fire	25	37	21	84	46	121	5.4%	1.0%
Children	7	9	4	4.3	11	13	1.3%	0.1%
Debris Burning	319	678	61	84	380	762	44.5%	6.3%
Equipment Use	32	86	15	22	47	108	5.5%	0.9%
Fireworks	2	2	2	0	4	2	0.5%	0.0%
Incendiary	147	9816	47	452	194	10268	22.7%	84.2%
Lightning	3	4.5	8	120.3	11	124.8	1.3%	1.0%
Miscellaneous	32	78	13	23	46	102	5.4%	0.8%
Power Line	41	126	15	70	56	196	6.6%	1.6%
Railroad	35	29	4	32	39	61	4.6%	0.5%
Smoking	9	401	2	1	11	401	1.3%	3.3%
Structure	4	1	4	28	8	29	0.9%	0.2%
Total	656	11268	196	921	853	12190		

2016 - Pennsylvania Wildfires reported to DCNR



853 Wildfires / 12,190 Acres

Wildfires by General Cause

- Lightning (11)
- Equipment Use (47)
- Smoking (11)
- Campfire (46)
- Debris Burning (360)
- Railroad (33)
- Incendiary (194)
- Children (11)
- Miscellaneous (46)
- Fireworks (4)
- Power Line (66)
- Structure (8)



Have a Campfire

Not a Wildfire

When campfires are permitted ...

Caution should be taken when:

- The leaves are off the trees
- Windy or breezy
- Dry, crunchy leaves

How to put your campfire out:

- Soak it with water or smother it with dirt
- Stir the coals then soak again
- Check for heat and repeat until the fire is out cold



For more information
contact your local State
Forest Office.



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

www.dcnr.state.pa.us



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED