



RASCL Community Fire Hazards Coffee Hour

Delaware Forest Service Wildland Fire Program

Community Wildfire

Sam Topper


Wildland Fire Supervisor

What We Do - Wildfire

- +In State Wildfire Response
- +Out of State Wildfire Response
- +Wildfire Risk Assessment and Prevention
- +Outreach and Education
- +VFC Grants
- +Hazard Fuel Reduction Grants
- +Wildfire and Incident Response Training



What We Do – Prescribed Fire

- + State Forest Lands
 - + Other Public Lands
 - + Private Lands
 - + Partner Rx Fire Support
 - + Support the Delaware Prescribed Fire Council
 - + Prescribed Fire Training
 - + Education, Outreach, and Advocacy
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Why Do We Conduct Prescribed Fire?

- +Hazardous Fuel Reduction
- +Maintain Early Successional Habitat
- +Nutrient Cycling
- +Improve Forest Health
- +Control Invasive Species
- +Maintain habitat of concern – T&E Species
- +Site Preparation

Why Do We Conduct Prescribed Fire?

- +Mimics Natural Disturbance and Historical Fire Regimes
- +Good Smoke Prevents Bad Smoke
- +Prescribed Fire is the Better Alternative

What We Do - Other

- +VFC Tool Giveaway Cache
- +Federal Excess Property Program
- +Emergency Response PPE Cache
- +Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS)
- +Specialized Equipment
- +Advanced Training & Qualifications
- +Maintain DE Qualification, Training, and Experience Database



Community Wildfire

What is Wildfire Risk

[Wildfire Risk to Communities](#)

[Northeast-Midwest Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal](#)

[FEMA - Wildfire National Risk Index](#)

[AirNow.gov](#)

[DNREC - Air Quality Forecast](#)



Community Wildfire

What is Community Wildfire Planning

NFPA - Firewise USA®

Assess WUI community risk

Community Wildfire Planning Center

NE Wildfire Preparedness Resource Guide

National Interagency Fire Center - Wildfire Mitigation



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What is Defensible Space & Home Hardening

[CAL FIRE - Defensible Space](#)

[CAL FIRE - Home Hardening](#)





Community Wildfire

What Funding Opportunities Exist?

U.S.F.S. - Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program

Funding - Wildfire Risk to Communities

Delaware Department of Agriculture - Wildland Fire Program

Community Wildfire

Delaware Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant

- +50/50 Reimbursement Grant Program
- +Spray, Mow, and Sometimes Prescribed Fire
- +Match can be cash, other community investment and/or volunteer time
- +Spray in Late Summer, Mow in Winter

Community Wildfire

Community Prescribed Fire

Delaware Forest Service Provides This Service Free

- +Used Across the Country to Create Defensible Space
- +Conducted in Spring/Fall; Often Part of a Larger Project
- +Delivery Capacity Limited by Staffing Challenges
- +Spraying and Mowing Are Often Used Instead

Call To Action

There is a huge gap between the demand for prescribed fire services, especially for coastal and bay communities experiencing high fire risk due to invasive phragmites; and the ability of the Delaware Forest Service (DFS) to deliver these critical public safety services. DFS is the only entity with the necessary equipment and the trained, experienced, and qualified staff to complete this highly-skilled work. We are asking The Delaware General Assembly to increase investment in the wildland fire program to protect communities and homes.



Thank You!

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