

NEW JERSEY FOREST FIRE SERVICE

# WILDFIRE REPORT

2025



NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**01** A Message from the Chief

**02** Operational Updates

**03** Prescribed Fire Summary

**04** Wildfire Summary

**05** Major Wildfire Summary

**06** Major Wildfires of 2025

**11** Key Findings

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



Fellow New Jerseyans,

As Chief of the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, I am proud to present New Jersey's first annual Wildfire Report, which provides a comprehensive look at wildfire activity across the state in 2025.

Coming off an extremely busy fall fire season in 2024, 2025 proved to be a significant wildfire year. Our wildland firefighters responded to an increased number of wildfires and spent weeks at a time battling fires, often under challenging weather conditions. Their professionalism, commitment and resilience were on display throughout the year as they worked tirelessly to protect lives, property and natural resources.

The data contained in this report tells an important story. While weather conditions and drought can increase wildfire risk, the overwhelming majority of wildfires in New Jersey are caused by people. Whether through accident, carelessness or even at times intentional acts, human behavior continues to be the primary driver of wildfire activity in our state. Understanding these causes is critical to preventing future fires and reducing their impacts.

This report is intended to serve as both a record of the 2025 fire season and a tool for public education. By sharing information about wildfire trends, causes and response efforts, we hope to help New Jerseyans better understand their role in wildfire prevention. The findings reinforce Smokey Bear's message that has remained true for generations, "only you, can prevent wildfires."

As wildfire risk continues to evolve in a changing climate, the Forest Fire Service remains committed to adapting, educating and protecting the people and wildlands of New Jersey. I hope this report provides valuable insight into our work and encourages all residents and visitors to New Jersey to do their part to reduce the risk of wildfire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Donnelly Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Bill Donnelly Sr.  
Chief & State Firewarden  
New Jersey Forest Fire Service



# OPERATIONAL UPDATES

New Jersey's fiscal year 2026 budget included an additional \$1 million for the Forest Fire Service, funding that is expected to continue in future budgets.

The additional funding was used in several ways, including the addition of six new full-time positions at an estimated cost of \$300,000.

The remaining \$700,000 has supported vehicle and equipment purchases and maintenance, including the purchase of a new bulldozer and related attachments, replacement batteries for existing radios, the building of and outfitting for Type 4 and Type 6 engines, expansion of air base operations, and general vehicle maintenance and upkeep.

The Forest Fire Service also began transitioning from its VHF radio system to a 700 MHz system as part of the New Jersey Interoperability Communications System. The upgrade will enhance communication among Forest Fire Service personnel and improve coordination with state, county and local agencies responding to wildfire emergencies.

In addition, construction began on the Veterans Fire Tower in Jackson Township, replacing the Lakewood Fire Tower, which was decommissioned in 2024. The approximately \$2 million tower will stand 133 feet tall and help protect more than 516,000 residents and nearly 200,000 homes across Ocean County and Monmouth County.



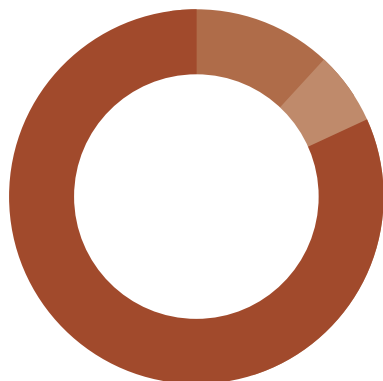
# PRESCRIBED FIRE SUMMARY

Following a prolonged drought in 2024, the Forest Fire Service was limited in its use of prescribed fire in 2025. Only 3,962 acres were treated, a 25-year low.

# 3,962

## ACRES TREATED WITH PRESCRIBED FIRE

### TREATED FUEL TYPES



- Grass (3,247 Acres)
- Marsh (459 Acres)
- Forest (257 Acres)



# WILDFIRE SUMMARY



**1,322**

**WILDFIRES**

20 Year Average: 1,059 Wildfires

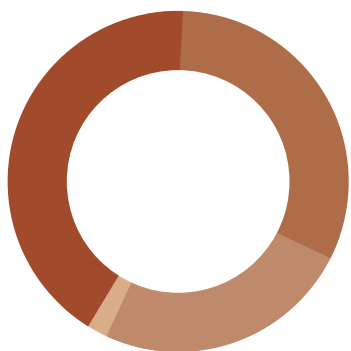


**27,229**

**ACRES BURNED**

20 Year Average: 7,198 Acres Burned

## WILDFIRE FUEL TYPES



- Forest (562)
- Grass (420)
- Brush (309)
- Other (31)

## WILDFIRE CAUSES

**486**

**Equipment**

527.25 acres

*Car fires, equipment malfunction, etc.*

**428**

**Miscellaneous**

9,925.75 acres

*Fireworks, utilities, undetermined, etc.*

**137** **Campfire**

15,263.75 acres

**120** **Debris Burning**

105.5 acres

**62** **Incendiary**

1,377.25 acres

**55**

**Discarded Smoking Materials**

19 acres

**28**

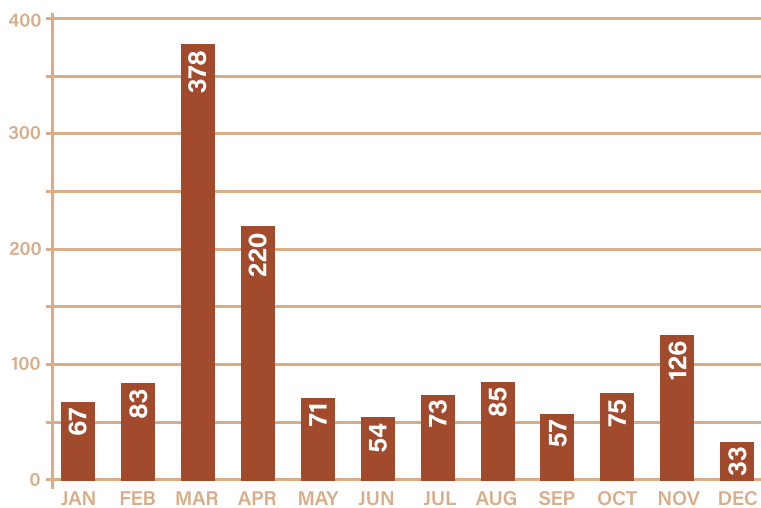
**Children**

9 acres

**6** **Lightning**

1.75 acres

## WILDFIRES BY MONTH



**99.6% OF WILDFIRES IN 2025 WERE HUMAN CAUSED**

# MAJOR WILDFIRE SUMMARY

## NINE MAJOR WILDFIRES

*20 Year Average: 4.75 Major Wildfires Per Year*

### **March 1, 2025 - Fort Mott Wildfire**

*Pennsville Township, Salem County*

### **March 1, 2025 - Poor Farm Wildfire**

*Hopewell Township, Mercer County*

### **March 12, 2025 - Scotland Run Wildfire**

*Franklin Township, Gloucester County*

### **March 22, 2025 - California Branch Wildfire**

*Waterford Township, Camden County*

### **April 18, 2025 - Danny's Wildfire**

*Vineland, Cumberland County*

### **April 22, 2025 - Jones Road Wildfire**

*Ocean & Lacey townships, Ocean County*

### **May 2, 2025 - Route 46 Wildfire**

*Independence Township, Warren County*

### **June 13, 2025 - Mines Spung Wildfire**

*Shamong & Washington townships, Burlington County*

### **Sept. 2, 2025 - Buckabear Wildfire**

*West Milford Township, Passaic County*



**A MAJOR WILDFIRE IS  
DEFINED AS A WILDFIRE  
THAT REACHES OR  
EXCEEDS 100 ACRES.**

# MAJOR WILDFIRES OF 2025

## FORT MOTT WILDFIRE

📍 PENNSVILLE TOWNSHIP, SALEM COUNTY

### MARCH 1, 2025

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED



### 377

ACRES BURNED



### 0

EVACUATIONS



### 0

STRUCTURES THREATENED

### 1

DAY TO 100% CONTAINMENT

### UNDETERMINED

WILDFIRE CAUSE

PROPERTY DAMAGE

None.

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

None.

## POOR FARM WILDFIRE

📍 HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP, MERCER COUNTY

### MARCH 1, 2025

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED



### 274

ACRES BURNED



### 0

EVACUATIONS



### 34

STRUCTURES THREATENED

### 3

DAYS TO 100% CONTAINMENT

### DOWNED UTILITY LINE

WILDFIRE CAUSE

PROPERTY DAMAGE

None.

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

Road closures including Poor Farm Road and Woosamonsa Road.

# MAJOR WILDFIRES OF 2025

## SCOTLAND RUN WILDFIRE

📍 FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP, GLOUCESTER COUNTY

### MARCH 12, 2025

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED

### 1

DAY TO 100% CONTAINMENT



### 191

ACRES BURNED

### UNDETERMINED

WILDFIRE CAUSE



### 0

EVACUATIONS

PROPERTY DAMAGE

None.



### 60

STRUCTURES THREATENED

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

None.

## CALIFORNIA BRANCH WILDFIRE

📍 WATERFORD TOWNSHIP, CAMDEN COUNTY

### MARCH 22, 2025

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED

### 2

DAYS TO 100% CONTAINMENT



### 2,336

ACRES BURNED

### UNDER INVESTIGATION

WILDFIRE CAUSE



### ATSION & GOSHEN POND CAMPGROUNDS

EVACUATIONS

PROPERTY DAMAGE

None.



### 18

STRUCTURES THREATENED

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

Road closures in Wharton State Forest including Raritan Avenue, Old Atsion Road and 5 Mile Crossing.

# MAJOR WILDFIRES OF 2025

## DANNY'S WILDFIRE

VINELAND, CUMBERLAND COUNTY

**APRIL 18, 2025**

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED

**26**

DAYS TO 100% CONTAINMENT



**1,327**

ACRES BURNED

**UNDETERMINED**

WILDFIRE CAUSE



**0**

EVACUATIONS

PROPERTY DAMAGE

None.



**0**

STRUCTURES THREATENED

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

Road closure of Union Road between Route 49 and Mays Landing Road.

## JONES ROAD WILDFIRE

OCEAN & LACEY TOWNSHIPS, OCEAN COUNTY

**APRIL 22, 2025**

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED

**20**

DAY TO 100% CONTAINMENT



**14,949**

ACRES BURNED

**ILLEGAL CAMPFIRE**

WILDFIRE CAUSE



**7,000**

EVACUATIONS

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Destroyed one commercial building, several outbuildings and multiple vehicles.



**1,320**

STRUCTURES THREATENED

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

Major road closures including the Garden State Parkway and Route 9.

Power outages affected 30,000 residents.

# MAJOR WILDFIRES OF 2025

## ROUTE 46 WILDFIRE

📍 INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP, WARREN COUNTY

**MAY 2, 2025**

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED



**102**

ACRES BURNED



**0**

EVACUATIONS



**25**

STRUCTURES THREATENED

**1**

DAY TO 100% CONTAINMENT

**IMPROPER ASH DISPOSAL**

WILDFIRE CAUSE

**PROPERTY DAMAGE**

Destroyed one outbuilding and damaged one outbuilding.

**OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS**

Road closures including Route 46 from Petersburg Road and Johnson Road, Tannery Road and Russling Road.

## MINES SPUNG WILDFIRE

📍 SHAMONG & WASHINGTON TOWNSHIPS, BURLINGTON COUNTY

**JUNE 13, 2025**

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED



**6,610**

ACRES BURNED



**PHILLIP M. COSTELLO  
PREPARATORY ACADEMY**

EVACUATIONS



**5**

STRUCTURES THREATENED

**18**

DAYS TO 100% CONTAINMENT

**UNDER INVESTIGATION**

WILDFIRE CAUSE

**PROPERTY DAMAGE**

Destroyed one outbuilding and one bridge.

**OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS**

Road closures including Tuckerton Road and Bulldozer Road. Closure of the Batona Trail between Carranza Road and Bulldozer Road. Closure of the Lower Forge Wilderness campground.

# MAJOR WILDFIRES OF 2025

## BUCKABEAR WILDFIRE

📍 WEST MILFORD TOWNSHIP, PASSAIC COUNTY

**SEPT. 2, 2025**

DATE WILDFIRE WAS REPORTED

**60**

DAYS TO 100% CONTAINMENT



**200**

ACRES BURNED

**ILLEGAL CAMPFIRE**

WILDFIRE CAUSE



**0**

EVACUATIONS

PROPERTY DAMAGE

None.



**0**

STRUCTURES THREATENED

OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS

Road closure of Clinton Road between Goldfinch Lane & Van Orden Road.



# KEY FINDINGS

**1**

Compared with the 20-year average, 2025 saw a 22% increase in wildfires and a 116% increase in acres burned.

**2**

Human activity caused 99.6% of New Jersey wildfires in 2025, whether accidental or intentional.

**3**

Equipment use was the leading cause, accounting for 486 wildfires which burned 527.25 acres.

**4**

Wildfires stemming from campfires burned the most acreage statewide, totaling 15,263.75 acres.

**5**

44% of major wildfires in 2025 took more than five days to contain, reflecting a growing trend of longer containment times amid prolonged dry conditions.



NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION



[wildfire.nj.gov](http://wildfire.nj.gov)



[@njforestfireservice](https://www.facebook.com/njforestfireservice)



[@njdepforestfire](https://twitter.com/njdepforestfire)



[@newjerseyforestfire](https://www.instagram.com/newjerseyforestfire)