

State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy

# ICYMI: Spring Hill Wildfire in Pinelands Reaches 100 Percent Containment

04/1/2019

*From the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection:*

TRENTON – A wildfire that consumed 11,638 acres of lands in the Pinelands region of New Jersey is fully contained and all roads around the fire are open, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe announced today.

The fire, one of the largest in recent New Jersey history, occurred Saturday in a remote section of Penn State Forest, in Burlington County. The cause is under investigation. Fire officials today announced they have ruled out prescribed burning, power lines and lightning as causes, but seek the public's help in providing information about the fire. All tips will be kept confidential and may be called in to New Jersey State Police Detective Sgt. Shaun Georggson at the Tuckerton barracks, (609) 296-3132.

There were no injuries, property damage or evacuations.

"The Department of Environmental Protection, State Police and our municipal partners did an outstanding job controlling the Spring Hill wildfire to ensure the safety of our residents," Governor Phil Murphy said. "I commend the brave men and women of the Forest Fire Service who responded quickly to minimize the spread of the fire's expansion through the Pinelands."

The fire is 100 percent contained, meaning there is a perimeter around the fire to stop its forward progress. Deeming the fire under control means there is some burning occurring inside the perimeter, but the exterior of the fire should not expand. Firefighters will continue to monitor the situation to make sure that no fire embers escape the perimeter.

Commissioner McCabe surveyed the area by helicopter this morning and met with Forest Fire Service officials for updates.

"The fire is 100 percent contained and the crews on the ground have done terrific work," Commissioner McCabe said. "The Forest Fire Service has been working around the clock all weekend to safeguard the areas around the fire. This fire could have been much worse had it not been for the critical work the Forest Fire Service does throughout the year using prescribed burns to eliminate fuels that can cause wildfires."

Prescribed burns help reduce forest fire risk before prime wildfire season, which is typically in April and May in New Jersey. At that time of year fallen leaves, branches and twigs are abundant, daylength increases, humidity can be low, and it is often warm and windy. Those weather conditions coupled with lack of new leaf growth makes forest debris more susceptible to the drying effects of wind and sun.

"Prescribed burns are one of our most important tools in reducing wildfire risk throughout New Jersey," Forest Fire Service Firewarden Greg McLaughlin said. "In no way did prescribed burning contribute to this fire, which remains under investigation."

The Cedar Bridge and Apple Pie Hill fire towers detected smoke Saturday afternoon and immediately began dispatching units to fight the blaze, which spread quickly. A combination of firefighting techniques and changing weather conditions throughout the weekend helped firefighters reach containment status.

The State Fire Marshal, the State Park Police, New Jersey State Police and Burlington County Prosecutor's Office

are assisting the Forest Fire Service with the investigation.

To learn more about wildfires in New Jersey, steps to protect property, and other resources, visit [www.njwildfire.org](http://www.njwildfire.org).  
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[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

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[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

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