



## Newsletter - March 2018

The England and Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF) newsletters aim to keep the wildfire community in England and Wales informed of key wildfire activities, events, debates and priorities. This is the first newsletter of 2018 and it presents information about some key events that took place in late 2017 and early 2018.

### Joint Wildfire Forum Meeting held in November 2017

The EWWF has been extremely busy since the last newsletter was published in July 2017. In November 2017, the EWWF held a joint wildfire forum meeting to discuss current wildfire issues and priorities. The meeting was held in Bournemouth in conjunction with the UK Wildfires 2017 Conference and was attended by members of the EWWF, Scottish Wildfire Forum, National Fire Chiefs Council Wildfire Group, Northern Ireland Wildfire Stakeholders Forum and a representative from the Republic of Ireland. During the meeting, the forums committed to close joint working and collaboration on wildfire issues and confirmed their intention to meet regularly in the future to help progress wildfire issues and projects in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. Also present were colleagues from the Netherlands National Wildfire Project who also agreed to work closely with the wildfire groups in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

[Click here](#) to read a copy of the meeting agenda.



### EWWF Meetings in 2018

Members of the EWWF will meet at least two times during 2018. The dates and locations for these meetings are as follows:

- 24th April 2018— Wrexham, North Wales
- 12th September 2018—Northumberland, northern England

Further information concerning these meetings will be circulated to EWWF members and will soon be uploaded onto the [EWWF website](#).

## Wildfire Incidents in 2018... so far

On 28th February 2018, the Natural Hazards Partnership issued the first Daily Assessment of the year with an elevated risk of wildfires. Windy conditions and low humidity levels were the causes of this elevated risk in south-western Britain.

There have also already been a number of wildfires already this year in England and Wales. Details of a couple of the largest incidents are provided below for information. Thanks to Andy Elliott and David Hodge for providing the reports.

### **Dorset—Report provided by Andy Elliott, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service have attended 3 wildfires so far during 2018.

The largest wildfire during 2018 so far was at Povington and Grangh Heaths (Five Tips Ranges). The fire burned an area of 19,800 metres square and was extinguished by 2 fire appliances, 4x heavy off-road vehicles, 1x Unimog and 2 x L4ts.

### **West Sussex—Report provided by David Hodge, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Iping Common is an area of lowland heath in West Sussex and is mostly owned by the Sussex Wildlife Trust. The incident commenced at 11:25 when a controlled burn of residues from a recent scrub reduction programme by the Sussex Wildlife Trust got out of control driven by easterly winds.

The initial Incident Commander requested the attendance of 8 appliances and I was initially responded as "liaison officer" as Hampshire FRS had mobilised more than 3 resources to the incident. Upon my arrival, I was requested by the Incident Commander to become the Wildfire Tactical Advisor. I had worked previously with the West Sussex Incident Commander at a South East England Wildfire Group exercise and this request was formalised and processed through our respective Fire Controls.

The incident was a rapidly moving wildfire of approximately 22 hectares which threatened a number of properties to the western edge. It was bordered to the North by the A272 which remained open during the course of the incident. Following the request for support by the initial IC, there were 8 appliances, 5 Landrovers, 1 Unimog and 2 water carriers as well as Command Support in attendance. A drone was also supplied by Surrey Search and Rescue for aerial observation of the incident.

The fire was stopped by personnel (FRS and Wildlife Trust) using beaters supported by off road FRS vehicles. 2 of these vehicles had high pressure fogging units which were also utilised for fire suppression. A small quantity of Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) was also used. The stop message was given by the IC at 15:17 with the last vehicle leaving the incident at 17:22. A re-inspection was conducted the following morning to confirm there were no remaining hotspots.

**NB.** CAFS is used in firefighting to deliver fire retardant foam for the purpose of extinguishing a fire or protecting unburned areas.

## Feedback requested for a new Wildfire Reporting Tool

As part of the [MoorLIFE2020 Project](#), the Moors for the Future Partnership is developing a wildfire reporting system which will allow rangers, land managers, fire services and others to record wildfires quickly and easily. Although the proposal states that the system will be developed for the project area (South Pennines Special Area of Conservation), Charlotte Kenyon and her colleagues are looking to develop a national system in collaboration with Dorset County Council and Natural England.

Currently data on wildfire sizes and the areas and boundaries of wildfire incidents are not routinely and consistently mapped and recorded. An online wildfire recording system will enable the collection of valuable data that is not currently being collected or collated. The data will significantly improve the evidence base as it will provide data on wildfire boundaries that will directly inform fire management plans. This data is also valuable to the wildfire research community for modelling wildfire risk and impact and providing evidence based solutions to the threat of wildfire.

Click the following link to access the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DXR33PB>

Please submit survey responses **by 6th April 2018**.

If you have any queries about this work or survey, please contact Charlotte Kenyon at the Moors for the Future Partnership at [Charlotte.Kenyon@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Kenyon@peakdistrict.gov.uk)



**Register Now!!!**

## **Wildfire Webinars in April and May 2018**



The Moors for the Future Partnership is coordinating two wildfire webinars to showcase international research and collaborative working to tackle their devastating effects. Europarc Atlantic Isles is hosting both the webinars. Find out more and register below:

### **WEBINAR 1—Rising from the ashes – wildfire conversation, research and prevention in the UK and beyond**

**12-1pm on Thursday 26th April: 2018**

Two months after the Moors for the Future Partnership started, a huge fire swept across Bleaklow moor, sending plumes of thick smoke across Greater Manchester, forcing Manchester airport to close. The fire burnt seven hectares of moorland -equivalent of 14 football or hockey pitches -killing everything in its path from vegetation to livestock. This fire epitomised the task ahead and Bleaklow became the focus of the initial restoration works. Since then, the Partnership has undertaken conservation and science work on a wide range of moorland sites across the Peak District and South Pennines that stretch from Leek in Staffordshire to the River Aire in Yorkshire. An introduction by a member of the Moors for the Future Partnership team will be followed by two other speakers on the wildfire subject.

Register your place to attend this webinar at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5534488924357496578>

### **WEBINAR 2—Adding fuel to the fire: the pivotal role of Fire Operations Groups (FOGs) in wildfire fighting**

**12-1pm on Friday 4th May 2018**

This second webinar in the wildfire series will showcase the power and importance of partnership work in attending wildfires, and dealing with their aftermaths. Robert Stacey from Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Secretary of the Northumberland Fire Group, will talk about improving understanding of wildfires internationally. Robert's presentation will be followed by two other speakers on the wildfire subject.

Register your place to attend this webinar at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/#register/4623830513587608067>

For further information about the webinars, please contact Rebecca Cassidy, Senior Communications Officer at the Moors for the Future Partnership at [Rebecca.Cassidy@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Cassidy@peakdistrict.gov.uk)

# UK Wildfires 2017

## Conference a success!

More than 130 delegates from 10 countries attend the UK Wildfires Conference 2017 in Bournemouth. The conference was opened by the Chief Fire Officer of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and ran for two days in October 2017. The conference theme was 'Wildfire resilience in a UK context'. During the conference, delegates were treated to 17 engaging presentations from a wide range of international speakers. There were also two workshop sessions where delegates were encouraged to discuss wildfire resilience at the home, community and landscape scales on day one, then on day 2, they were asked to consider who the stakeholders are and what barriers and opportunities exist to achieving wildfire resilience. A booklet was created during the conference that outlines the findings of the two workshops. This booklet "Wildfire resilience in a UK context" can be downloaded by [clicking here](#). The booklet was illustrated by Laura Sorvala who also created a number of graphic interpretations of the presentations. These can also be found on the [conference website](#).

The conference was hosted by the Urban Heaths Partnership (UHP) and Dorset County Council on behalf of the England and Wales Wildfire Forum. Conference organiser, Andy Elliott, said "Dorset County Council and UHP were delighted to host the conference. The international organising committee worked very hard to create a wonderful programme of speakers. Locally, the UHP staff and GIS team turned out in force to ensure that everything ran smoothly over the two days of the conference. I would like to thank all those that assisted in the running of the conference, the speakers for their high quality presentations and the delegates for their attendance and interest."

Along with the conference, the delegates were also treated to a trade show, hosted by Fire Times magazine and a display of academic posters from around the world. Both of these added a great deal of value and extra interest to the conference.

UK Wildfires Conference 2017 was very successful. The venue and format for the UK Wildfires Conference 2019 is still under discussion, but the organisers of the 2017 wish the new team every success and we look forward to joining you in 2019!



## Wildfire Exercise in South East England in October 2017

Exercise: Corsican Pine on 11th October 2017 was hosted by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Forestry Commission England and Ashdown Forest Rangers. The exercise involved six Fire and Rescue Services and four land management organisations. It tested Wildfire Support Officers and land managers with a fictional major wildfire incident.

Forestry Commission along with Natural England and Ashdown Forest Ranger staff helped Wildfire Support Officers, including Wildfire Tactical Advisors, to develop Wildfire Suppression Plans within a two hour period and presented these to a Fire and Rescue Service Tactical Coordination Group within a realistic incident situation.

The exercise was judged a significant success and has helped raise awareness of further training opportunities and joint working between the forestry sector and emergency services.

Lessons learnt and experience gained can be applied to other forestry emergency management situations, such as pest & disease outbreak/infestations, storm damage etc.

For more details please contact Rob Gazzard, Forestry Commission England ([Rob.Gazzard@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Rob.Gazzard@forestry.gsi.gov.uk))



# Prescribed Burning Workshop in South Wales in February 2018

## Report by Station Manager Craig Hope, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) hosted a wildfire practitioners seminar from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018. 35 people attended the event representing a number of Fire and Rescue Services from around the UK, the Forestry Commission, Brecon Beacons National Park and Natural Resources Wales. (NRW) There were also participants from the Republic of Ireland, Spain and Portugal.

The purpose of the workshop was for SWFRS to receive critical feedback on their prescribed and operational burning course, discuss how to develop a burn boss/burn supervisor course for SWFRS and to showcase equipment and ideas and to refresh partnerships.

The event started on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> with a welcome meal and introduction from ACFO Andy Thomas and presentations by Craig Hope and Becky Davies from NRW.

Due to poor weather, the timetable had been kept flexible so Tuesday saw a practical firefighting helicopter display and lecture. Attendees then planned for a night navigation exercise. Tuesday afternoon was spent on the Brecon Beacon National Park carrying out straw burning exercises before moving onto molinia grass. Tuesday evening was spent carrying out a night exercise with groups navigating from point to point.



Wednesday was spent in the classroom going through the south wales theory of burning course which was well received and provoked great discussion, the evening was then spent watching a new film just released in Spain showing the traumatic events around a firefighter death in Madrid where a firefighter was struck by rocks that had been loosened by a fire and even though wearing a helmet the injuries were fatal. This again provoked discussion as the ground was very similar to our post-industrial landscape.

Thursday morning was spent having a UK wildfire tactical advisor meeting and debriefing the seminar.

The seminar was an excellent success and very worthwhile for everyone who attended. It will stand SWFRS in good stead to move on with future training courses.

For further information about the event, please contact Craig Hope at [c-hope@southwales-fire.gov.uk](mailto:c-hope@southwales-fire.gov.uk)

# Photographs of the Prescribed Burning Workshop in South Wales in February 2018





## Wildfire Events in 2018

There are a number of wildfire events that are currently planned for delivery in 2018. Here is a summary of those identified so far:

- **“South and West Wales Networking Event” held on Thursday 15th March 2018**  
Venue: South Wales FRS HQ, Llantrisant  
Key contact: Craig Hope, South Wales FRS ([c-hope@southwales-fire.gov.uk](mailto:c-hope@southwales-fire.gov.uk))  
Please note a report on this event will be included in the next EWWF newsletter.



- **Northumberland Fire Group’s “Planning for Wildfire” Event — date TBC**  
Target audience: aimed at local landowners, land managers and agencies  
Venue: Northumberland  
Key contact: Rob Stacey, Northumberland FRS  
([robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk))



## Forthcoming Wildfire Exercises in 2018 (all dates tbc)

There are a number of wildfire exercises currently being planned for delivery in England and Wales during 2018 (specific dates to be confirmed):

- **Exercise Corsican Pine — South East England**  
Date: 4th April 2018  
Key contact: Rob Gazzard, Forestry Commission England  
([Rob.Gazzard@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Rob.Gazzard@forestry.gsi.gov.uk))
- **Operation Alpha — Peak District**  
Date: TBC  
Key contact: Tony Morgan, Derbyshire FRS ([tmorgan@derbys-fire.gov.uk](mailto:tmorgan@derbys-fire.gov.uk))
- **Cross-border Wildfire Exercise (Northumberland/Scotland)**  
Date: TBC  
Key contacts:  
Rob Stacey, Northumberland FRS ([robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk))  
Bruce Farquharson, Scottish FRS ([Bruce.Farquharson@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:Bruce.Farquharson@firescotland.gov.uk))

## What is the EWWF & how can it help?

The EWWF is a voluntary strategic body, independent of government, which has been created to expand and share knowledge and understanding of wildfires. The overall aim of the EWWF is to reduce the harmful impact of wildfires by promoting joint working and collaboration.

You can find out more about the EWWF on its website at <http://ewwf.northumberland.gov.uk>

Most importantly, the EWWF is here to help support organisations and individuals in England and Wales with wildfire-related issues, queries and problems. The EWWF also helps connect wildfire practitioners by sharing information. Do you have a query or problem and would you like some advice or guidance? Are you organising a wildfire event? The EWWF can help you by trying to find an appropriate person or organisation to provide advice or by sharing share information about your event to a large audience of people with an interest in wildfire?

## EWWF Management Team



**Chair**  
**Simon Thorp**  
Consultant at the Heather  
Trust



**Vice Chair**  
**Andy Thomas**  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
at South Wales Fire and  
Rescue Service



**Secretary**  
**Rob Stacey**  
Wildfire Project Officer at  
Northumberland Fire and  
Rescue Service

## Please let us know what you think

Thank you for reading this newsletter. We hope you found it interesting.

We value any feedback and will use it to improve how we communicate and share information in the future.

Write to the EWWF c/o Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service,  
West Hartford Business Park, Cramlington, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE23 3JP

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