

Newsletter - December 2016

This is the first newsletter issued by the England and Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF). The intention is to produce at least two newsletters each year to keep the wildfire community in England and Wales informed of key activities, events, debates and priorities.

Management



Chair
Simon Thorp

Director of the Heather Trust.



Vice Chair
Andy Thomas

Assistant Chief Fire Officer at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.



Secretary
Robert Stacey

Project Officer at Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.

EWWF Background

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.

The EWWF meets twice each year to discuss wildfire issues of national importance, and the Forum works closely with other wildfire-interest groups, such as local and regional Fire Groups, the Scottish Wildfire Forum and the Chief Fire Officers Association Wildfire Group. In between meetings the management team keep in regular contact and work takes place in task groups to produce reports for the EWWF on key issues.

Key EWWF activities during 2016

Production of new Wildfire Risk Assessment Guidance –

A new guidance document is being drafted to guide landowners and managers when assessing the level of wildfire risk on their land. Once published, this guidance will be provided to Countryside Stewardship Scheme applicants. The EWWF will investigate the wider use of the guidance by other stakeholders to help improve wildfire prevention and preparedness in England and Wales.

Government meetings -

The EWWF Chair and Vice Chair met with officials from the Home Office and Welsh Government in October 2016 to discuss how the EWWF can actively contribute to key debates and policy-level discussions on wildfire issues.

Engagement with local and regional fire groups –

The EWWF has established links to 18 local and regional fire groups to establish a more cohesive network of wildfire-interest groups. Local and regional fire groups in England and Wales are invited to share information and issues with the EWWF.

Forum Meetings -

Meetings were held in Cardiff on June 7th and in Bakewell on 9th November

Future Activity

EWWF Meetings

- 8th June 2017 – London Fire Brigade HQ

The next wildfire conference is due to be held towards the end of 2017. It is England's turn to host this and the EWWF will be leading the development of plans for the conference with support from members, the Scottish Wildfire Forum, and the Chief Fire Officers' Association Wildfire Group. Further information will be published soon.

Wildfire Events

This section of the newsletter provides information about wildfire events that have happened recently or which will take place in the near future. We hope to keep you informed of what is going on so you can find out about things that might be of interest to you.

Publication of National Guidance for Wildfires – New national guidance for wildfires was published in April 2016. This document has been produced by the National Operational Guidance Programme and is aimed primarily at the UK Fire and Rescue Services, although other organisations will also find the guidance useful. EWWF members were directly involved in the production of the guidance and contributed to the public consultation process. To view the guidance, visit www.ukfrs.com/guidance/published-guidance

Exercise Scots Pine in Berkshire – The South East England Wildfire Group organised a multiagency wildfire exercise in Berkshire on 5th October 2016. The exercise involved live fire exercises and partners from Royal Berkshire FRS, Surrey FRS, West Sussex FRS, East Sussex FRS, Dorset and Wiltshire FRS, Ashdown Forest Rangers, Crown Estate and the Forestry Commission. Contacts: Jon Singleton, Royal Berkshire FRS - singletonj@rbfrs.co.uk or Rob Gazzard, Forestry Commission - rob.gazzard@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

“Planning for Wildfire” Event in Northumberland - The Northumberland Fire Group (NFG) hosted a very successful “Planning for Wildfire” event on 19th October 2016 at Elsdon Village Hall in Northumberland. The event provided advice and guidance to farmers, land managers, gamekeepers and local agencies on how to prepare and plan for wildfires. To find out more, contact Rob Stacey, Secretary of the NFG - robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk.

“International Congress on Prescribed Burning in Spain – The International Congress on Prescribed Fires will be held on 31st January to 3rd February 2017 in Barcelona, Spain. Further information - <http://www.paucostafoundation.org/ICoPFires/>.

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