

Connecticut Rural Fire Council Holds ISO Workshop

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry



Fire & Aviation Management helps deliver workshop

Description: In July 2005, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry (CTDEP) and the Connecticut Rural Fire Council (CTRFC) conducted a survey of volunteer fire departments in Connecticut to determine their rural fire and wildland urban interface concerns. The results of the survey indicated that key issues were related to water supply and access to structures. These issues could be addressed by educating key community officials and volunteer fire departments, and by addressing the planning and zoning of communities. One of the barriers to improving rural fire protection can be a lack of understanding on the part of communities and volunteer fire departments of all the resources which are available and how to use them – the “tools” in the toolbox. The CTRFC and the CTDEP decided to hold a workshop which would bring together the various resources while at the same time addressing some of the issues raised in the survey.

Key Issues:

- The Insurance Services Office (ISO) administers the Public Protection Classification (PPC) Rating System which evaluates a community’s fire protection capability: communication system, fire department, and water supply system. A community’s PPC rating can be used to determine the rates of insurance for both commercial and private property and is an indicator of the community’s preparedness.
- This tool, along with other services provided by ISO, can be useful to volunteer fire departments seeking to improve their rural fire protection capabilities.
- It is important for volunteer fire departments to understand all the tools and resources which are available to them to improve fire protection in rural and wildland urban interface communities.

Accomplishments:

- Connecticut’s Rural Fire Council and Department of Environmental Protection jointly sponsored a workshop in November 2006 for fire chiefs and local officials to learn more about the ISO’s PPC Rating System.
- More than 70 people from throughout Connecticut attended the workshop.
- Participants also discussed various programs to fund and support the improvement of rural fire protection services: Volunteer Fire Assistance (U.S. Forest Service); Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program (Federal Emergency Management Administration); and USDA Rural Development program.
- Fire and Aviation Management provided assistance to the CTDEP and CTRFC to coordinate the workshop.

Future Direction:

- The workshop format can be replicated in other locations. The Missouri Department of Conservation has indicated they may want to hold a similar workshop.



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