



Fire Management

Quick Facts

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Program treated more than 71,000 acres throughout the Service's eight-state Midwest Region in 2003.
- The Rural Fire Assistance Program is a national program designed to enhance safety and the capabilities of rural fire departments that provide fire protection to lands managed by agencies within the U.S. Department of Interior.
- The Rural Fire Assistance Program began in 2001.
- In 2003, the Midwest Region granted \$353,000 between 55 fire departments.

Current Status

A branch within the Division of Refuges, the Fish and Wildlife Service's fire program protects communities while restoring and managing wildlife habitat. Service staff work with other agencies within the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture and with state and local agencies to implement the National Fire Plan.

In 2003, the Service treated 22,270 Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) acres and 49,120 non-WUI acres using both prescribed fire and mechanical treatment on national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts throughout the Midwest Region. In addition, Service firefighters helped suppress 124 wildfires on Service lands. The Service also provided financial assistance to rural fire departments for purchasing equipment and supplies and conducting training and prevention activities.

Although a primary reason for conducting prescribed burns is reducing hazardous fuel loads and mitigating WUI areas, the Service also burns for resource management purposes. Prescribed fire is used to restore and enhance native prairie, maintain desired stages of plant succession, control noxious weeds, and improve habitat for ground-nesting birds.

In addition to regional staff in the Twin Cities, the Service has fire management officers stationed throughout the region to assist field stations with treatment and suppression and coordinate with state agencies. FMOs are located at Big Stone Refuge (MN), Leopold Wetland Management District (WI), Mark



Hot Topics:

In May 2004, a lightning-caused wildfire at Big Stone Refuge (MN) was prevented from spreading onto private land due to a Service prescribed burn the week before.

Oak savannas at Necedah Refuge (WI) and Sherburne Refuge (MN) are showcase examples of habitat restoration maintained by fire.

In June 2004, Neal Smith Refuge, outside Des Moines, Iowa, showcased its fire program for state, local and federal attendees of the 35th Annual Meeting of Northeast Fire Supervisors.

Twain Refuge Complex (IL) and the Mio Ranger Station (MI).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides training to firefighters from federal and state agencies. In the past year the Service hosted approximately 1,000 hours of training.

2003 Midwest Region Fire Treatment (in acres)

