

New Hampshire Chapter report for 2020

The New Hampshire Chapter began 2020 with 7 Plus and 15 regular members for a total of 22. During the year two regular members renewed as Plus members; three new folks joined during the year, one as regular and two as Plus members so at the end of the year there are 11 Plus members and 14 regular, for a total of 23, up three from the previous year. There were no FFLA activities this year due to the chicom covid.

The State had 15 fire towers available for detection and used some of them later in the spring and again in September on class 3 and higher fire danger days. For the third year in a row winter held on making spring late to arrive so fire activity in the Spring was not as severe as in some years previously. Rainfall during late spring and summer was far less than normal resulting in drought conditions developing and worsening across the State; this led to summer and autumn fires. During 2020 New Hampshire had 215 fires which burned 84 acres; all were human caused except for 9 fires which burned 4 acres; much higher numbers than the previous year due to dry conditions. On the White Mountain National Forest, we ended the year with 37 fires which burned less than four acres. Two of these fires were caused by lightning but most of the others were camp fires in illegal locations not properly extinguished and most were very close to water. After covid travel restrictions relaxed the State experienced a great influx of visitors many of whom were able to start camp fires but were unable or unwilling to extinguish them. This caught up with the Forest in late August and we chased fires for over a month before rains mitigated the dry ground conditions. Both the State and the Forest issued fire bans for the first time in many years. The White Mountain National Forest did no prescribed burns this year due to covid concerns.

In early June a contractor for the State removed the fire tower at Hyland Hill which had not been used since 2005 and was deteriorating and victim of vandalism. Only one tower footing remains at the site and it is likely the contractor scrapped the steel work. I have not heard whether the tower cab at Milan Hill was replaced this year or if it was delayed.

Chris Haartz