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\$1M Grant Awarded For Wildfire Prevention Near NJ Military Bases



Jon Craig 03/03/2023 2:06 p.m.



A prescribed burn Photo Credit: *New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection*

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is set to receive \$995,000 from the U.S. Department of Defense to reduce wildfire risk near military facilities, the DEP announced.

The federal grant targets areas surrounding Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Warren Grove Gunnery Range in Bass River State Forest, Naval Weapons Station Earle and Sea Girt National Guard Training Facility, the DEP said in a press statement.

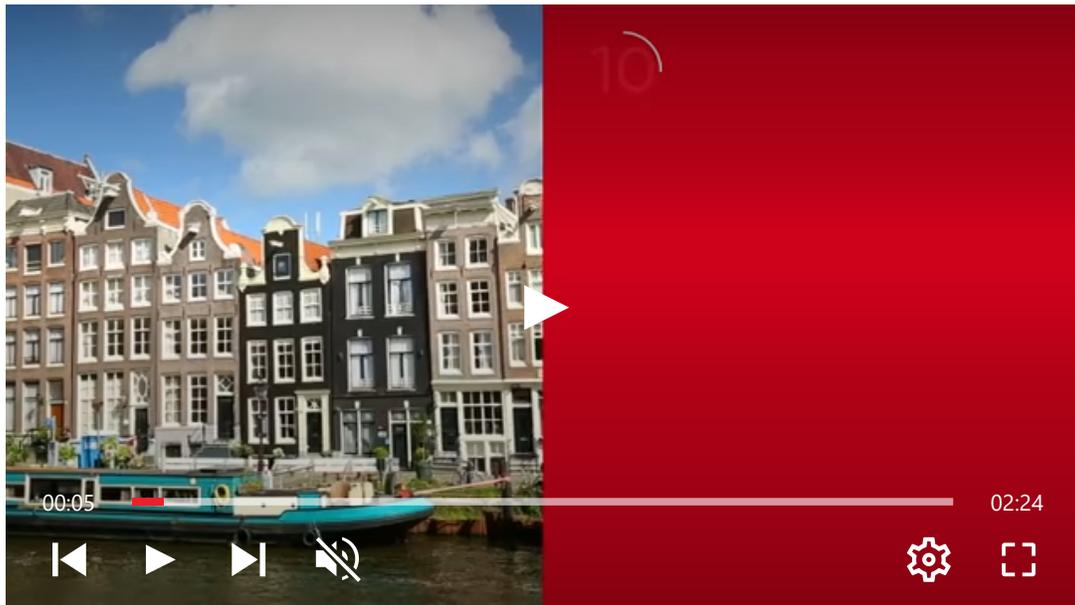
The New Jersey Forest Fire Service responded to 1,175 wildfires that burned 12,664 acres last year, according to the DEP.

When a wildfire encroaches a military installation, operations at the properties must be suspended, impacting various base and range activities and missions, the DEP said.

The New Jersey grant is one of 13 projects funded nationally with \$24 million from the DOD's 2023 Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Challenge Program

Warmer springs and hotter, drier summers may lengthen New Jersey's wildfire season and increase the occurrence of large fires, according to Nick Angarone, New Jersey's chief climate resilience officer.

"This REPI Challenge award supports the New Jersey Forest Fire Service in some of its most critical wildfire mitigation and protection projects in the state," Angarone said.



File photo

New Jersey Forest Fire Service

Construction of a "firebreak" at Warren Grove Gunnery Range is expected to begin in April 2023. A firebreak is an open area – a strip of land, for example – in which vegetation or other forest debris is removed to slow or prevent the spread of a wildfire.

Firebreak work will consist of reducing hazardous debris on a strip of land bordering Allen and Oswego roads, in Bass River Township, Burlington County, and in Egg Harbor Township, Ocean County. By doing this, firefighters may more safely control the forward progress of wildfires that may start in this area, the DEP said. The firebreak will also provide improved access to fight any fires that may occur in the area.



A prescribed burn at Stafford Forge Wildlife Management Area on March 5, 2022.]

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Additional REPI funds will go toward the ongoing Greenwood Triangle Forest Fuels Maintenance Project in Brendan T. Byrne State Forest and Greenwood Forest Wildlife Management area. This project entails firebreak maintenance and underbrush removal to protect residents in Burlington and Ocean counties and to create safe conditions for firefighters during wildfire battles.

"The Murphy Administration is grateful to our federal partners for this grant funding, which will help us mitigate the increased risk of wildfires that are one of the many adverse impacts of climate change in New Jersey," state DEP Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette said in the press statement.

For more information about this year's **REPI recipients**, **click here** (<http://www.repi.mil/Buffer-Projects/REPI-Challenge>).

Learn more about the DEP's Bureau of Climate Resilience Planning at www.nj.gov/dep/bcrp/ (<http://www.nj.gov/dep/bcrp/>) and other climate resilience **initiatives** by **clicking here**. (<http://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/resilience.html>)

For more about wildfires in New Jersey, steps to protect property and other resources, visit www.njwildfire.org (<http://www.njwildfire.org>).

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