

Whiting, Joint Base to be protected from wildfires by five-mile firebreak

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Whiting, Joint Base to be protected from wildfires by five-mile firebreak

The Department of Defense will spend \$380,000 to build a five-mile long firebreak near Whiting. Here's why it's important.

Amanda Oglesby, Asbury Park Press Published 5:01 a.m. ET Oct. 21, 2020 | Updated 3:16 p.m. ET Oct. 22, 2020

Pine Barrens residents can't stop wildfire from happening, but they can make their homes less likely to ignite during a forest fire. Here's how. Asbury Park Press

Above: *How to protect your home from wildfire*

MANCHESTER - More wildfire protection is coming to the Roosevelt City section of Whiting, along the densely forested western side of Manchester, due to a \$380,000 project by the U.S. Department of Defense.

The project will build a five-mile long firebreak, or stretch of land cleared of vegetation, in the forest between the Roosevelt City neighborhood and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, said U.S. Rep. Chris Smith R-N.J., whose Fourth Congressional District includes Manchester.

Whiting lies within the Pine Barrens, where dry, sandy soils and dense underbrush contribute to the region being one of the most fire-prone on the East Coast.

"This project protects America's only Army-Navy-Air Force joint base — the second largest employer in New Jersey — and the missions it performs," Smith said in a news

release. "More importantly, it also protects the residents of Whiting. There are many homes and businesses concentrated in Whiting which will be better protected through this project."

Over 10,000 acres caught fire at the Penn State Forest in Burlington County, leaving behind charred remains of trees. Drone footage coordinated with New Jersey Forest Fire Service. Asbury Park Press

Environment: California Camp wildfire is a warning to fire-prone NJ Pinelands

The funding is part of \$1.9 million in Department of Defense spending in New Jersey for "Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration." Other projects funded by the program are:

- \$500,000 for shoreline protection that will fund an oyster castle groin in Barnegat Bay near Island Beach State Park;
- \$500,000 for storm surge protection at Naval Weapons Station Earle in Middletown;
- More than \$100,000 for storm surge protection in Keansburg, near Earle;
- \$300,000 to protect forests from wildfire around the New Jersey National Guard Warren Grove Gunnery Range. In 2007, a fire that started at the range consumed more than 17,000 acres of forest and destroyed five homes in Barnegat;
- \$150,000 in storm water management infrastructure around the Lockheed Martin plant in Burlington County that produces AEGIS technology for the U.S. Navy.



Smoke from the Route 72 brush fire an be seen in Toms River. Kala Kachmar

[Fullscreen](#)



Smoke can be seen from the Route 72 brush fire on Hooper Ave. in Toms River near the Brick border. Kala Kachmar

[Fullscreen](#)



Forest fire as seen from West Bay Ave and Route 72 in Barnegat on Sunday morning on March 31, 2019. Peter Ackerman

[Fullscreen](#)



Smoke can be seen from the Route 72 brush fire on Hooper Ave. in Toms River near the Brick border. Kala Kachmar

[Fullscreen](#)



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The forest fire in a remote area of the Pine Barrens of Penn State Forest in Burlington County as seen from southwestern Ocean County in Barnegat on Saturday, March 30, 2019. Courtesy of Ocean County Sheriff's Office

Manchester Mayor Ken Palmer said in a statement that he welcomed the added fire protection for Whiting, the township's most heavily wooded neighborhood.

Earlier: Whiting brush fire consumes 99 acres

"Certainly, any safety measure to assist in this area is appreciated and extremely useful," he said.

Roughly 7,000 acres of forest burn each year in New Jersey due to wildfire, according to the state Forest Fire Service.

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