



Northumberland Fire Group

Summer 2009

Update... The Northumberland Fire Group (NFG) will begin its fourth year of operations this summer as wildfires burned throughout the spring and into summer in Northumberland, and amidst expectations that wildfire risk in the UK will continue to increase as a result of global climate change.

Over the past three years the fire group has worked hard to prevent and prepare for wildfire by delivering a wildfire awareness campaign, fire plans, and wildfire fighting training courses. However, wildfires are still very much a concern today, and will continue to be so in the future. Wildfires on the Otterburn Ranges and at Ros Castle highlight the specific need to continue to build relationships between fire group members, increase access to shared equipment, and prepare estate/farm fire plans.

In its third year the NFG focused on increasing equipment share amongst its members, thanks largely in part to the MOD (Otterburn) and Landmarc who purchased an Argocat to be used for wildfire suppression in Northumberland. The NFG also delivered live fire training exercises, published a wildfire standard operating procedures handbook, and completed new estate fire plans.

NFG ARGOCAT

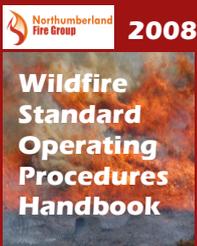
The Ministry of Defence and their land agent Landmarc, based at Otterburn Camp, have made an Argocat available to the NFG to help fight fires in Northumberland. The Argocat, together with a fully qualified Landmarc operator, are stationed at Otterburn Camp, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Argocat can be requested by the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service to aid in the suppression of a wildfire anywhere in Northumberland. An operational agreement has been drawn up between the NFRS and Landmarc / MOD. The addition of the Argocat gives a significant boost to the fire group's shared resources, and is an excellent example of the dedication of its members to share



*NFG Argocat
Gifted by MOD & Landmarc*

WILDFIRE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

The NFG Wildfire Standard Operating Procedures Handbook is intended to be used by land managers and the NFRS as a guide for conducting wildfire suppression operations. It provides specific "wildfire" checklists to conduct an initial attack risk analysis, safety analysis and situational briefing. It also provides guidelines for working together on a wildfire and staying safe on a fire ground. It is meant to be used by incident commanders, agency representatives and team leaders, but also provides practical advice and guidelines for any person working on a wildfire ground. Copies of the SOPs Handbook will be distributed at the next NFG meeting and are available upon request by NFG members. Get in touch with Ethan Bigelow at Northwoods to receive your copy today!



Wildfire SOP Handbook



WILDFIRE 2009

The UK's national wildfire conference, Wildfire 2009 was held on June 16th and 17th in the New Forest, Hampshire. A summary of topics

covered at the conference will be provided at the next NFG meeting in July. Key topics included:

- UK Wildfire Strategy
- Arson and Wildfire
- Partnership Working and Wildfire Groups
- Wildfire Training — Eurofire and the National Wildfire Forums' Training Working Group
- Summary of FIRES Seminars — Interdisciplinary Research on Ecosystem Services
- Land Management to Reduce the Risk of Wildfire
- Environmental Impacts of Wildfire

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NFG LIVE WILDFIRE EXERCISE

The NFG recently held a practical wildfire training day where participants had the opportunity to practice controlled burning and wildfire suppression techniques. The training day doubled as a site preparation day for the NFG's Live Wildfire Exercise. Although the actual live wildfire exercise was cancelled due to weather, participants gained invaluable knowledge of "fire use" techniques that could be used to combat a real wildfire.



FIRE PLANS

The NFG is continuing its campaign to cover all of Northumberland with a standard NFG fire plan. To date 120,000+ hectares of Northumberland are covered by an NFG fire plan. Get in touch if you have any fire plan updates, including contact details, additional equipment, an updated estate map, etc. Northwoods will be conducting an annual review of all NFG fire plans to ensure your fire plan is up to date.

