



Northumberland Fire Group

Spring 2011

Update... A hot, dry spring has led to Northumberland experiencing a number of recent wildfire incidents. Many landowners expressed concern about conditions on the ground leading up to the Easter weekend, and the Met Office Fire Severity Index remained high for many parts of the county over the May bank holiday period. The Northumberland Fire Group (NFG) has been liaising with key regional stakeholders; the Fire and Rescue Service have been on high and prepared for vegetation fires. Northumberland National Park are running Wildfire Awareness DVDs in visitor centres with staff, rangers and volunteers able to advise on the risk. The Landmarc fogger is available on standby and activity to promote awareness has included several recent press releases with continued lobbying against Chinese lanterns. The trend so far this year sits amongst wider concerns that wildfire risk in the UK will continue to rise as a result of record breaking temperatures.

NFG works to enhance local resilience to wildfire through faster responses and more efficient fire suppression operations, alongside awareness raising and promotion of (sharing) best practise. Training activities continue, and a new Wildfire Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Handbook has been published. We are currently conducting a review of all Fire Plans to bring records up to date and aim to further increase coverage of Northumberland's at risk areas. If you are a land owner or manager you will benefit from Fire Group membership. Contact us to find out more.

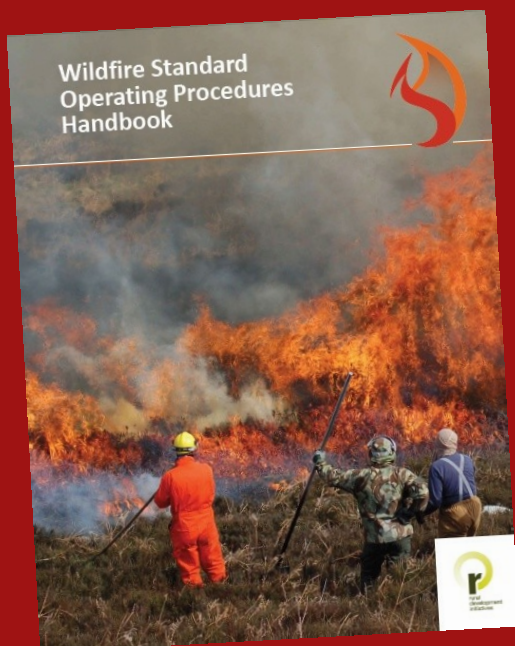


Hot off the press!

New Wildfire Standard Operating Procedures Handbook

Over the past few years several wildfire groups have requested their own version of the SOP booklet, based on the pioneering Northumberland publication. Rather than reinventing the wheel, RDI have put together a standard SOP for the wildfire groups it works with across the UK, which can be tailored to suit local circumstances.

The handbook is intended to be held by land managers and Fire and Rescue personnel as a guide for conducting wildfire suppression operations. It contains useful checklists, guides to conducting an initial risk analysis, safety analysis, situation briefings, wildfire safety and advice on working together on wildfire. For a copy contact Northwoods on 01670 513292.



TRAINING COURSES

Would you know what to do if a wildfire occurred on your land?

Are your employees suitably trained to work at a wildfire?

Want to brush up on new wildfire suppression techniques?

Northumberland Fire Group offers a range of training courses to help you respond efficiently and effectively to a wildfire event on your land, from classroom based courses to live exercises.

Courses are organised according to demand - to find out more or register your interest contact Northwoods on 01670 513292. In addition, we will be running a Fire Plan support workshop, more details overleaf.



Basic Wildfire Fighting

This course covers the principles of wildfire behaviour, suppression techniques, health and safety and how to work effectively with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. For efficient control of a wildfire it is essential everyone is speaking the same language, so whether you are an experienced game keeper or have never seen a fire, this course is an essential starting point.

Advanced Wildfire Fighting

Building on the knowledge from the Basic Wildfire Fighting, this course will look at much more advanced methods of wildfire control, including using fire to fight fire and new techniques for wildfire management based on international experience.

Heather Burning

This course will help you comply with the new heather and grass burning regulations.

Grass Burning training event, Otterburn

In March Northumberland Fire Group organised an event in association with Cheviot Futures for farmers, landowners or anyone involved in grassland burning as a management tool. 17 people attended the event, delivered by Andy McNaught of Natural England and Steve Gibson and Bruce Hardy of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. Training focussed on basic fire behaviour, fire control equipment, legislation and health and safety.

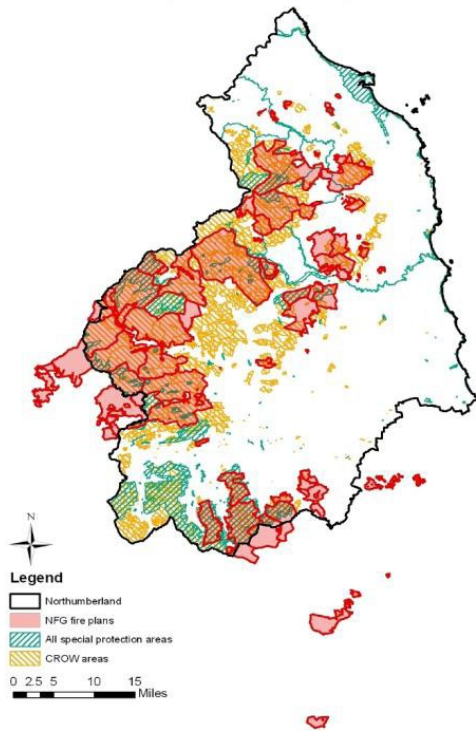
The aim of the event was to give people who already use fire as a management tool further skills and understanding to help prevent fires getting out of control and understand the valuable role fire can play in grassland management.

The Cheviot Futures project takes a simple, practical approach to land management that focuses on taking action to adapt to the effects of a changing climate, including offering training to deal with the real problem of increasing wildfire risk. www.cheviotfutures.co.uk



Update your fire plan!

Up to date fire plans are of crucial importance in controlling a wildfire event - with information fed directly to Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. Details such as important contacts, access points, equipment resources, water supplies, hazards and maps all contribute to an efficient and effective wildfire response. NFG are currently undertaking a review of all fire plan records - if you haven't heard from us already we'll be in touch in the coming weeks. If you need support in writing your plan, please let us know; we're happy to come to you to discuss your plan.



A key objective of the Group is to achieve full coverage of Northumberland's 'at risk' areas with fire plans; the map opposite showing coverage achieved to date. If you are a landowner or land manager and have not yet produced a fire plan please contact us. Templates are available and we will provide support completing plans and producing GIS maps showing key information. **Contact Jill Platten on 01670 513292 or jill.platten@northwoods.org.uk.**

WILDFIRE 2011 CONFERENCE

Wildfire 2011 will follow a groundbreaking Wildfire 2009 at which over 150 delegates learned about the latest techniques, best practice and research relating to the prevention and suppression of wildfire.

Now in it's sixth year, Wildfire brings together a host of high profile speakers from across the UK, international experts and exhibitors showing the latest wildfire fighting equipment and services.

Wildfire 2011 will take place on the 14th & 15th of September in Buxton, Derbyshire, in the heart of the Peak District. The conference will feature a programme of talks, workshops, trade exhibitions and technical demonstrations. It will also provide an unrivalled opportunity to look at some of the pioneering work of the Peak District Fire Operations Group.

The conference programme is still under development and Expressions of Interest for speakers, delegates, exhibitors and sponsors can be registered online. Visit www.wildfire2011.org.uk for more information or contact Erica Spencer on 01765 609355. Wildfire 2011 is organised by Rural Development Initiatives.



Northumberland Fire Group is supported by:



Project delivered by:

