

UPDATE: US Forest Service wildland firefighters and interagency crews mobilized to assist with Hurricane Sandy response

WASHINGTON Nov. 7, 2012 – Interagency wildfire suppression crews and incident management teams have been mobilized to support state and local efforts in response to Hurricane Sandy.

The interagency Incident Management Teams are funded with assets made available because of Disaster Declarations, tasked through FEMA, and bring skills in organization, planning and will assist with logistical needs of communities affected by Hurricane Sandy. The wildfire crews are clearing downed trees, assisting at Federal Emergency Management Agency facilities, and are providing communications support to local emergency response agencies.



Under the [National Response Framework](#), the U.S. Forest Service coordinates firefighting assets that respond to hurricanes and other emergency incidents.

(left) Clearing debris in West Virginia. Seventy US Forest Service personnel worked with the West Virginia National Guard, West Virginia Division of Highways and West Virginia Division of Forestry to clear downed trees and limbs and other debris from roads and power lines across the state in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy on Nov. 1, 2012. Crews encountered snow on roads and along roads and poor cell phone and radio communication due to terrain and storm damage to towers and associated infrastructure. US Forest Service photo.

As of 6 a.m. today, 10 incident management teams and 41 wildfire suppression crews, a total of approximately 1,100 personnel, of which 950 are Forest Service employees, are working in impacted communities. This includes:

New York:

- One incident management team managing road clearing operations and a mobilization center at East Farmingdale.
- One incident management team in Brooklyn assisting FEMA with managing community outreach volunteers.
- One incident management team in Nassau County, N.Y., helping to establish and manage FEMA distribution points, clearing roads and other logistical needs.
- Twelve interagency hotshot, chainsaw and camp crews performing emergency road clearance and support to FEMA points of distribution locations.
- One [National Incident Management Organization](#) incident management team assigned to support Nassau County, N.Y.
- One National Incident Management Organization incident management team supporting New York City to assist local efforts in debris removal through organization and tracking.
- One National Incident Management Organization incident management team supporting New York City Office of Emergency Management in Flushing..

Pennsylvania:

- Three interagency hotshot, saw and camp crews and one incident management team are staged in Harrisburg.

New Jersey:

- One Type 1 and one Type 2 incident management teams at Fort Dix are managing staging and road clearing.
- One Type 2 incident management team in Monmouth County is coordinating road clearing assignments.
- Twenty-six interagency hotshot, saw and camp crews are working on road clearing and supporting FEMA points of distribution operations.

Learn more about what these crews do [by listening to this podcast](#). (Here's the [transcript](#).)

(right) US Forest Service crew member, Bill Scripp finishes the job of sawing downed trees in order to make passage safe for residents in New York City parks on Nov. 4, 2012. Forest Park in Queens, NY is a major walking thoroughfare, including popular recreational trails. Bill Scripp belongs to the Wayne National Forest, in Ohio Valley, OH. US Forest Service photo/Dave Kosling.

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Forest Service lands contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$27 billion per year.

