

21st Annual “Fire Camp” set for April 23 at Redden State Forest



Veteran crew members (from left) Jeff Wilson of Clayton and Guy Cooper of Millville supervise a controlled burn as part of wildfire training for the Delaware Forest Service’s “Fire Camp” in 2015. This year’s camp is on Saturday, April 23 at Redden State Forest in Georgetown.

The Delaware Forest Service’s 21st Annual Fire Camp will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2016 at Redden State Forest from 6:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. The intensive, one-day seminar is the capstone of the agency’s wildfire training program to certify its emergency firefighters to meet [National Wildfire Coordinating Group](#) standards.

In addition to completing an arduous “work capacity test” – which involves carrying a 45-pound pack over a three-mile course in less than 45 minutes – crew members will receive hands-on instruction in several key areas: wildfire suppression, the effect of weather on fire behavior, crew mobilization, water pump and chainsaw usage, and culminating with a “live” controlled burn fire situation.



The Delaware Forest Service’s southern regional forester Erich Burkentine of Milton leads crew members through the “live burn” training session at the 2015 “Fire Camp” for new wildland firefighters.

Delaware’s wildfire program has achieved a well-regarded

reputation on the national firefighting scene and has dispatched crews almost every summer to fight forest fires in the western United States. In 2015, more than 9.2 million acres burned nationwide, making it one of only four years since 1960 to see more than 9 million acres burn, but still short of the 9.8 million acres burned in 2006. Other years topping the 9 million acre mark were 2007 and 2012. In August of 2015, as the [National Preparedness Level](#) hit its maximum of "5" on a five-point scale, Delaware's crew headed to the West to battle the [Fork Complex Fire near Hayfork, California](#) – a blaze that burned [more than 36,000 acres in the vicinity of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest](#).

For the news media:

This event offers excellent opportunities for journalists to capture photographs and video footage of actual wildland firefighting. Firefighters and instructors will be available for interviews; however, media who plan to capture footage of the live burn are advised to arrive on-site on Saturday, April 23 by 12 noon.

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* The timing and location of the "live burn" is subject to change based on actual weather conditions.



Starting second from left: Doug Rawling of Newark, Nicholas and Christopher Sturm of Hamburg, PA, and Jennifer DeCarlo of Felton construct a hand line as part of firefighting efforts on the Fork Complex, a 36,000-acre group of lightning-caused fires that burned near Hayfork, California last summer.