



Division of Forest Protection



2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

Table of Contents

Letter from the Acting Director Eric Lahr	1
2015 Annual Report Statewide Highlights.....	4
Division Mission	4
365-Day, 24-Hour Responsibility	4
Law Enforcement on State Lands	4
Search-and-Rescue Responsibility.....	5
Search-and-Rescue Missions	5
Clinton County Fugitive Search	5
Search-and-Rescue Training	6
Wildfire Mitigation	6
Wildfire Training.....	7
Wildfire Prevention	7
Wildfire Prevention Enforcement.....	7
National Response to Wildfires.....	8
Prescribed Fire	8
Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants.....	8
Support to Other Agencies	8
Licensed Guide Program	9
Comprehensive Annual Report.....	9
2015 Forest Ranger Division Fact Sheet.....	10
Division Members at Full Staffing.....	10
State Lands & Easements Acres	10
2015 Population (in millions).....	10
Wildfire Management Program	10
Search-and-Rescue Program.....	10
Protection of State Lands & Resources	10
Licensed Guide Program	10
Other	10
How Rangers Spent Their Time in 2015	10
Region and Zone Narratives.....	13
Regions 1 and 2 by Captain Timothy Byrnes	13
Region 3, Zone A by Lieutenant Robert Morse.....	14
Region 3, Zone B by Lieutenant Gregory Tyrrell.....	15
Region 4, Zone A by Captain Darryl Kittle	16
Region 4, Zone B by Lieutenant Robert Morse.....	18
Region 5, Zone A by Lieutenant Julie Harjung	19
Region 5, Zone B by Lieutenant Gary Friedrich.....	20
Region 5, Zone C by Lieutenant Charles Platt	22

Region 5, Zone D by Lieutenant Steve Preston	24
Region 5, Zone E by Lieutenant Brian Dubay	25
Region 5, Zone F by Lieutenant John Solan	27
Region 6, Zone A by Lieutenant Jay Terry	28
Region 6, Zone B by Lieutenant Joel Nowalk.....	30
Region 6 Zone C by Lieutenant Scott Murphy.....	31
Region 7 by Lieutenant James L. McPherson	32
Region 8 by Lieutenant Martin Flanagan	33
Region 9 by Lieutenant Shawn Plaisted	35
Aviation Program by Lieutenant Gary Friedrich	36
Forest Ranger Retirements	37
Wildland Fire Program by Lisa Smith, Fire Management Administrative Specialist	39
Emergency Management by Colonel Andrew Jacob	40
In Remembrance	41
Training and Development Report by Captain Eric Lahr	42
20 th Basic School for Uniformed Officers	42
Search-and-Rescue (SAR) Training Program	43
Airboat and Vessel Operation Training	43
Technical Rope Rescue Training	43
Swiftwater Rescue Training	44
Search-and-Rescue Management In-Service Training (SARMIST).....	44
Police Officer Training Program.....	45
Wildfire Management Training Program	45
Helicopter and Aviation Training	45
Wilderness First Responder.....	46
Division Training and Development Summary.....	46
2015 Summary of Wildfires by Forest Ranger Zone	47
Number of Wildfires and Acres Burned in New York State 1966-2015	50
2015 Summary of Forest Ranger Search-and-Rescue Missions	51
2015 Summary of Search-and-Rescue Incidents by Forest Ranger Zone	52
Search-and-Rescue Missions Annual Statistics 1966-2015	53
2015 Summary of Public Presentations and Training Given by Forest Rangers	54
2015 Summary of Activities by Forest Ranger Zone	55
2015 Summary of Tickets or Arrests by Forest Ranger Zone	56
Total of Forest Ranger Work Activities per Category and Year	57

Letter from the Acting Director

I am honored to have the distinct privilege to present the Division of Forest Protection 2015 Annual Report. For generations, our primary mission as New York State Forest Rangers has been to protect state-owned land and people who enjoy visiting these wonderful places. This vital mission is as true today as it has been since our beginning 130 years ago.

Within these pages, you will find brief narratives of incidents and tabular data from across every region of the state. However, missing from this report is the real life drama experienced by these courageous men and women who respond day or night, regardless of the weather or terrain, to calls for help and assistance. For rangers, these untold stories are a badge of honor not worn on the uniform but, rather, carried within.

In 2015, rangers applied their advanced training and skills to respond to an array of unique challenges beyond their normal duties of state land law enforcement, wildland search and rescue, incident management and wildfire suppression. Most notably, rangers assisted other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in capturing two escaped convicts from the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora. Additionally, the 2,759-acre Roosa Gap Fire in Sullivan and Ulster counties reminded us all of the potential danger and threat that wildfire has on our lives, forests and communities.

Throughout the year, rangers responded to a record 341 wildland searches and rescues (a 25% increase from 2014), extinguished 175 wildfires and enforced 2,847 violations of law. As in previous years, more than half of our time was dedicated to protecting people who visit and enjoy all that the five-million acres of state land have to offer, as well as the land itself for future generations.

For their efforts in preparing this report, I thank our division members who dedicated time to the thorough and accurate collection of data and narratives presented herein. Special recognition is also offered to DEC's Office of Communication Services, which provided editing, graphics and publishing support. Also, I give special thanks to Division Director Joseph Zeglen, who will soon retire, for his leadership and direction over the past five years. Through his dedicated and tireless efforts, the division is well suited for meeting the difficult challenges ahead.

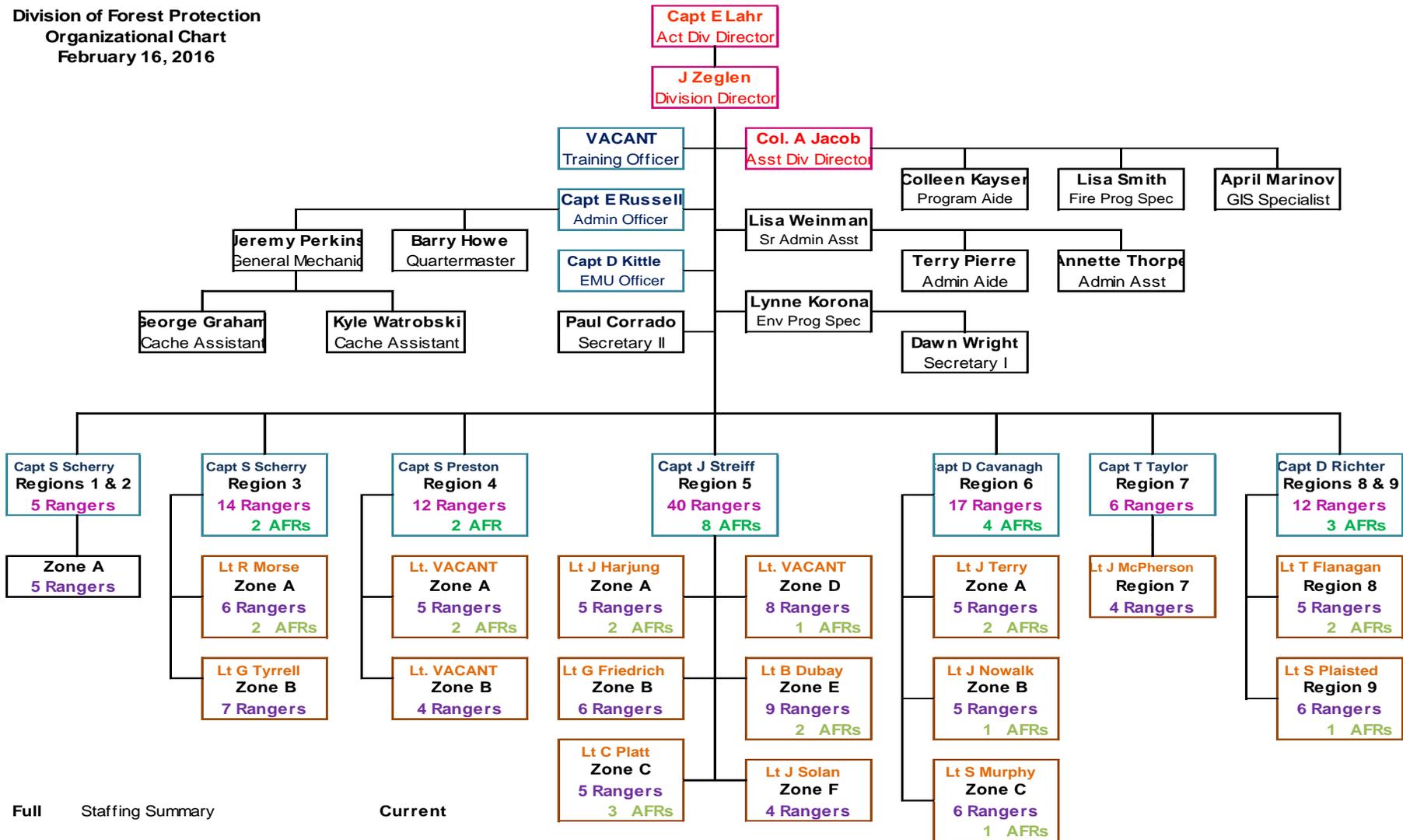
Finally, I commend the rangers who dedicate and risk their lives each and every day to help others, their families who support them, and our support staff and volunteers who aid us in achieving our goals. Only through their teamwork are we able to accomplish all that we do!

Sincerely,



Captain Eric A. Lahr
Acting Division Director

Division of Forest Protection
 Organizational Chart
 February 16, 2016



Full	Staffing Summary	Current
106	Forest Rangers	95
16	Lieutenant Forest Rangers	13
10	Captain Forest Rangers	10
2	Division Director/Assist. Div. Dir.	2
134	Total Uniformed Forest Rangers	120
19	Asst. Forest Rangers (AFRs) (Seasonal)	18

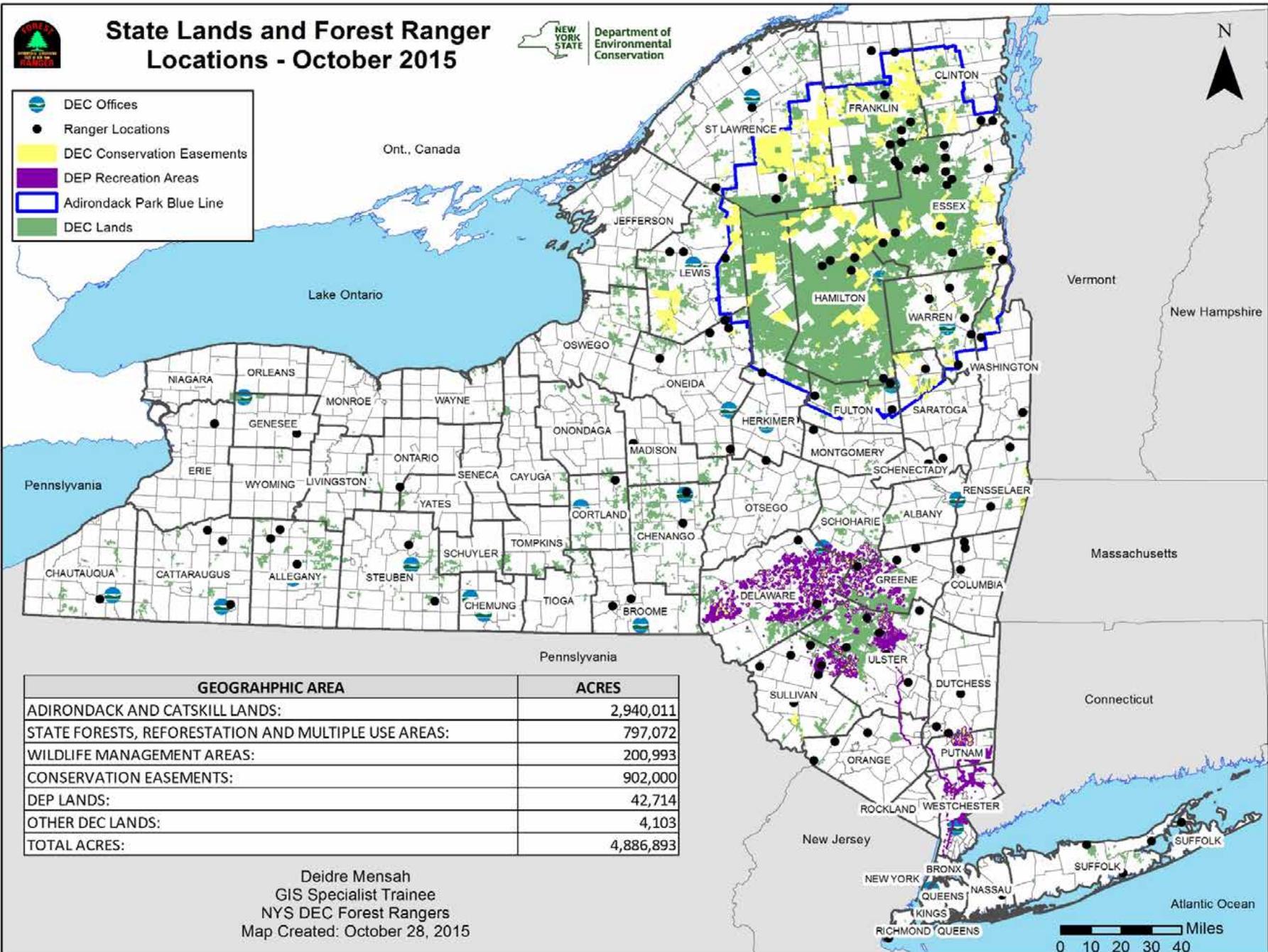


State Lands and Forest Ranger Locations - October 2015



Department of Environmental Conservation

- DEC Offices
- Ranger Locations
- DEC Conservation Easements
- DEP Recreation Areas
- Adirondack Park Blue Line
- DEC Lands



GEOGRAPHIC AREA	ACRES
ADIRONDACK AND CATSKILL LANDS:	2,940,011
STATE FORESTS, REFORESTATION AND MULTIPLE USE AREAS:	797,072
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS:	200,993
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:	902,000
DEP LANDS:	42,714
OTHER DEC LANDS:	4,103
TOTAL ACRES:	4,886,893

Deidre Mensah
GIS Specialist Trainee
NYS DEC Forest Rangers
Map Created: October 28, 2015

2015 Annual Report Statewide Highlights

Division Mission

The Division of Forest Protection protects five-million acres of state-owned, department-managed lands and easements as well as the people who use these lands. For 130 years, New York State Forest Rangers have extinguished wildfires, found and rescued the lost and injured, and enforced state land use and wildfire prevention laws. Over three-million acres of department lands and easements are in the Adirondack Park alone, but every region has substantial state land resources that support public recreational use, habitat protection and open space.

365-Day, 24-Hour Responsibility

The division's forest rangers continue their historic tradition of providing police, wildfire and wilderness search, rescue and emergency medical services to protect department state lands and the people using these lands. Direct professional contact between rangers and state land users enhances people's safety and enjoyment while protecting the land for the benefit of all. This public service role is a 365-day responsibility. Historically, summer hiking and camping and fall hunting seasons were the primary periods of state land use. In recent decades, however, usage has expanded through the entire year, with peak use during summer and fall weekends. Rangers use the nationally recognized Leave-No-Trace (LNT) Program to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation on public lands through education, research and partnerships. Rangers made 25 presentations about the proper use of state lands to 5,557 recreationists. In addition, rangers issued 1,807 camping permits to groups of 10 or more and to any group staying at one site for more than three nights. Throughout the year, rangers inspected or patrolled the department's 52 public campgrounds 1,496 times to support campground staff and to check facilities during the off season. Routine patrols included 70,439 inspections of trailhead access points and inspection of 2,645 miles of non-roadside state boundary lines.

Law Enforcement on State Lands

Continuing a trend of the last two decades, the most problematic activity encountered by rangers was the illegal use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles on state land. In 2015, forest rangers issued tickets or made 258 arrests for violations involving ATVs and another 345 tickets or arrests for snowmobile offenses. Another 303 violations involved the unauthorized use of traditional motor vehicles on state land. Rangers executed enforcement actions in response to 74 violations in department campgrounds and another 1,301 violations of various regulations designed to protect state land. An increased emphasis on curbing underage alcohol consumption on state lands resulted in rangers making 89 arrests for illegal possession of alcohol by a person under 21 years old. Rangers issued tickets or made arrests for 133 fish and wildlife law offenses that occurred on or near state land and 271 tickets related to other environmental law offenses.

Offenses Related to State Land Use	1,292
Offenses Related to Fire Laws	73
Offenses Related to Fish & Wildlife Laws	133
Offenses of High Peaks Rules and Regulations	9
Offenses Related to Illegal ATV Operation	258
Offenses Related to Illegal Motor Vehicles on State Lands	303
Offenses Related to DEC Campgrounds	74
Offenses Related to Air Pollution	18
Offenses Related to Underage Drinking	89
Offenses Related to Other EnCon Laws, Rules or Regs	35
Offenses Related to Other Laws, Rules or Regulations	218
Offenses Related to Illegal Snowmobile Operation	345
Total Number of Tickets and Arrests	2,847

Number of Forest Ranger Tickets or Arrests by Category in 2015

Search-and-Rescue Responsibility

An important part of protecting the people who use New York’s natural resources is wilderness search and rescue. The need to find and rescue lost or injured people in wild or remote locations is almost a daily state event. Throughout 2015, the division fulfilled its traditional responsibility of assisting, rescuing and comforting hundreds of people. Forest rangers have always provided search-and-rescue response in the Adirondack and Catskill parks. During the last five decades, this service has expanded to all wildland areas of the state. In rural areas, local emergency services are insufficient to effectively find a lost hiker or rescue an injured person in a remote area. In urban and suburban areas, local services are available but generally not trained or experienced in wilderness search or back-country rescue techniques. New York’s forest rangers are nationally known and respected for their search-and-rescue work and are even asked to teach agencies and volunteer groups from other states.

Search-and-Rescue Missions

In 2015, forest rangers conducted 179 search missions, 149 rescues and 13 recoveries. Eighty-two percent (278) of these incidents occurred on state lands. Most of them were resolved in one or two days, but several searches continued for many days, incurring thousands of hours of search time. Although hikers are the group most often reported lost or injured, people suffering from dementia or mental illness are often the most difficult to find. Rescue and recovery missions are frequently complicated by the nature of wildland recreational activity. Ice-climbing rescue requires special training and equipment. White-water boating requires rangers to prepare for fast-moving water rescue, sometimes in the most remote and inaccessible areas of the state. Snowmobiling accidents require rangers to be prepared to treat potentially serious injuries in cold weather and remote locations. The largest wildland search event in 2015 was the response to a missing 82-year-old Troy hunter in Warren County. Forty-four rangers were assigned to this mission, which lasted from November 15 through December 9. A total of 14,524 search hours by rangers, state and local police, fire department and New York State Federation of Search and Rescue Team volunteers intensively searched 8,028 acres (12.5 square miles). As of April 2016, the man had not been found nor had any evidence of his whereabouts been discovered.

Aircraft	1
Biking	7
Boating	4
Camping	12
Climbing: Rock/Ice	7
Criminal	3
Despondent	20
Fishing	3
Hiking	216
Hunting	13
Motor Vehicle	1
Off-Road Vehicle/ATV	5
Runaway	5
Skiing	4
Snowmobile	12
Swimming	5
Walking	23
Total Number of Incidents	341
# of State Land Incidents	278

Number of Forest Ranger Search-and-Rescue Missions by Category in 2015

Clinton County Fugitive Search

On the morning of June 6, state police requested forest ranger assistance with apprehending two escaped murderers from the State of New York Clinton County Correctional Facility in Dannemora. Inmates Richard Matt, 48, and David Sweat, 34, escaped the maximum security facility after months of planning and preparation and with some help by one or more correctional employees. This search became the largest fugitive search in New York history and was reported daily by media throughout the world. The prison is located in the northern fringe of the Adirondack Park and is within 20 miles of the NY-Canadian border. The search was under the incident command of state police Major Charles E. Guess, while Governor Andrew Cuomo made frequent visits to the area to ensure public safety was the first priority. As the search continued, more agencies and officers were added to what quickly became a complex National Incident Management System (NIMS) Type 1. Because of the historic close working relationship between state police and rangers in northern NY, most of the incident command and

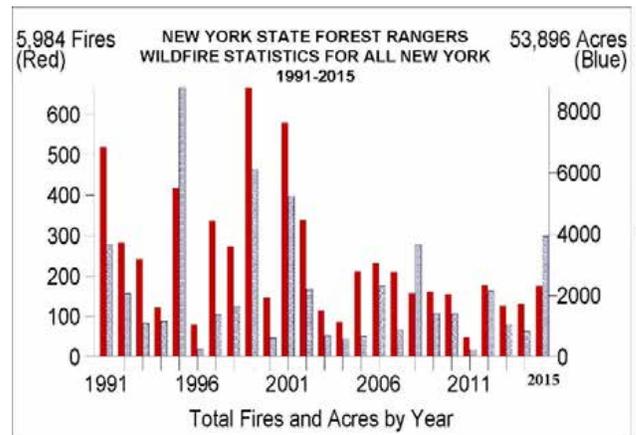
general staff positions were filled with 94 rangers and supervisors who spent days or weeks supporting the search. On June 27, fugitive Matt was shot and killed by federal agents and the next day, fugitive Sweat was shot and captured by state police. This incident required 13,212 ranger work hours or 5.4 percent of total ranger work hours for the calendar year.

Search-and-Rescue Training

Considerable time and effort is spent preparing for search-and-rescue missions. Rangers train emergency service agencies and volunteer groups to support them during incidents. Together, they maintain positive relationships and continually improve the search-and-rescue program. In 2015, rangers presented 29 NYS Basic Wildland Search courses to 686 participants. Another 55 presentations, covering wilderness first aid, advanced search-and-rescue training and incident management were given to 1,385 participants in support of local and division response to incidents statewide.

Wildfire Mitigation

An important part of protecting public and privately owned open space is wildfire mitigation. New York State has 18.5 million acres of public and private forest lands that are susceptible to seasonal wildfires. The division is the state's lead agency for the control and prevention of wildfires. In 2015, forest rangers reported 175 wildfires which burned a total of 3,924 acres. During the last 25 years, rangers responded to an average of 239 wildfires per year that burned an average total of 2,156 acres annually. More than 1,700 volunteer and career fire departments are the primary first responders to wildfires throughout the state. Combined, fire departments and rangers responded to 3,404 wildfires that burned a total of 5,847 acres in 2015. The past 15-year average number of wildfires in New York was 5,269 fires which burned 4,667 acres per year.



Forest ranger wildfire statistics from 1991 through 2015

In 2015, the largest wildfire to occur in New York was the 2,759-acre Roosa Gap Fire in Sullivan and Ulster counties that began on May 3. Although the fire started on May 3, it increased by at least 2,000 acres on May 4 when a National Weather Service “red flag” was posted for most of the state. Most of the fire occurred on Shawangunk Ridge State Forest and exceptional firefighting tactics by rangers and firefighters kept the fire from destroying homes in the Hamlet of Cragmoor, Ulster County. New York’s state incident management team (IMT) assumed incident command on May 5 and used bulldozers, state police and National Guard helicopters and a single-engine air tanker and aerial command plane from Brunswick, Canada through interagency cooperation with the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Commission or “Compact.” By May 8, the fire was fully contained and then declared out on May 11. Only two firefighters were hurt when their fire department ATV rolled over. A 62-year-old East Meadow man and a 52-year-old Bethpage man were charged for setting and allowing the fire to escape their control at a weekend residence near the Hamlet of Roosa Gap, Sullivan County.

This year was the third consecutive year in which the primary cause of wildfires reported by forest rangers was not from debris burning. Campfires caused 36 wildfires (21 percent) and intentional incendiary fires caused 32 fires (18 percent), while debris burning caused 30 wildfires (17 percent). The

continued significant reduction of wildfires from debris burning is attributed to the well-supported annual burning ban from March 16 through May 14 that began in 2010.

Wildfire Training



A seasonal home was lost in a wildfire in Newcomb, Essex County on May 9. A powerline caused the fire.

The division's wildfire mitigation role requires considerably more time than that which is spent extinguishing fires. Similar to the search-and-rescue program, significant time and energy focuses on preventing fires and preparing for fire suppression. Forest rangers instructed the 12-hour NYS Basic Wildland Fire Suppression Course on 12 occasions, teaching 192 volunteer firefighters the basics of wildfire suppression. On three occasions, rangers taught the 44-hour Basic Federal Wildland Firefighting Course, commonly referred to as S130/190. A total of 35 firefighters, state employees, students and volunteers completed this course, which is considered basic training for professional (non-volunteer) wildland firefighters. Rangers provided an additional 21 training sessions to 411 firefighters, emergency service personnel and volunteers in

advanced firefighting or incident command management. When needed, the division uses state Department of Correctional and Community Supervision (DOCCS) inmate crews for "mop up" of controlled fires. Rangers gave one four-hour training session to 90 inmates.

Wildfire Prevention

The best way to reduce wildfires is to prevent fires from starting. Rangers made 24 prevention presentations to 6,896 people. Many of these events were large gatherings, such as the state and county fairs where Smokey Bear appears with a ranger. Smokey continues to be the most recognized symbol of fire prevention in the world. Of the 175 wildfires extinguished by the division in 2015, rangers attributed only four fires to the actions of children. This statistic stands as a tribute to the effectiveness of the 72-year Smokey Bear campaign of preventing wildfires started by children and adults.

Wildfire Prevention Enforcement

Debris burning, unextinguished campfires and arson are the three leading categories of human-caused wildfires in New York State over the past decade. As a means of preventing debris fires, rangers and their permit-issuing agents issued 3,287 burning permits as required by state Environmental Conservation Law. Rangers inspected 117 of the permitted burns to insure compliance with the terms of the permits. In addition, they issued tickets or made arrests for 73 violations of law related to fire prevention. The most frequent violation was burning without a permit in towns within the Adirondack and Catskill parks. Department burning permits are not required in other areas of the state. The division's rangers, trained as wildfire cause-and-determination investigators, assisted the National Park Service with securing evidence at a rash of suspicious fires in the Gateway National Recreation Area in Queens County, New York City. Incendiary evidence was collected to support further investigation by National Park Service Police.

National Response to Wildfires

In 2015, the division sent two 20-person initial attack firefighting crews for 14 days to western wildfires as part of its mutual aid agreement with the US Forest Service. Typically, one crew is sent each year but 2015 experienced exceptional wildfire activity in northwestern states. A crew consists of a forest ranger as crew boss and three other rangers as squad bosses. The other 16 members are forest rangers, other DEC employees and department volunteer firefighters. The first crew, NYS#1, was sent to the 23,000-acre Stouts Fire in Oregon, with Ranger John Scanlon as crew boss. The second crew, NYS#2, was sent to the 38,000-acre Mad River Fire Complex in California, with Ranger Ian Kerr as crew boss. Seven other specially trained and experienced rangers were sent to national wildfire incidents as single resources.



NYS#2 after returning to New York from fighting wildfires in California

Prescribed Fire

In 2015, forest rangers maintained their working relationship with the department's Division of Lands and Forests and Division of Fish and Wildlife to use prescribed fire as an ecosystem management tool. Throughout the year, rangers supported 11 prescribed fires on public lands, burning a total of 268 acres.

Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants

Each year, the division administers the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant Program, using funds provided by the US Forest Service. VFA grants assist rural volunteer fire departments with the purchase of fire-suppression equipment and supplies. In 2015, 262 qualifying fire departments received VFA grants of \$1,500 each. Not only does this program place much needed dollars in the hands of rural fire departments, it also furthers the solid working relationship between forest rangers and the volunteer firefighter service.

Support to Other Agencies

Forest rangers provide a variety of support activities to other programs within the department, other state agencies and local governments throughout New York State. They assisted other agencies with emergency incidents on 727 occasions in 2015. Many were automobile accidents at which a ranger came upon the scene. Others included criminal and evidence searches, fire-scene traffic control, drownings and marijuana plantation eradication. Because rangers are considered experts in the National Incident Management System Incident Command Systems (NIMS ICS), they often are called upon to teach courses on these topics at police academies, county government centers and local fire departments.

Licensed Guide Program



New York State Licensed Guide badge that must be worn when guiding

The division manages the NYS Licensed Guide Program. By the end of 2015, there was a total of 2,288 licensed New York outdoor guides. Of that total, 242 new licenses and 330 license renewals or updates were processed throughout the year. Rangers made 710 licensed guide checks statewide and two arrests were made for guiding without a license. In 2015, no guides had their licenses revoked for violations of the state Environmental Conservation Law.

Comprehensive Annual Report

The division's *2015 Annual Report* includes summary tables of reportable data on wildfire occurrence, prescribed fire, search-and-rescue missions, arrests or tickets issued, public presentations and general activities. Most summaries are reported at the division's zone level. A zone is identified as the smallest work group under the direct command of a division supervisor. There are 17 division zones in the state, each within a department region. Each zone supervisor has provided a narrative review of activities within their zone as part of the division's annual report. All summaries are substantiated by data reporting at the region, zone or individual ranger level. A fact sheet on 2015 forest ranger accomplishments and statistics accompanies this summary.

2015 Forest Ranger Division Fact Sheet

Division Members at Full Staffing

106	Forest Rangers
28	Forest Ranger Lieutenants, Captains & Directors
9	Administrative Support Staff
3	Fire Cache Equipment Specialists

State Lands & Easements Acres

2,931,512	Adirondack & Catskill Forest Preserve
796,777	State Forests, Reforestation and Multiple Use Areas
200,906	Wildlife Management Areas
848,803	Conservation Easements
4,103	Other DEC Lands
<u>+ 110,531</u>	<u>NYC DEP Public Access Lands</u>
4,892,632	DEC-Administered Lands

2015 Population (in millions)

19.8	New York State
32.8	Surrounding States (VT, MA, CT, NJ, PA)

Wildfire Management Program

127	Fires Suppressed in the Spring
36	Fires Suppressed in the Summer
12	Fires Suppressed in the Fall/Winter
3,924	Acres Burned
11	Prescribed Fires
268	Acres of Prescribed Fire
3,287	Burning Permits Issued
117	Burning Permits Inspected
37	Wildfire Control/ICS Training Events with 728 Participants
24	Fire Prevention Events with 6,896 Attendees
73	Fire Prevention Law Violations/Tickets
262	\$1,500 Grants to Rural VFDs

Search-and-Rescue Program

178	Search Missions
149	Rescue Missions
13	Recoveries
1	Fugitive Searches
84	Search-and-Rescue or First Aid Training Events with 2,071 Participants

Protection of State Lands & Resources

70,439	Inspections of Trailheads/Access Points
21,262	Miles of Trails Walked/Snowshoed/Skied
1,531	Hours of Boat Patrol
1,972	Navigation Law Safety Checks
22,155	Miles of Snowmobile Patrol
17,529	Snowmobile Law Safety Checks
11,046	Inspections of Occupied Campsites
1,807	State Land Camping Permits Issued
2,645	Miles of State Boundary Line Inspected
1,056	State Land Use Permits Inspected
1,496	Patrols of DEC Public Campgrounds
1,213	Conservation Easement Inspections
258	ATV Violation Tickets Issued
1,767	State Land Offense Tickets/Arrests
345	Offenses Related to Snowmobile Use
133	Fish & Wildlife Offense Tickets
271	Other EnCon or Other Law Offenses
25	Outdoor Use Presentations to 5,557 Participants

Licensed Guide Program

2,288	Licensed Guides on 12/31/15
242	New Guide Licenses Issued
330	Guide Licenses Renewed or Updated
0	Guide Licenses Revoked
710	Checks of Licensed Guide Credentials
2	Licensed Guide Violations Ticketed

Other

1,681	Calls for Service/Complaints
727	Incidents of Assisting Other Agencies
93	Other Presentations, Fairs, Career Talks to 11,822 Attendees

How Rangers Spent Their Time in 2015

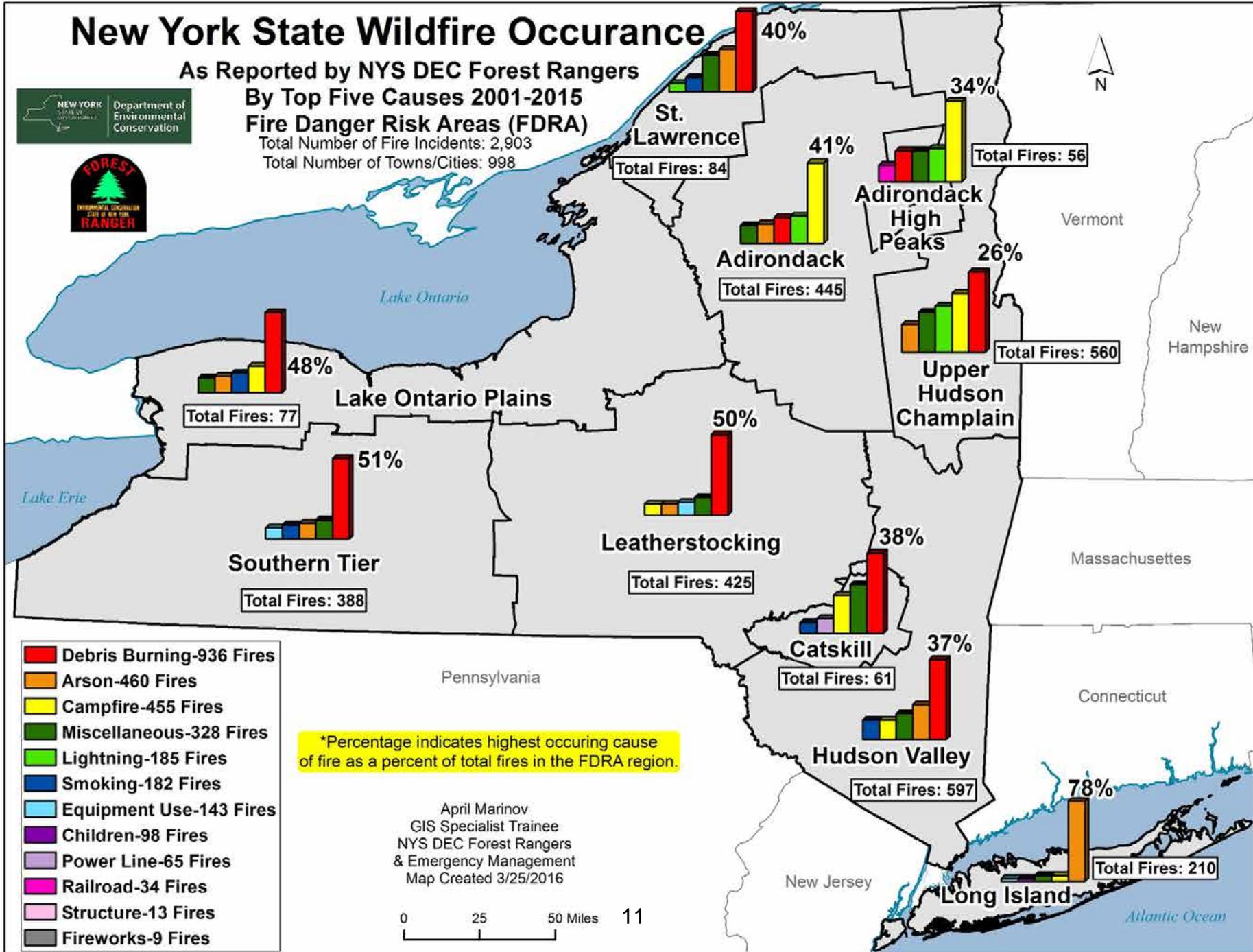
44%	State Land Patrol and Enforcement
14%	Fire Management Activities
17%	Search-and-Rescue Missions and Training
0%	Basic Academy Police Training
18%	Administrative Responsibilities
7%	Support to Other Programs/Agencies

New York State Wildfire Occurance

As Reported by NYS DEC Forest Rangers
By Top Five Causes 2001-2015

Fire Danger Risk Areas (FDRA)

Total Number of Fire Incidents: 2,903
Total Number of Towns/Cities: 998



- Debris Burning-936 Fires
- Arson-460 Fires
- Campfire-455 Fires
- Miscellaneous-328 Fires
- Lightning-185 Fires
- Smoking-182 Fires
- Equipment Use-143 Fires
- Children-98 Fires
- Power Line-65 Fires
- Railroad-34 Fires
- Structure-13 Fires
- Fireworks-9 Fires

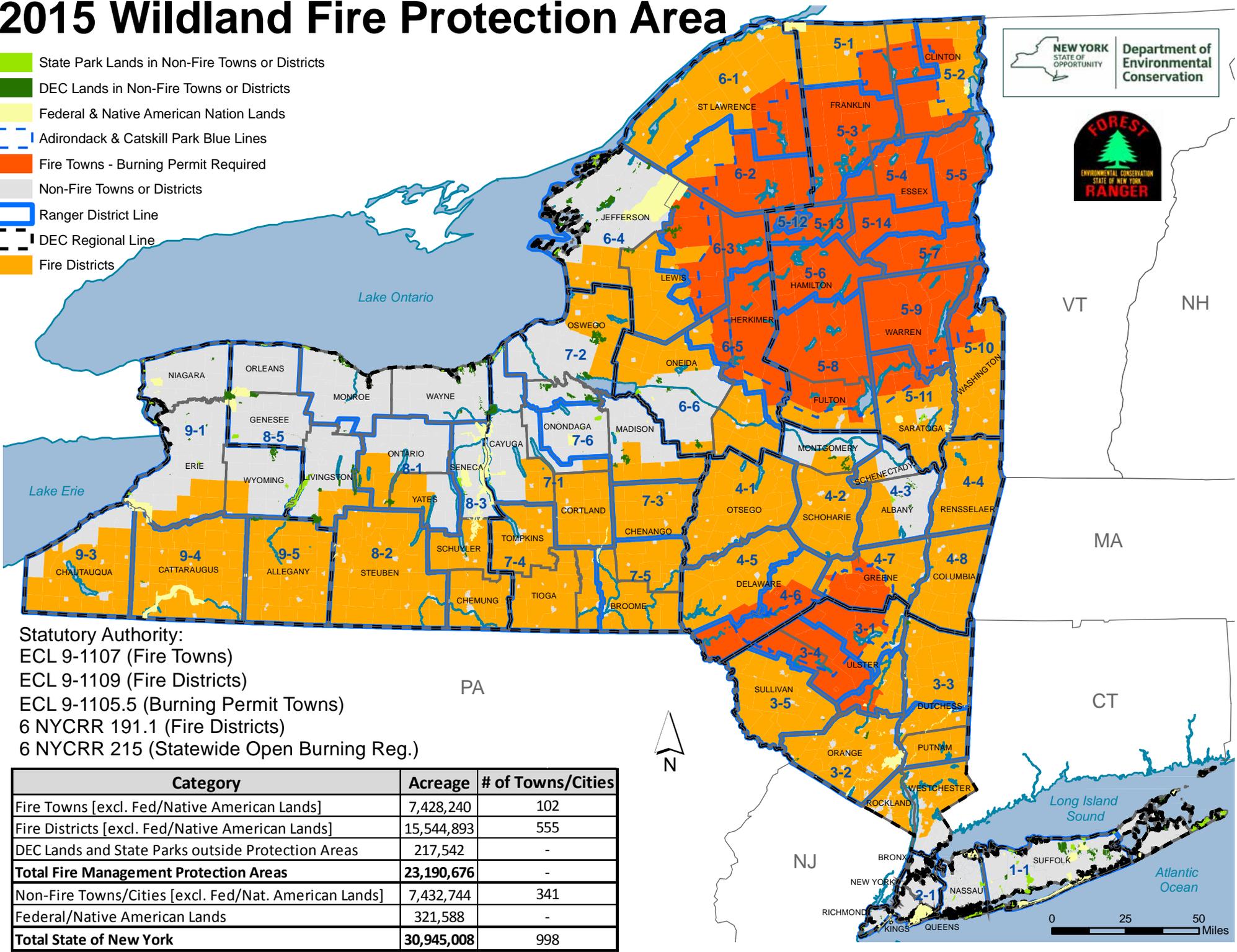
*Percentage indicates highest occurring cause of fire as a percent of total fires in the FDRA region.

April Marinov
GIS Specialist Trainee
NYS DEC Forest Rangers
& Emergency Management
Map Created 3/25/2016

0 25 50 Miles 11

2015 Wildland Fire Protection Area

- State Park Lands in Non-Fire Towns or Districts
- DEC Lands in Non-Fire Towns or Districts
- Federal & Native American Nation Lands
- Adirondack & Catskill Park Blue Lines
- Fire Towns - Burning Permit Required
- Non-Fire Towns or Districts
- Ranger District Line
- DEC Regional Line
- Fire Districts



Statutory Authority:
 ECL 9-1107 (Fire Towns)
 ECL 9-1109 (Fire Districts)
 ECL 9-1105.5 (Burning Permit Towns)
 6 NYCRR 191.1 (Fire Districts)
 6 NYCRR 215 (Statewide Open Burning Reg.)

Category	Acreage	# of Towns/Cities
Fire Towns [excl. Fed/Native American Lands]	7,428,240	102
Fire Districts [excl. Fed/Native American Lands]	15,544,893	555
DEC Lands and State Parks outside Protection Areas	217,542	-
Total Fire Management Protection Areas	23,190,676	-
Non-Fire Towns/Cities [excl. Fed/Nat. American Lands]	7,432,744	341
Federal/Native American Lands	321,588	-
Total State of New York	30,945,008	998



Region and Zone Narratives

Regions 1 and 2 by Captain Timothy Byrnes



Region 1 comprises Suffolk and Nassau counties, while Region 2 comprises the five boroughs of New York City: Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island. Both regions comprise one forest ranger working unit or administrative zone. The entire zone comprises 1,501 square miles, with a population of 11 million people. The department owns 19,899 acres of land and easements throughout this area. The zone has five rangers, with four rangers assigned to Region 1 and one assigned to Region 2. One captain supervises the entire zone.

On January 14, Ranger David Nally was called to locate an overdue hunter on Otis Pike State Forest. Within an hour, Nally located the man through use of their cell phones and returned the Elmont man to his vehicle.

On April 25, Ranger Joseph Pries received a report from a mountain biker on Edgewood Oakbrush Plains Preserve that a wildfire was occurring. Twenty-one local fire departments responded to contain the fire that eventually burned 19 acres. Eight to ten-foot-high flames were encountered as the fire burned through the hardwood and pitch pine forest; however, no pines were consumed. The following day, Ranger Bryan Gallagher assisted Pries with keeping the fire contained to the control lines. Within two days, the fire was out and the cause was determined to be incendiary.



Rangers apprehend illegal off-road operators.

On May 17, Ranger Nally was patrolling DEC state land by ATV when he attempted to stop an off-road motorcycle and an ATV illegally operating on the Robert Cushman Murphy County Park near Brookhaven National Laboratory. Immediately after the two operators fled from Nally, the ATV crashed into a second ATV and both operators were seriously injured. Nally told two motorcycle operators to provide first aid to the injured men while he radioed for Suffolk County police and paramedic assistance. The injured men, age 23 of Medford and age 26 of Patchogue, were later airlifted to a local hospital because of the seriousness of their injuries.

On August 31, Rangers Nally and Gallagher were notified of a Northport man and his 8-year-old son lost while mountain biking on the Otis Pike Preserve. Through use of cell phone coordinates, the rangers were able to quickly locate the pair and provide needed hydration.

The New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy (NYWIMA), which ran from October 22 through November 1, concluded its 18th year of operations and has now provided training to more than 7,130 firefighters and emergency response personnel during its existence. Rangers from around the state supported the Central Pine Barrens Commission's Wildfire Task Force and conducted the Academy with a consortium of federal, state and county agencies, including: (federal) Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, United States Coast Guard, United States Forest Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service; (state) Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, New Jersey Forest Fire Service, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES), New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, Stony Brook Southampton College and (city, county and other organizations) Fire Department of New York (FDNY), Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services, and the Colorado Wildfire Academy.

The largest wildfire to occur within the zone happened on November 13 along the seashore near Oakwood Beach, Staten Island. This fire burned 56.8 acres of city and privately owned lands. Ranger Russell Martin assisted the FDNY and National Park Service firefighters in containing the fire that burned through tall stands of fragmites. A subsequent investigation determined the fire was intentionally caused but no suspect was identified.

Region 3, Zone A by Lieutenant Robert Morse



Region 3 Zone A is the more western of the two Region 3 zones, comprising northern Sullivan County and the western portion of Ulster County. Nearly all 170,000 acres of forest preserve state lands in Region 3 are located in Zone A. Two wilderness areas comprise over 81,000 acres, and another 24,198 acres are spread across dozens of separate parcels of state forest, wildlife management areas, and unique areas. One lieutenant, six rangers and one seasonal assistant forest ranger are assigned to this zone.



A typical weekend at "Blue Hole," Sundown Wild Forest

Sundown Wild Forest, Ulster County, experienced an unusual increase in day use at the area locally known as the "Blue Hole." This popular natural swimming pool in the Rondout Creek, Town of Denning, kept Ranger Howard Kreft very busy. Social media advertised this location, resulting in 700 or more visitors per day on most weekends. Parking in the valley is limited to few small parking areas due to the narrow, winding road and steep landscape. In addition, the town prohibits parking along the road. The crowds and illegal parking resulted in unified patrols by rangers, environmental conservation officers, state police and Ulster County Sheriff's deputies. Many tickets were

issued for illegal parking, littering, underage drinking and drugs. Department foresters are developing improved strategies to reduce the crowds in summer 2016.

On June 24, at approximately 4:30 PM, a 33-year-old Ridgewood woman and a 31-year-old Brooklyn man began their hike to Giant Ledge, Town of Shandaken. The two made it to Giant Ledge but continued hiking north, thinking that the trail would loop back around to the parking area. As darkness set in, they realized the trail did not return to the parking lot. At 10:30 PM, they found cell phone service and called Ulster County 911. Rangers Kreft and Erik Stratton worked with Ulster County Sheriff's deputies to locate the pair. At 5:00 AM, the couple was located on the trail just north of Panther Mountain in good condition. Rangers escorted the couple back to their car and concluded the mission by 8:30 AM.

On October 10, at approximately 4:00 PM, Ranger Kreft was informed by Ulster County 911 of an injured 44-year-old Erin, NY woman hiker along the Biscuit Brook Trail in the Town of Denning. Kreft was assisted by state police and Claryville and Neversink fire departments. The woman's friend advised responders that she hurt her left knee after falling and could no longer walk. GPS coordinates located the injured woman approximately 2.75 miles from the trailhead. At 5:00 PM, Kreft led a team of 14 rescuers, but two became injured themselves from the difficult terrain. The rescue team reached the woman by 8:00 PM and found her unable to move her leg. She was then carried in a rescue litter to an ATV staged near the Frost Valley YMCA. By 3:00 AM, she was at the YMCA, where medical personnel evaluated her before she was released.

Region 3, Zone B by Lieutenant Gregory Tyrrell



Region 3, Zone B lies in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley region of New York. This area is considerably influenced by those commuting to the New York City metropolitan area. Most of the largest parcels of wildlands are owned by State Parks which, along with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Scenic Hudson, Open Space Institute, Mohonk Preserve, and other such non-governmental organizations,

provide significant public outdoor recreation opportunities. Forest rangers are present on most of these tracts through joint patrols, training and emergency response. In total, rangers protect 21,493 acres of department-administered state lands. While hunting activity remains consistent from year to year, mountain biking, hunting dog training, bird watching and horseback riding are popular state land activities. One lieutenant and seven rangers are assigned to this zone.

On May 3, the Roosa Gap Fire began near a home in Roosa Gap, Sullivan County and eventually burned 2,759 acres into the Hamlet of Cragmoor, Ulster County. This fire began by unlawful debris burning and spread quickly from dry, blustery winds, steep slopes and dense



Ranger Davey at Pawling fire

forest. Firefighting tactics were not able to prevent the wind-driven fire from jumping forest roads and bulldozer lines. The State Incident Management Team (IMT) took command of fire operations on May 5 through May 8 and included a single-engine air tanker and aerial command plane from New Brunswick, Canada. Only two firefighters were hurt when their ATV rolled over and no homes or buildings were damaged. A 62-year-old East Meadow man and a 52-year-old Bethpage man were charged with setting and allowing the fire to escape their control.



Photo by Michael Wentland of Roosa Gap Fire.

A 37-year-old Florida, NY man was last seen on September 16 at approximately 12:00 AM in the Village of Florida. On September 18, Ranger Scott Sabo was asked to assist with the search. According to police investigators, the man had recently purchased a shotgun and ammunition but these were not accounted for at his residence. Rangers Sabo, David Meade and Erik Stratton managed the search effort on September 19 and the next day, the man was found deceased from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.

On August 20, Lieutenant Greg Tyrrell assisted with the opening of a new 800-foot boardwalk and trail that crosses the Great Swamp in Stewart State Forest, Orange County. The boardwalk and new trail are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and offer views of the wetlands, wildlife and waterfowl. The new trail connects existing trails to create a loop that hikers, bicyclists and cross-country skiers can enjoy year-round. Lieutenant Tyrrell and zone rangers will spend much of their time patrolling this new trail system for authorized use that prohibits ATV use.

Region 4, Zone A by Captain Darryl Kittle



Region 4, Zone A consists of Rensselaer, Columbia, Albany, Schenectady and Greene counties and constitutes an area of 2,686 square miles with a population of 705,000. Within these counties are approximately 124,500 acres of DEC-administered lands, managed under ten different land classifications. The zone includes two wilderness areas (37,411 acres), five wild forests (42,902 acres), two DEC public campgrounds (760 acres) and 15 detached parcels of forest preserve (447 acres). Throughout the five-county zone, there are 27,691 acres in 18 different state forests. There are also 1,851 acres of the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, 51 acres in scenic areas, 2,751 acres within the Albany Pine Bush Preserve (APB), 10,336 acres of wildlife management area (WMA) property and a 435-acre environmental education center in Albany County. Through a cooperative agreement between the department and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), rangers are responsible for patrolling

DEP parcels adjacent to state lands. The zone includes six forest rangers, one lieutenant forest ranger, and two seasonal assistant forest rangers.

Rangers responded to 31 search-and-rescue incidents in 2015. The frequency of these incidents has markedly increased as a result of more people coming to Greene County. Both Greene County and state government have promoted the Catskills as a popular tourist destination, particularly the Kaaterskill Falls area. Twenty years ago, an average of 12 calls for lost or injured people occurred in and around Kaaterskill Falls. In the past five years, that number has doubled and is likely to increase. For backcountry searches and rescues, rangers remain the primary first responders and rescuers.



Operational briefing at Heavenly Valley Road Fire

Hot, dry weather this spring resulted in rangers responding to 15 wildland fires. The largest was the 146-acre Heavenly Valley Road Fire in the Hunter-Westkill Wilderness Area, Lanesville, Greene County on May 7. The steep terrain was only accessible by foot or ATV and burned for eight days. Suppression efforts included 20 rangers, two aircraft from New Brunswick, Canada, a state police helicopter, DEC staff and volunteer firefighters.

Ranger Chris DiCintio helped the division adopt Mountain Rescue Association rope rescue protocols as its standard operating procedure. Throughout the year, DiCintio worked with a small committee of rangers to develop a standardized training program, which was then taught throughout the state. These skills have helped keep rangers among the best trained backcountry rescuers in New York. On July 2, a 39-year-old Astoria, Queens man fell 70 feet from a suspended slack line across Devil's Kitchen Gorge in the Indian Head Wilderness Area. Rangers and fire department rescuers worked for more than six hours using vertical and steep-angle rescue systems to extract the man from the gorge.

On July 9, the department began a large-scale construction project at Kaaterskill Falls. One-hundred stone steps were installed to allow visitors to hike to and around the falls. Ranger Rob Dawson, other rangers and assistant forest rangers (AFRs) maintained a daily presence at the falls until Labor Day to enforce the restricted area around the construction. Thirty tickets were issued for visitors entering the restricted area. During the construction, three rescues occurred. Two involved leg injuries along the old Kaaterskill Falls trail, while the third involved Ranger Christine Nelson assisting a couple attempting to leave the area at night.

Rangers continue to support the prescribed fire program at the Albany Pine Bush Preserve with personnel, training and equipment. Favorable weather conditions this past year allowed for eight burns that treated 220 acres. Involvement and participation in the prescribed

fire program continues to be valuable for rangers to advance their wildland firefighter federal credentials.

Region 4, Zone B by Lieutenant Robert Morse



Zone B consists of Delaware, Otsego, Montgomery and Schoharie counties encompassing 3,504 square miles. The zone comprises three wild forest areas totaling 34,810 acres, 14 state forest units covering 76,300 acres, four wildlife management areas totaling 7,352 acres, and nine forest preserve parcels totaling 5,000 acres. The zone includes two DEC-administered public campgrounds and a ranger field station at the Huckleberry Brook Storage Facility. Zone B is currently assigned five forest rangers and one lieutenant.

On March 21, state police in the Town of Deposit, Delaware County, requested forest ranger assistance with a search for a missing 30-year-old despondent Kingston man. All zone rangers responded, set up a command post at the fire house and organized 30 searchers into crews. One crew located the subject after about three hours of searching.



The new Kaaterskill Falls overlook platform

On August 12, Ranger Jason Seeley was notified by a Division of Operations road maintenance crew of approximately 20 marijuana plants on Bear Spring Wildlife Management Area. Seeley enlisted the help of Delaware County Sheriff's deputies and they removed the plants for evidence storage and eventual disposal.

On August 3, Ranger Seeley assisted ECO Sergeant Keith Isles with a large underage drinking party at Mallet Pond, Burnt-Rossman Hill State Forest, Schoharie County. This is a site of many past parties, primarily attended by students from SUNY Cobleskill, and several tickets were issued. On November 6, rangers intercepted a similar party involving 21 individuals from SUNY Cobleskill. Forty-two appearance tickets were issued for underage

possession of alcohol, depositing litter on state land, and having an organized event involving more than 20 people without a permit. Rangers are finding a trend of more frequent state land college parties being organized via websites such as Facebook and Yik Yak.

Ranger Joseph Bink assisted New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Pegg DiBenedetto with the reconnaissance of golden eagle nesting locations in Delaware County. Several of these locations were on department state land.

At 3:00 AM on July 18, the caretaker of the department's Bear Spring Campground asked rangers to control an unruly group of 25 campers on four sites violating quiet hours. Rangers Seeley and Jeff Breigle found many violations to campground regulations, including improperly setting up camping equipment off site, littering and failure to obey quiet hours. The four campsite permit holders, from Queens, were arrested, taken for immediate arraignment and paid a total of \$425 in fines.

Region 5, Zone A by Lieutenant Julie Harjung



Region 5 Zone A includes the Towns of Duane, Waverly, Franklin, Brighton, Harrietstown and Tupper Lake in Franklin County and the northern half of Long Lake, Hamilton County. Canoeing, camping, hiking, fishing and hunting, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are very popular state land activities. Zone A contains the Saint Regis Canoe Area, William C. Whitney Wilderness, and Saranac Lake and Debar Mountain wild forests, and parts of the Western High Peaks, totaling 284,055 acres of forest preserve and 103,914 acres of conservation easements. There are seven department campgrounds in this zone, including Fish Creek, Rollins Pond, Meachum Lake, Buck Pond, Saranac Islands, Lake Eaton and Forked Lake. Zone A is assigned six forest rangers, two seasonal assistant forest rangers (AFRs) and one lieutenant.

On March 7, Governor Andrew Cuomo once again initiated an Adirondack Winter Challenge that included team competition in downhill skiing, curling and bobsledding in Lake Placid. Prior to the event, Governor Cuomo took a ranger-guided snowmobile ride in Franklin County. The invitation-only event required rangers to work closely with the governor's state police protective services unit. The ride included DEC Commissioner Joe Martens, State Park's Commissioner Rose Harvey and several state, county and local officials.



Governor Cuomo meets Ranger David Russell at the Adirondack Winter Challenge.

On May 4, rangers were called to a wildfire on easement lands managed by Molpus Timber on the border of Franklin and St. Lawrence counties. The very remote 22-acre fire was only accessible by secondary unmarked roads. Fifty-five firefighters representing 13 fire departments from St. Lawrence, Franklin and Essex counties, along with seven rangers, responded and quickly contained the fire. The fire was started by a camp owner burning a cardboard box in a barrel. The camp owner, a 68-year-old Vernon, New Hampshire man, was charged with unattended fire and failure to clear sufficiently around the fire.

Zone A rangers increased patrols of department campgrounds this year that included speed enforcement, several evictions and two incidents of note. A significant tree cutting violation at Fish Creek Campground resulted in a fine of \$2,500 paid by a 26-year-old Massena man. The other incident involved a 73-year-old Martville man discharging a .357 revolver in the direction of his granddaughter's boyfriend while camping at Buck Pond Campground. Two rangers and two state troopers responded but could not locate the reported pistol. The scene was secured overnight by rangers and an evidence search the next day resulted in Ranger Tom Edmunds finding the revolver hidden in the woods a short distance away.

Aviation crew chief Ranger Jeff Balerno flew 38 missions with state police helicopters, including 12 search-and-rescue missions, six remote rescue hoists, four moose surveys and six utility missions. He also made 16 state police marijuana eradication flights resulting in the removal of over 2,100 plants with a street value of more than \$1 million, and 14 arrests, four of which were for felonies. Flights also resulted in the successful raid of an illegal meth lab. Balerno also assisted ECOs with two deer/bear-baiting detection flights, which resulted in several tickets being issued.

On August 7, state police notified Ray Brook Dispatch of a possible plane crash near the Adirondack Regional Airport in Lake Clear. State police aviation quickly located the plane and determined that all four occupants were killed. Rangers assisted the Federal Aviation Administration investigators with securing the scene and locating evidence around the aircraft.

In October, Ranger Megan Dominesey was dispatched for a lost hunter from Paul Smith's College. The 26-year-old Elma man went hunting near the college and did not return. Rangers located the man's vehicle and attempted to get the cell phone location from Franklin County 911. The coordinates proved inaccurate and rangers determined the man was farther away than anticipated. Rangers used sound techniques to locate the man later that evening and then escorted him to his vehicle by 10:30 PM.

On September 24, rangers were needed to rescue an abandoned dog that was stranded on the rocks in the Wilmington Flume. No onlookers would attempt the rescue themselves. Ranger Dominesey entered the water upstream of the dog and coaxed it downstream. Ranger Scott vanLaer was lowered via a technical rope system and both rangers soothed the dog and gained control. The dog was put in a mesh duffel bag and, along with Ranger Dominesey, was raised to the top of the cliff. The dog was turned over to an animal control officer and then later adopted by Ranger Dominesey. Her family named him "River."

Region 5, Zone B by Lieutenant Gary Friedrich



Region 5, Zone B is in the northeastern corner of the state. The zone includes the Saint Lawrence Valley in northern Franklin County, all of Clinton County and the ten towns in the Champlain Valley, Essex County. Zone B has large areas of remote forests and agricultural farmland, along with state-owned forest preserve islands on Lake Champlain. Along with numerous wildlife management areas and state forests outside the Adirondack Park, Zone B includes all or portions of the Chazy Highlands, Hammond Pond,

Split Rock and Taylor Pond wild forests and the Giant Mountain and Hurricane Mountain wilderness areas. Altogether, there are 149,031 acres of Adirondack Park Forest Preserve lands, 148,693 acres of conservation easements and 47,722 acres of state forest, wildlife management areas, unique areas, fishing access and trailways within Zone B. The zone includes six forest rangers and one lieutenant.

On January 24, Ray Brook Dispatch was notified that a 75-year-old Plattsburgh man with a history of cardiac problems was conscious but ill and slowly walking out. The hiking group said they were located at the junction of the old and new Lyon Mountain Trail. Lieutenant Gary Friedrich sent rangers David Russell, Rob Praczkajlo and Tom Edmunds to the scene. Russell arrived first and determined the man's condition had improved since initial contact. Edmunds and Praczkajlo helped at the trail head while Russell evacuated the man by snowmobile to an awaiting ambulance.



Rangers Rob Piersma and Erik Stratton lead correction officers to search for escaped inmates Matt and Sweat.

At 5:45 PM on April 18, Ranger Russell responded to a search for a missing 10-year-old girl on the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation. On arrival, 20 family members, state troopers and firefighters were already searching as a crew. Russell established an incident command post and ordered three additional rangers plus volunteer search crews. By 7:00 PM, seven additional crews were in the field. Russell requested St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Police to search buildings on the south side of Route 37, both east and west of the last known siting. At 8:24 PM, the child was located in good health by Tribal Police in a building near that point.

On June 6, state police asked Region 5 forest rangers to help them capture two escaped inmates, Richard Matt and David Sweat, from Clinton Correctional Facility, Dannemora. Lieutenant Julie Harjung and four rangers responded initially. This would be the beginning of the largest manhunt in New York since 1973. The search, spanning two counties, would include 94 rangers working a total of 13,212 hours. The effort lasted 22 days and involved 11 different local, state and federal agencies with 1,538 officers, or approximately 850 officers each day. Rangers quickly became the technical experts in the search function, using the national Incident Command System for managing all aspects. Rangers served in every field leadership position as well as filling most command and control positions. In addition, rangers supported tactical teams as they searched a multitude of cabins throughout the very remote and wild area. On June 27, Border Patrol agents shot and killed Matt near the Village of Malone. On June 28, a state trooper wounded and captured Sweat as he continued to flee within two miles of the Canadian Border.

On October 23, 2015, while on routine patrol, Ranger Russell discovered an illegal camp on state-owned land. Russell determined the camp was being accessed from a neighboring landowner's property. A joint detail with ECOs was planned for the following day,

the first day of the big hunting season. A 47-year-old Plattsburgh man was observed exiting the camp and was eventually cited for multiple state land violations. A consent order was issued for the camp to be removed during the winter to minimize damage to the land.

Region 5, Zone C by Lieutenant Charles Platt



Region 5, Zone C includes most of the Adirondack High Peaks and consists of the Towns of Keene, North Elba, Wilmington, and Harrietstown within Essex and Franklin counties. The land within the zone is more than 65 percent forest preserve, with 365,581 acres of state land and 12,518 acres of conservation easements. Zone C continues to have the highest incidence of rescues in the state, primarily due to the year-round popularity of the High Peaks region. Six forest

rangers, three seasonal assistant forest rangers (AFRs) and one lieutenant are assigned to this zone.

The most significant search and subsequent rescue began at 5:25 PM on March 21, when Ray Brook Dispatch received a call from lost hikers on the summit of Mount Marcy. A 39-year-old Potsdam woman stated she was on snowshoes with her sons, ages 7 and 11. They had left the summit of Marcy at 4 PM and then lost the trail above the tree line due to high winds and blowing snow. They had left their backpack with coats and two snowboards at the tree line before ascending to the summit but could not find their gear or the trail while descending.

Ranger Scott vanLaer was stationed overnight at the Lake Colden Interior Outpost and was the first to respond on foot to Mount Marcy's summit. A crew of four rangers left from South Meadow by snowmobile and met with vanLaer at 8:50 PM on the Marcy Plateau. The five reached the summit at 9:30 PM and began to search the summit area, encountering winds that were 30-40 mph and gusting to 50 mph, with temperatures of -10 degrees creating wind chills of -30 to -40 F. Search efforts continued throughout the night, with two crews of three rangers each leaving from South Meadows by snowmobile at 3:30 AM to replace the initial crew. When there was no sign of the mother and sons by daybreak, five additional rangers with snowmobiles and six state police special operations team (SORT) members were brought in at 7:30 AM to supplement the crews already on the mountain. The state police helicopter with a ranger on board launched at first light but was turned back by strong winds. Based on the forecast, a state police Huey helicopter with better stability in windy conditions was requested from Albany to supplement the search efforts. In mid-morning, the weather broke and enabled the helicopter from Lake Clear to search the summit. The trio was located around 11:00 AM on Schofield Cobble southwest of Marcy's summit by the helicopter crew. Ranger Will Benzel was on board the helicopter as a secondary observer and was inserted via hoist to evaluate the trio's medical conditions and to prepare them for helicopter evacuation via hoist. The two children were first



Rangers prepare to helicopter hoist an injured climber on Wallface Mountain.

hoisted at 11:50 AM and taken to Adirondack Medical Center, Lake Placid, for evaluation and treatment. Then the mother was hoisted at 12:38 PM and taken to Adirondack Medical Center, Saranac Lake, for treatment. The search-and-rescue involved 28 rangers, 4 ECOs, 6 SORT members, two helicopters and numerous snowmobiles.



Rangers search for a Potsdam woman on Mount Marcy.

On June 28, rangers responded to a call for help from a 35-year-old Cato man who was near the summit of Marcy. At 6:30 AM, he said he was lost, hypothermic and lacked proper clothing. Rangers Scott vanLaer, Tom Edmunds, Jake DesLauriers, Assistant Forest Ranger Sarah Ryan and Lake Colden Caretaker Sean Platt responded initially. At 2:00 PM, the man was located by Ryan and Platt and then joined shortly by the other rangers. During the medical assessment, the man advised he had eaten some flowers and berries which were making him nauseous. The rangers determined that he had ingested Indian Poke, a toxic plant.

A critical care technician from Keene Valley Fire Department treated his sickness. An attempt to hoist the subject out by helicopter failed due to weather, so a carry-out team was sent in. The man was able to walk but occasionally had to be carried by the team. By 3:45 AM, June 29, he was out of the woods and enroute to Elizabethtown Hospital for treatment.

On August 17, rangers responded to a technical climber who had fallen 40 feet on Wallface Cliffs in the Eastern High Peaks. Rangers Rob Mecus and Chris Kostoss and volunteer climbers Adam Crowfoot and Royce Van Evera were taken by helicopter to the 23-year-old Carmel man. With a rope rescue system and rescue litter, the man was lowered to the base of the cliffs. Rangers Ben Baldwin, Art Perryman, Chuck Kabrehl, and Jamison Martin then carried him down slope to a point where a helicopter hoisted him aboard and then flew him to Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake.

In addition to a very busy search-and-rescue year, Zone C also provided patrols to the department's Meadowbrook Campground, Ray Brook, for Rugby Weekend, July 31 and August 1. Although it has traditionally been an unruly weekend, with underage drinking and assorted other violations, it has lately become uneventful due to proactive patrols by rangers and ECOs.

Region 5, Zone D by Lieutenant Steve Preston



Region 5, Zone D comprises Fulton and Hamilton counties. State land unit management areas include whole or parts of the West Canada Lake, Blue Ridge, Pigeon Lake, Siamese Ponds and Silver Lake wilderness areas; Moose River, Ferris Lake, Shaker Mountain, Blue Mountain Lake, and Jessup River wild forests; and West Canada Mountain and Hudson River Gorge primitive areas, totaling 809,929 acres. Within Zone D are 17 DEC campgrounds, 73,993 acres of conservation easements and 6,081 acres of state forests. Eight rangers, one seasonal assistant forest ranger and one lieutenant are assigned to this zone.

On January 19 at 1:44 PM, Ray Brook Dispatch reported a 30-year-old Hamilton, NJ male was riding his snowmobile in the Squaw Valley Easement, had struck a tree and had severe injuries. Rangers Bruce Lomnitzer, Jen Temple, Gary Miller and Jay Scott, who were on an interior snowmobile detail in the Moose River Plains, responded to the accident, along with Indian Lake Fire and Ambulance. Rangers and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) reached the subject at 2:30 PM and determined that a helicopter evacuation was necessary but not available due to weather. Basic first aid was administered and the man was evacuated on a rescue toboggan to an ambulance. It was later reported the man suffered from two collapsed lungs, four broken vertebrae and multiple rib fractures.



Rangers Temple and Miller attending to injured snowmobiler

On July 5 at 3:30 PM, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department reported an 18-year-old Johnstown man had fallen over the cliff face at Echo Cliffs, Piseco. The young man was standing at a look-out point on Panther Mountain when the moss gave way and he slipped over the edge. He was able to grab onto a tree but that also gave way resulting in a fall of approximately 70-110 feet to the base of the cliffs. The man was awake and conscious but had a severe head injury. Multiple rescue units from the Piseco area responded, as well as Rangers Michael Thompson, David Kallen, John Ploss and Bruce Lomnitzer, along with ECO Scott Pierce. The rescue carryout was approximately two miles and involved multiple low-angle rope belays through steep terrain and rock debris fields. By 7:15 PM, the man was out of the woods and airlifted to Albany Medical Center.



Ranger Bruce Lomnitzer assists whitewater rafters on the Upper Hudson River.

On July 19, the third annual Adirondack Challenge took place in Hamilton County. This event was promoted by Governor Cuomo to include several venues, a hike into the OK Slip Falls, a whitewater raft race on the Indian River and horseback rides to the Cedar River from the recently opened Outer Gooley Club. The river race had many participants, including Governor Cuomo, members of the state legislature and other local officials. Many hours of planning by rangers and regional staff went into this event. The unified command of Forest Ranger Captain John Streiff and State Police Captain John Tibbitts managed security and public safety, while Ranger Bruce Lomnitzer developed the incident action plan for

the raft race. During the hike, raft race and horse ride, seven Region 5 rangers were assigned stations on and along the river, two rangers were assigned as guides for the hike and one ranger was assigned to the horse ride. The only major incident took place after the event when one of the stables that was providing wagon rides had a motor vehicle accident on State Route 28. The horse trailer overturned, trapping the four horses for two hours. All were removed with only minor injuries.

On August 11 at approximately 5:00 PM, a 55-year-old Troy man was walking his small dog near Stewart's Landing, Ferris Lake Wild Forest, Stratford, when the unleashed dog encountered a bear. The bear attacked the dog and then the owner after the man tried to separate the animals. Eventually, he was able to strike the bear on the nose with a stick, causing the bear to run away. Both the victim and his dog suffered bites, scratches and puncture wounds. Ranger Ploss was sent to assist the Stratford Volunteer Ambulance. After the man was placed in the ambulance and transported to a hospital in Utica, Ploss, Lieutenant Steve Preston and Jay Scott, with his trained bear dogs, assisted department wildlife biologists and ECOs in trying to locate the bear but without success.

Region 5, Zone E by Lieutenant Brian Dubay



Zone E compromises all of Warren County and the southern half of Essex County. The southern part of the zone is made up of the Lake George Wild Forest and the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest, while the central and northern portions are mostly wilderness, including the Pharaoh, Siamese, and Hoffman wilderness areas in their entirety and the southern portions of the High Peaks and Dix wilderness areas. State lands total 440,000 acres and include six DEC-administered campgrounds. On July 1, public access to the recently purchased (2013) Chain Lakes Tract was opened for public use after much planning. This land was recently classified a mixture of wilderness, primitive and wild forest and has many different public opportunities. Zone E includes two seasonal assistant forest rangers (AFRs), nine forest rangers and one lieutenant.

Zone E rangers had two unusual searches in 2015. On January 1, the parents of a missing 34-year-old Schenectady woman began honking their car horn outside the residence of Lieutenant Brian Dubay. Sometime later, Dubay and Ranger Evan Donegan located the woman and her companion in the Dix Wilderness Area and reunited them with the parents. Rangers then mentioned that the proper way of reporting a missing hiker is to call the Ray Brook Dispatch Center. The largest and most intense search was for an 82-year-old Troy man that began on November 15. The man went hunting with friends near Lily Pond in the Lake George Wild Forest, but was never seen again. Rangers were assisted by as many as 250 volunteers in one day and searched more than 11 square miles of remote wild forest. The search transitioned to a limited-continuous status in anticipation of evidence, clues and better weather.



Ranger Rick Schroeder briefs volunteers about a missing Troy hunter.

Rescue incidents increased by 20 percent in 2015 when compared to previous years. On August 11, rangers rescued three men and three women, all from Cortland and in their twenties, who became trapped in a canyon below Hanging Spear Falls, High Peaks Wilderness Area. The group mistakenly descended into the canyon before realizing they could not get out after rain made the rocks slippery. Fortunately, they brought a satellite phone to call for help. Rangers Ben Baldwin, Evan Donegan,

Art Perryman, Jacob DesLauriers, and Lieutenant Dubay hiked into the gorge and set up a technical rope system to raise each subject out one at a time. Hypothermia became a factor as the rescue process took additional time and the subjects were underdressed for cool temperatures. Perryman started a warming fire in the pouring rain, while the other rangers set up a rope safety system to extract the group. Other rescues of note included two Fulton County men in their thirties who had become dehydrated on Vanderwhaker Mountain on September 9. Rangers determined the two men had given all their water to their St. Bernard dog, which had collapsed and subsequently died.

A significant wildfire occurred in Zone E this year when powerlines ignited a fire near Newcomb on May 9, which burned 60 acres and a seasonal home. The largest fire of the year in the Adirondacks began on September 26 in the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness. The Crane Pond Fire eventually burned 122 acres and took four days to contain and nine days until declared out.



Ranger Ben Baldwin confirms his location on the Crane Pond Fire.

Region 5, Zone F by Lieutenant John Solan



Region 5, Zone F includes Saratoga and Washington counties. Combined, both counties have 36,636 acres of forest preserve, 1,056 acres of wildlife-management areas (WMA), 7,073 acres of state forest and 31,811 acres of conservation easement lands. Shelving Rock is a heavily used day-use and undeveloped camping area located in the Lake George Wild Forest in Washington County. Shelving Rock offers the only drive-up forest preserve access to Lake George and is a popular camping location for young people. In addition, both counties have land holdings by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Battenkill and Lake George conservancies that are generally adjacent to department-administered state lands. There are approximately 30 miles of snowmobile trails in Saratoga County on state lands and easements and approximately 50 miles of snowmobile trails in Washington County. Zone F consists of five forest rangers and one lieutenant.



Truck that caused a 17-acre Saratoga County wildfire

Spring fire season was fairly active with the most notable a 17-acre fire on the afternoon of April 15 during a red flag warning. The wildfire started from a semi-tractor trailer fire on the shoulder of Interstate 87. Strong winds spread the fire rapidly and all three lanes of the highway were closed for several hours as the fires were extinguished and the vehicle was removed.

An annual July 4 anonymous Internet-advertised event has been steadily growing on the Battenkill River. Approximately 1,000-1,200 people of all ages float down the river in tubes, canoes, homemade rafts and kayaks. Most people access the river at a highway rest area on State Route 313 at the Vermont state line and exit at Battenkill State Forest, Washington County. Excessive and underage alcohol consumption, drug use, fighting, littering and illegal motor vehicle use on state land has become a significant problem. Rangers increased their patrols this year and saw a reduction in general offenses.

The last Monday of July is the traditional Log Bay Day on Lake George. Log Bay is surrounded by forest preserve state land within the Shelving Rock Special Management Area. Lieutenant John Solan led 16 rangers and another lieutenant during the 10:00 AM to midnight detail. Even with afternoon thunderstorms, over 2,000 people attended, with many accessing the bay through state land. Rangers were assisted by sheriff's deputies, state police and West Fort Ann Fire and EMS. Several tickets and arrests were made for violations of state land regulations and drug possession. This is the first year in the history of the event that there were no DWI offenses. As in past years, every car entering the area was stopped and the drivers informed of regulations and zero tolerance for underage alcohol and drug possession.

On November 25, Saratoga County Sheriff's deputies asked rangers to help find a 68-year-old Saratoga man missing from his home. Rangers organized 136 volunteers to search approximately 1,200 acres of open land surrounding the man's property. Deputies and

investigators have followed up numerous leads and tips, but the man had not been located by the end of the year.

A winter priority is to monitor and patrol 30 miles of snowmobile trails on conservation easements and forest preserve in northwest Saratoga County. These trails are heavily used when snow conditions allow. Rangers coordinate patrols by county, state and state park police. During peak weekends, more than 100 snowmobiles per hour will pass safety and compliance checkpoints. Saratoga Sand Plains Wildlife Management Area is the second winter priority, with several miles of groomed and ungroomed cross-country ski and snowshoe trails that connect state and public access properties. Once again, an increase of ranger patrols resulted in greater compliance and fewer enforcement actions.

Recreational use of the Shelving Rock Day Use Area and adjacent trails dramatically increased in 2015. Most of these visitors are from major urban areas in downstate New York and New Jersey, with little or no outdoor experience. During nice weather, the influx of visitors usually exceeds the parking capacity of the area. Rangers routinely deal with parking problems that make Shelving Rock Road impassable. Inexperienced hikers tend to over-estimate their hiking skills and are less prepared to navigate at night. The result was that rangers made numerous responses to find overdue hikers throughout the year. A 61-year-old Queensbury man sustained serious injuries when he slid down Shelving Rock Falls. He was stabilized and evacuated by West Fort Ann Fire Department, Fort Ann EMS and rangers.

Region 6, Zone A by Lieutenant Jay Terry



Region 6 Zone A consists entirely of Saint Lawrence County, geographically the largest county in New York at 2,842 square miles. It includes 252,857 acres of state land and 159,322 acres of conservation easements. The majority of this land lies in the southern portion of the county. The most significant tracts are the Five Ponds, Bog River and Low's Lake wilderness areas and the Aldrich Pond, Horseshoe Lake, Cranberry Lake, Whites Hill, Raquette Boreal, and Grass River wild forests. In addition, there are large tracts of easements, numerous state forests and Cranberry Lake Campground, with 173 campsites. This zone includes one lieutenant, six forest rangers, and two assistant forest rangers (AFRs).

On May 18, while on boat patrol on Low's Lake near Campsite 12 in the Five Ponds Wilderness Area, AFR Dawn Andrews was notified by a 53-year-old Middlebury, Vermont woman that her 53-year-old husband was experiencing severe lower abdominal pain. Andrews directed the woman to paddle to shore where they both helped her husband walk to Andrews's vehicle. Ray Brook Dispatch sent Long Lake Rescue to the Sabattis Station parking area, where they met Andrews and the couple. The man was then transported to Adirondack Medical Center, Saranac Lake.



Ranger Will Benzel interviews a subject illegally living on state lands in Brasher State Forest.

On July 18, Ranger Corene Black received a complaint that a camping trailer had been at a Horseshoe Lake Primitive Area campsite for several weeks. Black found an unregistered camping trailer, camping equipment and garbage. The campsite was photographed and monitored for several days, during which time no one returned. The trailer was eventually towed from the site and it was determined a 31-year-old Tupper Lake man was the

owner. Rangers Will Benzel and Black interviewed the man who admitted to leaving the trailer unoccupied at the campsite for nearly a month. Black issued tickets for camping structure unoccupied for more than 48 hours, unsanitary campsite, camping without a permit, abandoning property on state land, unlawful possession of marijuana and unregistered trailer.

On September 14, Ranger Benzel responded to a report of a 65-year-old Luts, Florida woman complaining of pain and a possible broken leg after a fall on the trail near Bear Mountain Summit. Benzel and members of the Cranberry Lake Rescue Squad carried the woman approximately two miles using a rescue litter with a wheel to the ambulance at the trail-head.

On October 2, Rangers Joshua Hogan, Howard Thomes and Benzel were at Brasher State Forest where a 48-year-old Massena man had set up a camper with all of his personal belongings. He had moved onto state land after being evicted from his relative's property and felt that he had every right to live on state land until he found alternate housing. After a period of discussion, the man was issued multiple tickets for state land and camping violations and was made to leave state land in the condition he had found it.

On December 14, Ranger Thomes was called to the California Road State Forest for a 45-year-old Gouverneur man who was hiking with his dog and had become disoriented. He called 9-1-1 to say he was on a human-made road. Thomes determined the man was most likely on a log skidding trail and found him on the first trail he checked.

Region 6, Zone B by Lieutenant Joel Nowalk



Region 6, Zone B comprises Lewis and Jefferson counties and the northern portion of Herkimer County. It encompasses the Tug Hill Plateau, which annually receives the highest measured snowfall in the state, and the western portion of the Adirondack Park. Zone B has a diverse array of state land, ranging from 26,964 acres of wildlife management areas (WMAs) in Jefferson County, 104,893 acres of state forests managed for multiple use in Lewis and Jefferson counties, and 204,493 acres of forest preserve lands in eastern Lewis and northern Herkimer counties. The zone includes four large conservation easements totaling 104,957 acres. These diverse state lands host a variety of user groups throughout the year. With heavy snowfall, Zone B has the largest snowmobile trail system in the state. Cross-country ski trails have been developed in many state forests, and a network of horse trails has evolved in a portion of the Independence River Wild Forest. The popularity of whitewater rafting and kayaking has brought users to the Beaver, Black and Moose rivers. Hunting and fishing still comprise a large portion of use on state land. Zone B includes one lieutenant, six forest rangers and two assistant forest rangers.

On September 20, Lieutenant Joel Nowalk and Ranger Martin Candee responded to a reported unexploded military ordinance on Lakeview Wildlife Management Area in Jefferson County. Nowalk coordinated the search with the U.S. Army's 760th Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) unit led by Sergeant Kelly and two soldiers. Once the ordinance was found and the area secured, the EOD team exploded it in place. It was determined the device was a Canadian military flare that had washed up on shore. According to the sergeant, these flares can reignite if resubmerged in water.



Explosive device found on wildlife management area

From March 10 through March 13, rangers directed a large-scale operation to move 80 tons of lime to Bear Pond in the Five Ponds Wilderness Area to neutralize water acidity for improved brook trout habitat. Logistical planning among the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Operations, and Lands and Forests, and the state police was crucial to a successful mission. Rangers developed an incident action plan, provided landing zone safety on Stillwater Reservoir and Bear Pond, directed communications, and positioned safety equipment in the event of an emergency. Two state police helicopters were used to sling load the lime and a 25-person crew to Bear Pond. In addition, rangers created a winter trail to Bear Pond in case helicopters could not evacuate crew members.

In April, the "SNIRT, snow and dirt run" takes place annually in Lewis and Jefferson counties. The event has approximately 4,000 participants who ride town and county roads that have been opened to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). The event is a benefit for the local snowmobile club, "Sno-Pals." As in years past, rangers were assigned to this event with the objective of protecting state lands and providing for public safety. Twelve forest rangers

coordinated their patrols with other state, county and local police agencies. Ten tickets were issued by rangers, four of which were for illegal vehicle operation on state lands.

On Sunday, July 19, Rangers Michael Hubschmitt and John Scanlon responded to a reported hostage and bomb incident at the Calvary Bible Church, Town of Greig, after Lewis County 911 received multiple calls. Hubschmitt and Scanlon were among the first police on scene and immediately established a perimeter around the church. After additional police arrived, it was determined that the church goers were not hostages. Ranger Scanlon assisted local police with searching the church and outbuildings for any suspicious packages. An explosives-trained K9 unit verified the area was safe. The Lewis County Sheriff's Department continued the investigation.

Region 6, Zone C by Lieutenant Scott Murphy



Zone C comprises all of Oneida and most of Herkimer counties. State land holdings include 274,532 acres divided among 29 state forests, portions of four wild forest preserve areas, three wilderness areas, one unique area, three wildlife management areas, Alger Island and Nicks Lake campgrounds, the Hinckley Day Use Area, and 21,949 acres of conservation easements. Zone C includes six forest rangers, one seasonal assistant forest ranger and one lieutenant.

On June 12, Ranger Greg Hoag was patrolling state lands in Herkimer County and overheard Lewis and Oneida County 9-1-1 dispatches coordinating sheriff's deputies and state police to look for a suicidal 34-year-old Port Leyden man. The search narrowed to an area around Popple Pond State Forest, Boonville. After police were unable to locate the man, Lewis County Dispatch obtained his cell phone coordinates, showing him in a large wooded area in or near the state forest. Hoag plotted the coordinates and hiked to that location and found the man. Hoag was able to disarm the man of a pistol and knives and then transferred him to deputies and state police.



Snowmobile accident scene

On September 22, rangers were asked to help find a 91-year-old Russia, NY man who was reported missing in the forested area near his residence. Family members had initially searched the area without success. Lieutenant Scott Murphy requested additional assistance from state police and ECOs. Thirteen troopers, two ECOs, five rangers, four state police K-9s and a helicopter were organized into six teams to simultaneously search all high-

probability areas. The man was located at 9:20 PM and was evacuated to an awaiting ambulance by 10 PM.

On October 10, four rangers assisted local police and firefighters with the rescue of a 54-year-old Syracuse woman with a leg injury at Bald Mountain's summit, Fulton Chain Wild Forest. EMTs stabilized and packaged the woman for a wheeled rescue-litter carry down the mountain. Rope systems were used to lower the woman through two especially steep locations.

On November 1, rangers assisted state police and deputies looking for a 39-year-old Boonville man and his 14-year-old daughter who were deer hunting on Popple Pond State Forest. Police had located the man's vehicle but they could not locate the pair. Ranger Bob Coscomb called the man's cell phone to determine their condition and to tell them to stay put. They assured Coscomb that they would and would start a campfire because they did not have cold weather clothing for the night air. Coscomb plotted the cell phone coordinates and determined the two were in a vast wooded area over a mile from their vehicle. By 8:00 PM, Coscomb found them both warm by their campfire and returned them to their vehicle.

Region 7 by Lieutenant James L. McPherson



Region 7 functions as one large ranger administrative zone, stretching from the Pennsylvania border north to the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, and from the Finger Lakes east to Unadilla River and includes nine counties in central New York. The total area exceeds 6,700 square miles. Forest ranger responsibility has expanded to include more than 261,000 acres of state forest lands, wildlife management areas, unique areas, conservation easements and one multiple-use area. Six forest rangers and one lieutenant are assigned to this zone.

On May 9, Ranger Joan Oldroyd responded to a wildfire on Five Streams State Forest in the Town of German, Chenango County. The fire burned nearly 20 acres of logging slash and timber on state forest lands for four days until finally put out on May 12. Containing the fire involved multiple fire departments and several forest rangers. In addition to leading control efforts, Oldroyd investigated the cause and origin of the fire. The investigation indicated the fire had been caused by mechanized equipment.



Smokey Bear sign at Sherburne Office

On August 13, rangers investigated a reported marijuana growing operation on Bear Swamp State Forest. The site was extensive and involved over 100 plants in large containers. Evidence led to an adjoining camp property. Rangers and state police set up trail cameras and

a search warrant was executed. In addition to the marijuana, related charges were issued by state police, and several Environmental Conservation Law violations were also issued to the responsible party by rangers.

On August 15, state police asked forest rangers to help find an 81-year-old Chenango County man reported to have dementia and last seen the day before at his residence. Ranger Joan Oldroyd was assigned as incident commander with Ranger Jeremy Oldroyd as operations section chief. The incident expanded over eight days, with forest rangers, state police, volunteer search teams, fire departments, the Civil Air Patrol, ECOs and family and friends searching for a total of 5,200 hours over 2,000 acres. The man was found immobile on August 22 in a thick, brushy, wooded area nearly a mile uphill from his residence. He was quickly evacuated to a local ambulance for transport to the hospital.

On September 14, Ranger Mike Burkholder responded to an uncontrolled burn in the Town of Pitcher, Chenango County. The local fire department was refusing to enter the property without law enforcement presence due to a landowner who was known to be armed. Deputies advised that a known felon and drug dealer lived on the property and there was an active warrant out for his arrest. A neighbor advised that the wanted 32-year-old man had alarms on the road and also has been known to escape down a secondary hidden driveway. Ranger Burkholder and a deputy approached the residence from the woods to the rear and located more than a dozen hunting blinds along the hillside. Two other deputies encountered the man near his residence and with Burkholder's assistance, he was taken safely into custody. Drugs and weapons were confiscated and the fire department was provided safe passage to extinguish the fire.

Region 8 by Lieutenant Martin Flanagan



Region 8 is considered one ranger administrative zone and comprises the following 11 counties in west-central New York: Orleans, Genesee, Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Livingston, Yates, Seneca, Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung. The region includes 88,699 acres of state lands divided among 53 parcels. These lands are evenly divided between state forests (49,301 acres) and wildlife management areas (39,398 acres).

The region has a mix of urban and rural areas. Its largest metropolitan area is Rochester, in northern Monroe County. Significant oil and gas deposits are located in the region, and some state land parcels have active wells. Region 8 often has a higher incidence of wildfires than either Region 9 to the west or Region 7 to the east. Many state parks are located in the region, with the two largest being Watkins Glen and Letchworth. The region is also home to several federal properties, including the Finger Lakes National Forest and the Montezuma and Iroquois national wildlife refuges. Region 8 has one lieutenant, five forest rangers and two seasonal assistant forest rangers (AFRs).

Rescue efforts were brought to a successful conclusion after an exhaustive seven-day search for a missing 70-year-old Livingston County man. Region 8 rangers used a unified command structure with three local agencies, while Region 9 rangers ran field operations. Searchers included members from state and local police agencies, 12 fire departments, eight search-and-rescue teams, two water rescue teams, a county dive team, sheriff's mounted

patrol, state police aviation, and K-9s from both law enforcement and NYS Federation Search Teams. Over 200 searchers worked more than 1,600 hours to cover 1,250 acres.



Ranger Carpenter leads SWAT training.

Rangers Tim Carpenter and Anne Staples instructed sheriffs' special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams from Steuben and Livingston counties in basic land navigation. SWAT team members learned the basics of navigation with map and compass and global positioning systems (GPS) and then practiced their skills at Mount Washington State Forest. This training helped the deputies complete their New York State SWAT training standards.

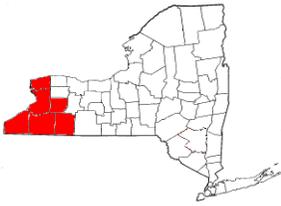
In July, helicopter crew chief Ranger Dan Cordell assisted state police with a helicopter rescue of a 25-year-old South

Byron man who had fallen into the Letchworth State Park Gorge. State park police had a rope system established to reach the injured man who had sustained a leg injury. He was safely hoisted out of the gorge and then transferred to an ambulance for transportation to a local hospital.

On July 31, Ranger Cordell assisted state and local police in locating a 35-year-old Mount Morris man who had escaped from parole custody that morning. Lieutenant Martin Flanagan assigned rangers Ann Staples and Bill Meehan to assist as he managed perimeter security of the search area. Although the fugitive was not found through that day's effort, he was apprehended later that week.

This year was the inaugural year of the 100-kilometer Ultra Marathon Twisted Branches Trail Race on Labor Day weekend on the Finger Lakes Trail that extends through Ontario, Steuben and Yates counties and multiple state land units. The event took years of preparation to secure permissions, permits and insurance by race promoters. There are more than 10,000 feet of elevational changes over the course, with many sections not readily accessible by road. Region 8 rangers were involved in the planning and provided important logistical and safety considerations. Rangers Dormer and Carpenter monitored the participants as they progressed on the Finger Lakes Trail from Hi Tor Wildlife Management Area to Italy Hill and Urbana state forests. Approximately 100 people registered for the race. Although race day was quite hot, only minor injuries were addressed.

Region 9 by Lieutenant Shawn Plaisted



Region 9 is considered one ranger division administrative zone and comprises the six western-most counties in New York: Niagara, Erie, Wyoming, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany. There are more than 102,490 acres of state forest lands located on approximately 75 parcels within the region. In addition, there are 17,739 acres of wildlife management areas located on nine parcels. Most of this state land experiences heavy public use due to its proximity to the Buffalo and Rochester metropolitan areas. One notable example is the Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area, which attracts hundreds of day-use recreationists in the warmer months. This area includes Zoar Valley Gorge and Cattaraugus Creek, the region's only regulated whitewater river. Overall, the region is a mix of urban, suburban and rural areas. There are many state land parcels with significant oil and gas deposits, some of which have active wells and pipelines. In addition, solution mining for salt is also located on both state and private parcels in Wyoming County. Several state parks are located in the region, the two largest being Allegany and Letchworth. The region is also home to several Native American reservations, the most sizeable being the Allegany Indian Reservation near Salamanca and the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation near Brant. Seven forest rangers, one lieutenant and one seasonal assistant forest ranger are assigned to the zone.



Ranger Krulish leads a search crew.

On May 24, Ranger David Pachan was asked to issue a camping permit to a caller then camping at the Chautauqua Gorge State Forest. Based on the information given over the phone, Pachan requested a background check of the 26-year-old Oklahoma man. The check indicated the man was wanted on felony charges in Oklahoma. Pachan and a state trooper found a 34-year-old Oklahoma woman at the campsite. Pachan checked the area, found the man and took him into custody. A check of the woman indicated she too was wanted. Both were processed and sent to Chautauqua County Jail.

Trail cameras have become a critical tool for rangers at protecting state lands and that was proven once again on April 11 in Chautauqua County. Ranger Pachan had previously placed a camera on a site where people had been illegally dumping garbage. Soon after, a 35-year-old Stockton man discarded an old freezer full of rotten meat. The camera caught his vehicle and a picture of the driver who was identified by county deputies. The man was charged with a solid waste offense and had to remove what he dumped.

In April, Rangers Justin Thaine and Peter Liebig assisted local emergency responders in searching for a three-year-old Allegany County girl who had wandered from her home. By evening, the temperature had dropped to 38 degrees, with a mix of snow and rain. Rangers John Kennedy, Wayne Krulish, Dan Cordell, Bill Meehan, and Lieutenant Shawn Plaisted were

included, along with state police, Allegany County Search Team members, sheriff's deputies, ECOs and numerous fire department and ambulance volunteers. The remote search area encompassed part of Hiltonville State Forest and private lands that had recently been logged. The young girl was found that evening by a search crew led by Meehan almost three-quarters of a mile from her home. She was reunited with her family with minor exposure to the cold and a few scratches.



Drug paraphernalia found on state land

Being observant and cautious proved to be good actions by a local hunter on Watts Flats Wildlife

Management Area in December. The hunter stumbled upon a suspicious duffel bag and called Ranger Pachan to report his find. Pachan quickly realized he was looking at a portable methamphetamine lab. State police sent their contaminated crime scene emergency response team to examine the materials. Items included soda bottles, Drano, naphtha, coffee filters, sulfuric acid, lithium batteries, canning jars and other miscellaneous items. The response team carefully contained and removed the explosive and poisonous materials. No arrests had been made by the end of the year.

Aviation Program by Lieutenant Gary Friedrich

A long-standing and productive partnership with New York State Police has been to assign rangers as crew chiefs and/or hoist operators on their helicopters. Rangers are valued in these roles because of their specialized knowledge of remote wildlands, topography, search-and-rescue techniques and risk assessment. Helicopters and, to a lesser degree, fixed-wing aircraft are vital aircraft for successful wildfire control and search-and-rescue missions. The following 22 rangers have been trained as crew chiefs and hoist operators: Dave Meade, Region 3; Chris DiCintio, Region 4; Jeff Balerno, Kevin Burns, Dan Fox, Jim Giglinto, Lieutenant Gary Friedrich, Tony Goetke, Dave Kallen, Ian Kerr, Joe LaPierre, Bruce Lomnitzer, Ben Baldwin, Jenifer Temple, Robert Prackajlo, and Chris Kostoss, Region 5; Will Benzel, Dave Cornell, and Pete Evans, Region 6; Scott Jackson, Region 7; Dan Cordell and Lieutenant Tim Flanagan, Region 8; and John Kennedy, Region 9. Rangers Kevin Slade, Region 3; Robert Dawson and Joe Hess, Region 4 are currently trainees but all 25 rangers train monthly to maintain their skills and expertise. In 2015, there were 50 training events that involved 1,200 work hours. Rangers conducted 15 search observation flights, 23 hoist rescue missions, 20 marijuana detection on state lands flights, 15 utility/resupply internal/external sling

load transports, 14 firefighting bucket drop missions, six aerial moose survey flights, and one standby.

Forest Ranger Retirements



Captain Pat Kilpeck

Captain Patrick Kilpeck retired in August after serving 32 years with DEC. Pat was a graduate of State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and began his department career in 1984 as a pesticide inspector, Region 8, Bath Office. His 28-year forest ranger career began in 1988 in Region 6, Boonville. Six years later, he was promoted to lieutenant in Region 4, Stamford, and then captain in 1998, where he served for the remainder of his career. During his service, Pat had mobilized with six out-of-state fire crews to six different states. He served as chairperson for the division's Wildland Search Advisory Committee throughout his last 17 years. As an avid historian, Pat worked continually throughout his career to help collect NYS Forest Ranger memorabilia to preserve our long and distinguished history. Pat frequently helped instruct at DEC Office of Public Protection (OPP) Basic Schools in NYS Forest Ranger History and National Incident Command. During his career, he helped oversee the division's response to many events, including the 1998 ice storm, 2001 terrorist attacks, 2002 Adirondack fires, 2003 capsized ship Stellamare in the Port of Albany, 2004 chronic wasting disease, 1996 and 2006 catastrophic Catskill Mountain floods, 2008 Northeast Forest Fire Supervisors Conference, and Tropical Storm Irene (2011) and Superstorm Sandy (2012). Pat is a proud husband, father of three children, and a recent grandfather.



Captain Dan Walsh

Captain Daniel Walsh retired after 28 years of state service as a forest ranger, lieutenant and captain. Dan was hired to the Dutchess County Ranger District in 1986 and quickly adapted to the fast pace life of working in suburbia New York. In 1994, Dan was promoted to lieutenant in the Central Office as the division's training officer. As such, he was the officer-in-charge of the first Forest Ranger Training Academy held at Camp Smith, Peekskill in 1994. For Dan's exceptional work with the first academy, Colonel Edward Jacoby presented him with the Superintendent's Award at the graduation ceremony. In 1996, Dan was promoted to forest ranger captain and continued to serve in the Central Office in administrative affairs. In 2003, Dan transferred to the Region 3 Forest Ranger Captain position in New Paltz, where he successfully continued the legacy of field training the majority of forest rangers who began their careers in the Hudson Valley.



Lieutenant Joe Shafer

Lieutenant Joseph Shafer started his forest ranger career on March 27, 1987 when he was assigned to the Rockland County ranger district in Region 3. In March 1988, he transferred to Columbia County, Region 4. Ranger Shafer was promoted to the position of lieutenant on August 11, 1994, working out of the Stamford Office. In 2003, Lt. Shafer transferred to Region 8 and was assigned to work out of the Bath Office. He was well-traveled having visited nearly all of the United States and many nations in Europe and Asia. Joe also was an avid sportsman who fished and hunted whenever the opportunity presented itself. He retired from state service on January 29, 2015.

Ranger William Meehan started his forest ranger career on March 3, 1988 and was assigned to the Schuyler, Chemung and Seneca County ranger district in Region 8. Bill was very active in the division's fire program. He frequently accompanied the NYS wildfire crews on out of state assignments, usually in the capacity of crew boss or as a crew rep. Bill was also active in the Region 8 Prescribed Fire Program. He helped develop prescribed burn plans for both Lands and Forests and Fish and Wildlife. Bill also reviewed prescribed fire plans that were submitted by other agencies and private entities for approval. He was usually the burn boss for DEC-prescribed fires in Region 8. In 2006, Ranger Meehan participated in the manhunt for Ralph "Bucky"



Ranger Bill Meehan

Philips. He retired from state service on October 17, 2015.



Ranger Werner Schwab

Ranger Werner Schwab retired in August 2015 after serving 37 years with DEC. He started as a ranger in the Warren County Towns of Luzerne and Warrensburg, transferred to southern Washington County and later transferred to northern Washington County. Ranger Schwab was involved in numerous training committees throughout his career and was recognized in 2015 for his contributions to wildfire control and search and rescue. Before working as a ranger, Werner worked for DEC as a forest technician and an environmental analyst.

Wildland Fire Program by Lisa Smith, Fire Management Administrative Specialist

As part of maintaining its ability to control wildfires in New York and support other states with their wildfire emergencies, the division annually qualifies wildland firefighters to state and national standards. In 2015, over 150 firefighters submitted forms and documentation for processing their annual credentials. This included in-state and out-of-state volunteers, fire wardens, other department employees, and forest rangers. Current qualifications, experience and certifications are tracked for all firefighters in the national Incident Qualification System (IQS) database. The division had more than 700 individuals listed in IQS for fire-related missions.

New York participated in the Eastern Area Coordination Center (EACC) Priority Trainee Program. This provides rangers with a priority assignment on national wildfire assignments to increase their certified skills. Rangers Michael Burkholder, Scott Jackson and Bob Rogers each had one assignment, completing their experience to fully qualify in their intended positions.



NYS#1 Crew Boss John Scanlon on the fireline in Oregon

On August 3, Ranger Adam Pickett was dispatched to the Gish Fire in the Pacific Cascade region of Washington State as a Plans Section Chief (PSC2). This fire was just over 100 acres when he arrived, but the severe dry conditions and the immediate threat to several homes made it a priority to contain quickly. On August 4, Ranger Timothy Carpenter was dispatched to the Wolverine Fire in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Washington (State) as a Task Force Leader (TFLD). This fire consumed over 65,500 acres. A TFLD is generally responsible for a large number of firefighters and resources on large fires and this was the case for Carpenter. The

assignment increased Carpenter's experience so that he can manage a fire of any size in New York State. On August 5, Ranger Bob Rogers was dispatched to Mad River Complex, Six Rivers National Forest, California as a Situation Unit Leader (SITL) trainee. This fire consumed approximately 38,000 acres and provided Rogers with the experience required to become a qualified SITL. On August 7, Ranger Michael Burkholder was dispatched as a Supply Unit Leader (SUPL) trainee to the Gasquet Complex in the Six Rivers National Forest, California. This fire consumed over 30,000 acres and the assignment resulted in Burkholder returning as a qualified SPUL.

On August 8, a 20-firefighter initial attack crew, NYS#1, was dispatched with four other eastern area crews to the Stouts Fire in Douglas County, Oregon. This fire consumed over

23,000 acres and had 1,900 firefighters and support personnel assigned. Ranger John Scanlon was the crew boss. This experience resulted in Rangers Kevin Slade, Michael Thompson, and Albany Pine Bush Fire Specialist Tyler Briggs qualifying as crew bosses and provided four recently hired (2013) rangers with their first experience on a national wildfire incident.



NYS#2 firefighting crew after returning to New York

On August 19, Ranger Jamie Laczko was dispatched to Colville National Forest in Washington as a Task Force Leader (TFLD). This fire was one of three in the Kettle Complex and consumed over 35,500 acres. It was Laczko's second trip as a qualified TFLD as he develops toward becoming a Division Supervisor (DIVS) and Incident Commander Type 3 (ICT3). On August 20, Ranger Scott Jackson was dispatched to the Kaniksu Complex on Colville National Forest, Washington as a Plans Section Chief (PSC2) trainee. This fire consumed over 26,600 acres. There were seven fires in this complex, making it a

challenging assignment for Jackson. It also gave him his final experience to become a nationally qualified Type 2 PSC. On August 22, Ranger David Kallen was dispatched to 689-acre Last Inch Fire on Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protection Association lands in Idaho as a Field Observer trainee with the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Commission or "Compact" Type 2 Incident Management Team (IMT). This assignment also provided Kallen with experience as a TFLD.

On August 25, NYS Crew #2 was dispatched with four other eastern area initial attack crews to the Mad River Complex on the Six Rivers National Forest in Ruth, California. This fire consumed approximately 38,000 acres. Ranger Ian Kerr was the crew boss and this experience resulted in Ranger Jeremy Oldroyd qualifying as crew boss (CRWB) and provided three recently hired (2013) rangers with their first experience on a national wildfire incident.

Emergency Management by Colonel Andrew Jacob

Region 4 forest rangers were assigned to staff the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) for three emergency activations and three drill exercises involving 17 days in 2015. Two snowstorms in January, the second being named winter storm Juno, resulted in statewide emergency preparations involving the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). In late August, weather models predicted Hurricane Joaquin's path would impact the New York-New England area. A week prior to its arrival, the SEOC, and DEC's Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC) at the Port of Albany were staffed by rangers to coordinate department staff and resources involved with potential storm-related impact preparations. Region 4 rangers staffed the SEOC for three annual planned exercises involving five days. These included emergency preparedness exercises to plan for a plume dispersal of the R.E.

Ginna Nuclear Facility in March and April, a plume dispersal exercise at the Indian Point Nuclear Facility and a hostile action-based exercise at the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant in September and October.

In Remembrance

Retired Radio Dispatcher Jackie Patnode, 84, passed away on December 20.

From 1977 until Dispatch moved to the Ray Brook office, Jackie and her husband Roland, the Region 5 radio technician, operated Saranac Lake Dispatch 24 hours a day, seven days a week from their home in Saranac Lake. Jackie set a gold standard of statewide communications for DEC with her dedication and calm voice that answered all agency personnel. She provided the safety net that Dispatch has strived to maintain and uphold ever since. Every ECO, forest ranger and other DEC employees who ever called her on the radio remember how reassuring it was that she was always there. This was in evidence at her service, where current and retired rangers and dispatchers joined many members of the Northern New York Amateur Radio Association (co-founded by Roland) to honor her memory.



Jackie Patnode at dispatch controls in her home, circa 1980

“Saranac Lake Dispatch clear.”



Roland Patnode installing a new mobile radio

Training and Development Report by Captain Eric Lahr

2015 was another busy year of training. Ranger training activities accounted for 37,609 program hours of instruction. This amounted to a decrease of 1,408 hours from the previous year. The table below provides data related to training given and received by division members. This table does not include program hours or number of events related to presentations such as Smokey Bear or career day. A footnote below the table summarizes that data.



Swiftwater Technician Class at DEC Academy, Pulaski

TRAINING PROGRAM	RANGER TRAINING RECEIVED			RANGER TRAINING GIVEN TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES			TOTAL TRAINEES	TOTAL CLASS HRS	TOTAL EVENTS
	Trainees	Hours	Events	Trainees	Hours	Events			
WS - Wildland Search & Rescue	221	77	16	2024	464	84	2245	541	100
WS - Helicopter & Aviation	219	146	39	24	21	5	243	167	44
WS - Airboat & Vessel Operation	111	61	20	0	0	0	111	61	20
LE - Law Enforcement	458	372	56	379	101	9	837	473	65
WF - Wildfire Management	185	95	16	542	298	28	727	393	44
EM - Wilderness First Aid	196	258	11	31	22	2	227	280	13
HZ - Hazardous Materials	139	85	13	0	0	0	139	85	13
AR - All-risk & Other ICS	1	7	1	0	0	0	1	7	1
NR -Management	30	5	5	0	0	0	30	5	5
NR - General Training	15	18	3	0	0	0	15	18	3
TOTALS FOR ALL EVENTS	1,575	1,124	180	3,000	906	128	4,575	2,030	308

Other Presentations: 263 Events; 1,441 Hours; 27,074 Attendees

20th Basic School for Uniformed Officers

Forest ranger candidates for the 20th Basic School began the arduous hiring process in hopes of being offered a permanent position. Nearly 200 candidates attempted to pass the physical ability requirements. Approximately half of these candidates were successful. Each candidate then began the intense background investigation, physical and psychological

exams, and interview(s) prior to being considered for employment. The 27-week Basic School for 17 recruits began on February 28, 2016.

Search and Rescue (SAR) Training Program

In 2015, the division participated in a total of 164 training events related to search and rescue. This was an 11% decrease from the previous year. Thirty-three Basic Wildland Search Skills courses were taught to search volunteers and emergency response organizations. This course teaches the skills necessary to serve as a wildland searcher under the direction of a crew boss or forest ranger. Rangers also offered 21 Basic Search Skills Refresher courses and 13 Flat Ice Rescue training programs to local firefighters and search and rescue volunteers.

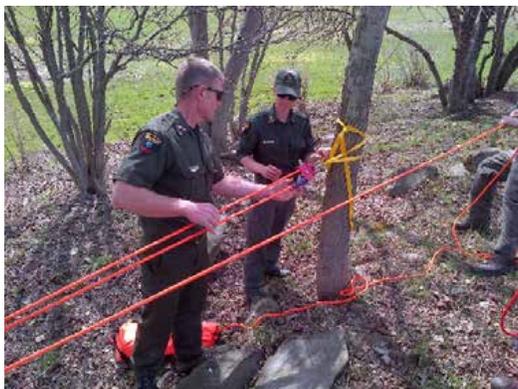
Airboat and Vessel Operation Training

Similarly, due to the hazards and risks associated with airboat operations, the rangers have a long-established training program for operating and working with airboats. These vessels are critical for swiftwater and flat-ice rescue operations. Currently, the division has four airboats with 28 qualified operators. To maintain operator skills, 20 training sessions were held.

Technical Rope Rescue Training

Each year, rangers spend considerable time learning and practicing rope rescue techniques. Seven training sessions were given throughout the state. These skills are necessary in high and low-angle or aviation rescues.

The division's new Technical Rope Committee, led by Lieutenant Brian Dubay and consisting of Rangers Rob Mecus, Chris Kostoss, Chris DiCintio and Evan Donegan, worked hard to develop training and equipment protocols. In addition, they developed a training course designed to create a cadre of ranger instructors. At the same time, the division had a busy technical rope incident year, with some very noteworthy rescues that occurred on DEC state lands.



Ranger Bodnar providing ropes training to Ranger Temple



Ranger Rob Dawson checking his rope harness

Swiftwater Rescue Training

A significant accomplishment for the division in 2015 was the completion of the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) Water Rescue for First Responders Course, Technician Level. This course was a continuation of ranger water rescue training. Forty-two rangers completed these courses at the DEC Academy in Pulaski. All rangers have now met the technician level of training involved with swiftwater. The instructors were Rangers Del Jeffery, Art Perryman, Evan Donegan and Bruce Lomnitzer.



Instructor Del Jeffery demonstrating the proper throw bag technique

In support of this program, the division sent four rangers to attend the American Canoe Association Whitewater Instructor Certification Course in Charlemont, MA. This 40-hour course prepares students to become certified whitewater instructors. As a part of the division's annual water rescue training, these instructors are able to teach this life-saving skill. The new instructors include Rangers Perryman, Lomnitzer, Jason Scott and Jamison Martin.

Search-and-Rescue Management In-Service Training (SARMIST)

Another significant accomplishment for the division in 2015 was the SARMIST In-service. The division hosted four, 40-hour in-service sessions for all members. The SARMIST In-service was the second phase of search management training which began in 2014 and was the culmination of 18 months of planning. This in-service challenged all rangers of all ranks to perform at the highest level on an incident management team. Each ranger was assigned a specific incident command position on their eight-person team and applied search management skills taught throughout the week. By the conclusion of an intense search scenario with 50 challenging injects, the teams were expected to complete an incident action plan. The course planners included: Captains Eric Lahr and Pat Kilpeck and Rangers Rob Mecus, Peter Liebig, Bryan Gallagher, Kevin Burns, Jim Giglinto, Adam Pickett and Dan Cornell.



Instructor Pete Liebig discussing the search management class exercise

Police Officer Training Program

The division attended 56 law enforcement training events and provided an additional nine events to other agencies. This year, the division focused a large portion of its law enforcement training to maintaining their firearms shooting skills. Some other key law enforcement instruction included six defensive tactics courses, two firearms armorer courses, two active shooter courses, two woodland tactics, and three snowmobile operations courses.

In March, Captain Tim Taylor attended the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)–sponsored course, Trauma in Law Enforcement in Syracuse. This course taught managers how to effectively manage a crisis following a shooting incident.

Wildfire Management Training Program

In 2015, the division participated in a total of 44 wildfire training events. As trainees, rangers attended 16 training events. These events included 12 Annual Fireline Safety refreshers and two Chainsaw Operator courses. In addition to these opportunities, the division provided 13 Basic Wildland Fire Suppression courses to volunteer fire departments, eight Wildland Fire Suppression Refresher courses and two Basic Firefighter courses (S-130, S-190) to volunteers interested in receiving federal firefighter certification.

The division once again supported the New York Wildfire Incident Management Academy on Long Island, with both instructors and students. Twenty-three rangers attended four different wildfire courses. Most notably, 15 rangers that graduated from the 19th Basic School in 2013 successfully completed the S-336 Tactical Decision Making in Wildland Fire Course. In addition to student participation, 11 additional rangers provided either incident management staff support or served as instructors.

Helicopter and Aviation Training

Due to the high risk associated with working around helicopters, rangers continually train with State Police Aviation throughout the year to maintain their skills in this area. As the program coordinator, Lieutenant Gary Friedrich managed to deliver 44 helicopter training sessions. These sessions prepared rangers to serve as hoist operators and ground support personnel for search, rescue and wildfire operations. The training covered litter and personnel hoist operations, forward-looking infrared (FLIR) training, and ground operations. Currently, the division has 21 qualified trained operators and four trainees.



Rangers Jackson and Flanagan call in a helicopter water drop.

Wilderness First Responder

The division participated in 11 first aid training events. Division instructors provided nine annual refresher training events for all rangers to maintain their wilderness first responder certification. The first aid instructors also provided wilderness first aid training to 18 seasonal assistant forest rangers in May. Lieutenant Julie Harjung is lead instructor with Rangers David Meade, Rob Dawson and Jen Temple assisting.

Division Training and Development Summary

DIVISION of FOREST PROTECTION				
<i>Table of Hours Worked in the Training Program by Category</i>				
CATEGORY	ACTIVITY	Annual Program Hours Worked per Category		
		2013	2014	2015
Search-and-Rescue Training	Given	4,015	4,985	8,030
Search-and-Rescue Training	Received	5,295	8,680	11,598
Search-and-Rescue Training Total		9,310	13,665	19,628
Wildfire Training	Given	3,855	4,459	4,712
Wildfire Training	Received	2,677	3,960	3,305
Wildfire Training Total		6,532	8,419	8,017
Police Officer Training	Given	2,851	4,159	2,898
Police Officer Training	Received	22,906 ¹	7,720	4,099
Police Officer Training Total		25,757	11,879	6,997
Basic Academy Instruction	Given/ Received	6,403	77	237
Basic Academy Training	Administration	2,210	64	124
Basic Academy Training Total		8,613	141	361
General Training	Given	503	717	508
General Training	Received	2,806	4,196	2,098
General Training Total		3,309	4,913	2,606
Grand Total		53,521	39,017	37,609

¹Includes 19th Basic School hours

Annual Training Hours Worked by Forest Rangers			
Year	Total Training Hours Worked	Year	Total Training Hours Worked
2002	37,462 ¹	2009	24,648
2003	26,082	2010	23,000
2004	34,710 ¹	2011	22,835
2005	31,616	2012	27,067
2006	30,118	2013	53,521 ¹
2007	52,654 ¹	2014	39,017
2008	23,264	2015	37,609

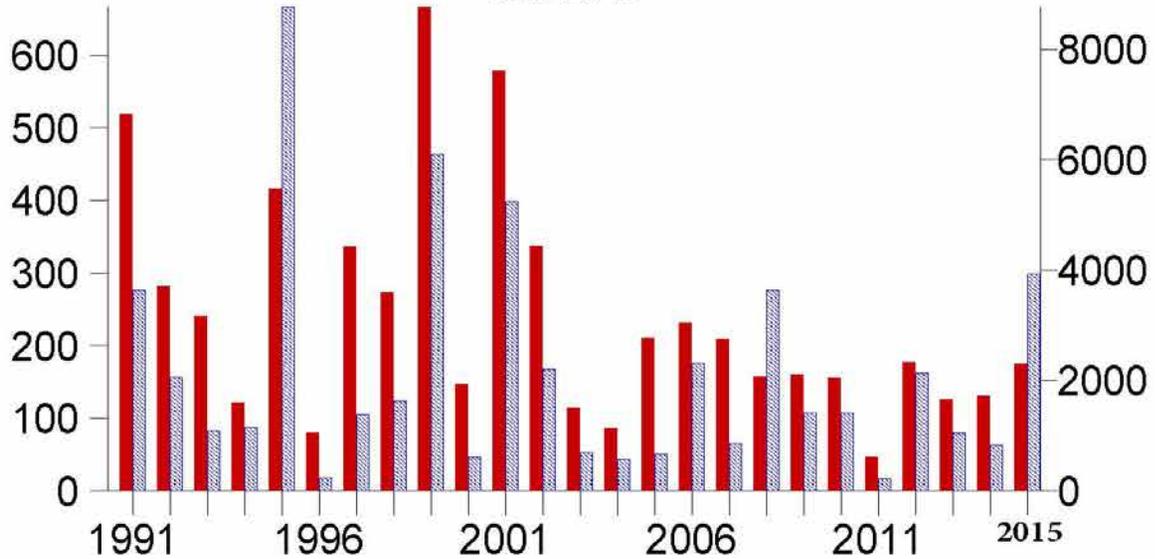
¹Includes Basic School Training for Recruits

2015 Summary of Wildfires by Forest Ranger Zone																		
DEC Region and Zone	1&2	3A	3B	4A	4B	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	5F	6A	6B	6C	7	8	9	TOTAL
# of Debris Caused Fires	0	0	9	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	3	0	2	30
# of Campfire Caused Fires	3	1	4	1	1	3	0	0	6	6	4	0	3	0	3	1	0	36
# of Lightning Caused Fires	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	11
# of Arson Caused Fires	11	0	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	32
# of Other Caused Fires	3	3	14	7	4	1	4	1	4	4	4	2	0	0	8	5	2	66
Total Number of Wildfires	17	4	35	15	7	6	6	2	10	19	16	5	5	0	14	8	6	175
# of Fires < 0.25 acres	5	1	7	5	0	4	0	0	1	8	6	1	4	0	0	0	0	42
# of Fires 0.25 to 9.9 Acres	9	2	22	8	6	2	6	2	9	8	9	3	1	0	11	6	3	107
# of Fires 10 to 99.9 Acres	3	1	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	3	2	3	23
# of Fires 100 Acres or larger	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total Acres of Wildfires	124.7	24.2	2,938.3	194.2	63.5	7.9	22.6	2.4	17.8	207.3	38.1	26.3	5.1	0.0	116.6	76.2	59.0	3,924
# of State Land Fires	7	2	7	4	2	3	1	1	6	13	4	1	3	0	3	1	2	60
# of Private and Other Government Land Fires	10	2	28	11	5	3	5	1	4	6	12	4	2	0	11	7	4	115
# of Spring Fires	8	3	29	13	7	2	4	1	6	13	9	5	2	0	14	6	5	127
# of Summer Fires	7	1	4	2	0	4	2	1	4	4	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	36
# of Fall-Winter Fires	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	12
Total Cost of Wildfires	\$0	\$0	\$100,026	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,488	\$722	\$0	\$104,335.60

5,984 Fires
(Red)

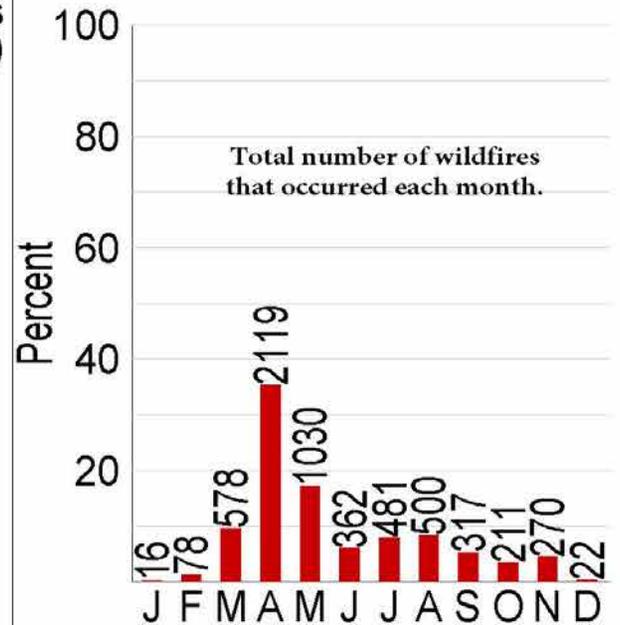
**NEW YORK STATE FOREST RANGERS
WILDFIRE STATISTICS FOR ALL NEW YORK
1991-2015**

53,896 Acres
(Blue)

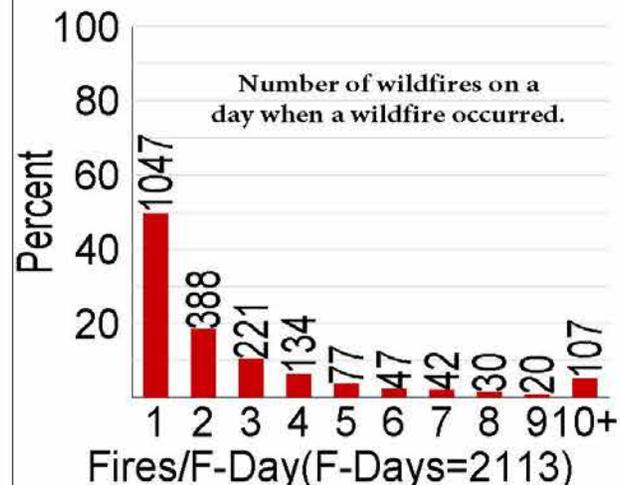
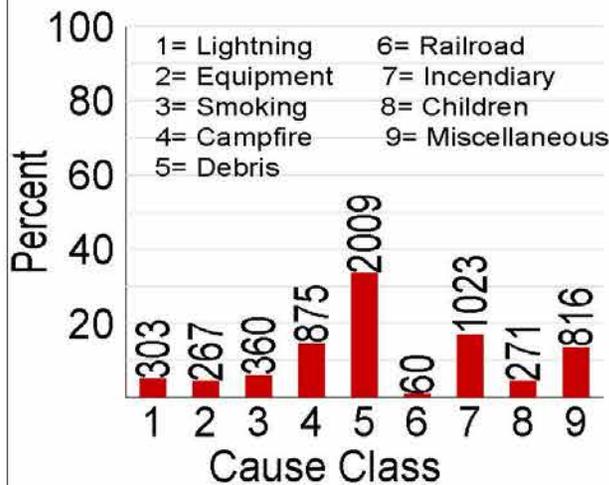
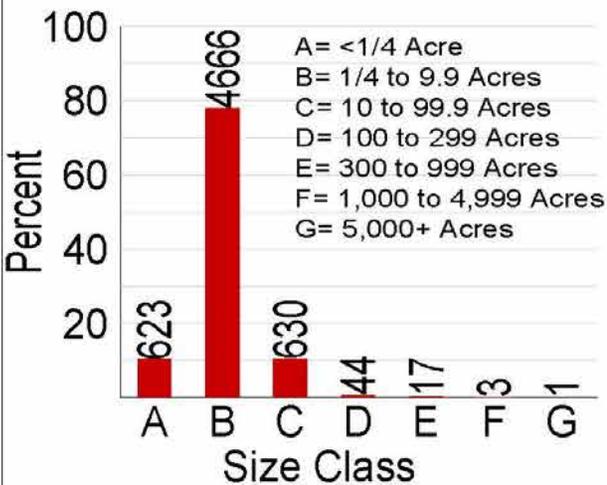


Total Fires and Acres by Year 239 Wildfires Burned 2,156 Acres per Year

25-Year Annual Average:



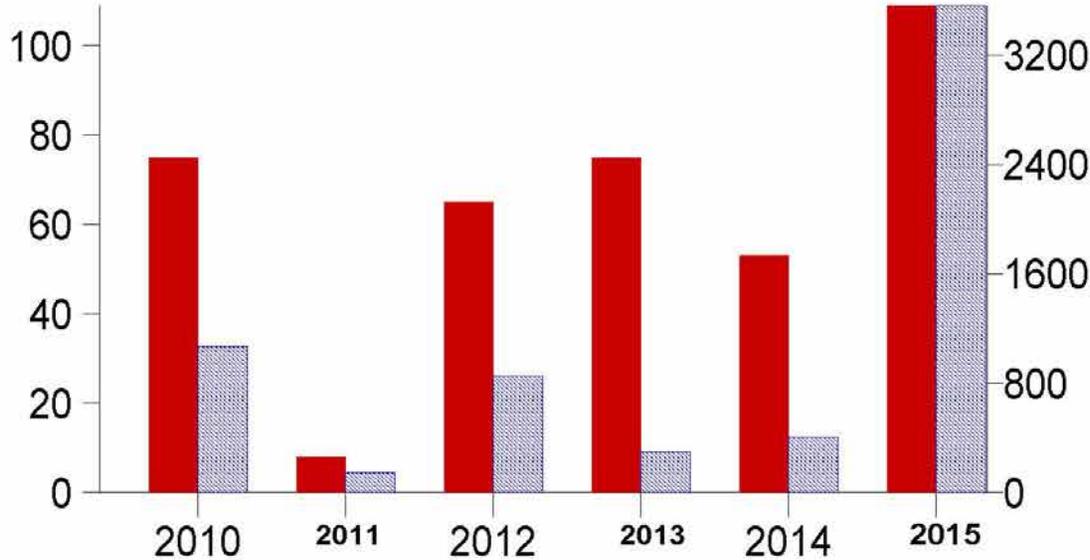
Month



385 Fires
(RED)

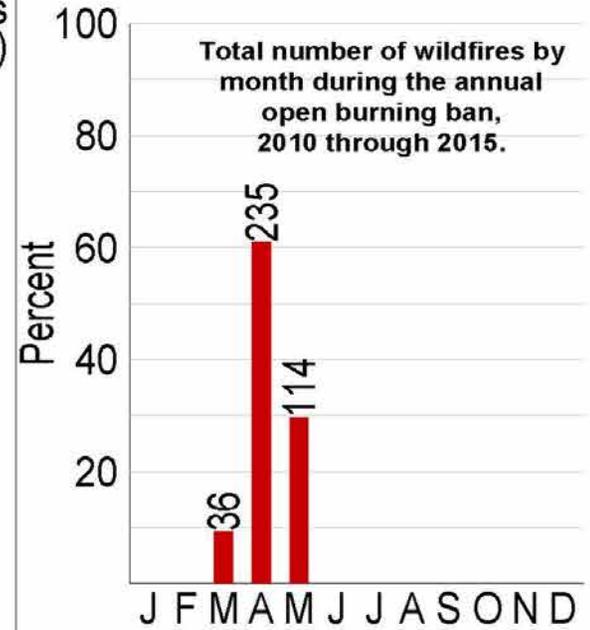
NEW YORK STATE FOREST RANGERS
WILDFIRE STATISTICS FOR UPSTATE NEW YORK
2010-2015, MARCH 16 THROUGH MAY 14 ONLY

6334 Acres
(BLUE)



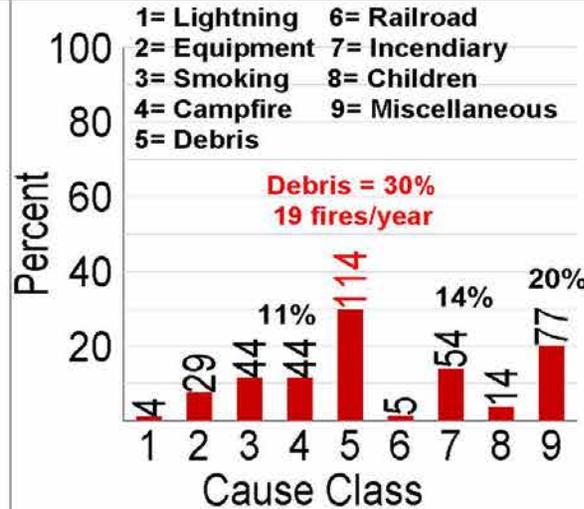
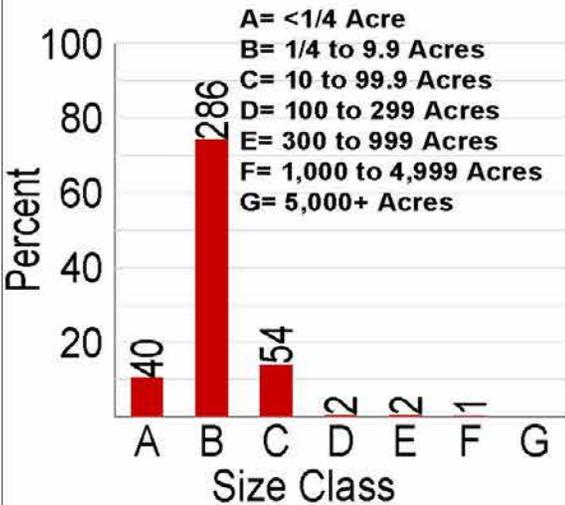
Total Fires and Acres by Year

Six-year annual average:
64 fires burned 1,056 acres/year.



Total number of wildfires by month during the annual open burning ban, 2010 through 2015.

Month



New York State Forest Rangers Number of Wildfires and Acres Burned in New York State 1966-2015

Year	Number of Wildfires	Acres Burned	Average Size of Fire		Year	Number of Wildfires	Acres Burned	Average Size of Fire
1966	1,131	5,856	5.2		1991	535	3,453	6.5
1967	657	4,218	6.4		1992	292	2,014	6.9
1968	1,458	11,413	7.8		1993	243	992	4.1
1969	894	5,135	5.7		1994	129	1,177	9.1
1970	631	2,262	3.6		1995	379	7,334	19.4
1971	596	2,203	3.7		1996	79	211	2.7
1972	508	2,693	5.3		1997	309	1,218	3.9
1973	670	3,300	4.9		1998	346	2,569	7.4
1974	558	2,268	4.1		1999	629	5,557	8.8
1975	795	2,968	3.7		2000	134	451	3.4
1976	484	6,140	12.7		2001	460	4,545	9.9
1977	895	7,016	7.8		2002	324	2,062	6.4
1978	792	7,143	9.0		2003	106	594	5.6
1979	552	2,593	4.7		2004	73	431	5.9
1980	772	5,391	7.0		2005	208	669	3.2
1981	655	5,540	8.5		2006	231	2,323	10.1
1982	610	3,389	5.6		2007	211	855	4.1
1983	356	1,585	4.5		2008	157	3,634	23.1
1984	319	1,516	4.8		2009	159	1,405	8.8
1985	644	3,666	5.7		2010	155	1,413	9.1
1986	460	3,799	8.3		2011	47	232	4.9
1987	267	1,072	4.0		2012	177	2,146	12.1
1988	556	5,031	9.0		2013	126	1,059	8.4
1989	603	11,730	19.5		2014	131	836	6.4
1990	322	1,589	4.9		2015	175	3,924	22.4
25 Years	16,185	107,927	6.7	Summary	25 Years	5,815	51,104	8.8
Annual Average	647	4,381			Annual Average	233	2,044	

Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Forest Protection

2015 Summary of Forest Ranger Search and Rescue Missions

Activity of Subjects	Total Number of Incidents	Percent of Total	Searches	Rescues	Recoveries	Total Costs
Biking	7	2.1%	4	3		\$0
Boating	4	1.2%	2	2		\$0
Camping	12	3.5%	4	8		\$0
Climbing (Rock/Ice)	7	2.1%		7		\$222
Despondent	20	5.9%	16		4	\$86
Fishing	3	0.9%	2	1		\$0
Hiking	216	63.3%	101	111	4	\$424
Hunting	13	3.8%	12		1	\$0
Runaway/Fugitive	8	2.3%	8			\$57,121
Skiing/Snowshoeing	4	1.2%	1	3		\$0
Snowmobile/ATV	17	5.0%	6	9	2	\$0
Swimming	5	1.5%		4	1	\$0
Walking/Walkaway	23	6.7%	22	1		\$522
Other*	2	0.6%	1		1	\$0
Totals	341	100%	179	149	13	\$58,375

Other* : Aircraft, motor vehicle

Number of Incidents by Day of the Week

Event	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TOTAL
Search	21	19	22	21	19	36	41	179
Rescue	16	10	20	18	16	34	35	149
Recovery	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	13
Total	40	30	43	40	38	72	78	341

Number and Percentage of Incidents by Month

Month	#	%	Month	#	%
January	14	4.1%	July	57	16.7%
February	11	3.2%	August	49	14.4%
March	16	4.7%	September	36	10.6%
April	26	7.6%	October	36	10.6%
May	34	10.0%	November	18	5.3%
June	34	10.0%	December	10	2.9%
			TOTAL	341	100.0%

2015 Summary of Search-and-Rescue Incidents by Forest Ranger Zone

Activity of Subjects	1&2	3A	3B	4A	4B	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	5F	6A	6B	6C	7	8	9	TOTAL
Aircraft						1												1
Biking	1		2				1		2								1	7
Boating						4												4
Camping		1	1	3		3		1				2			1			12
Climbing: Rock/Ice				1			1	4			1							7
Criminal							1					1				1		3
Despondent	1	1	3	1	1				3	2	1	1		2	3	1		20
Fishing						1											2	3
Hiking		6	7	21		4	9	93	19	24	18	3		7	1	1	3	216
Horseback Riding																		0
Hunting	1	1		1		2			1	2				3	2			13
Motor Vehicle				1														1
Off Road vehicle/ATV				1					1		2		1					5
Runaway							1					1			1	1	1	5
Skiing				1				2		1								4
Snowmobile						3			3			2	3	1				12
Stranded																		0
Swimming						2	1				2							5
Walking		2	1	1		1	2	1		1	3			2	3	1	5	23
Total # of Incidents	3	11	14	31	1	21	16	101	29	30	27	10	4	15	11	5	12	341
State Land Incidents	1	9	6	28	0	17	10	100	28	26	21	7	4	11	5	0	2	275
Total Costs							\$56,772	\$295	\$152	\$286	\$223					\$182	\$466	\$58,376

New York State Forest Rangers Search and Rescue Mission Annual Statistics 1966-2015

Year	# of Missions	Total Ranger Hours	Average Hours per Mission		Year	# of Missions	Total Ranger Hours	Average Hours per Mission
1966	116	1,877	16.2		1991	252	4,290	17.0
1967	130	2,447	18.8		1992	244	11,282	46.2
1968	100	1,805	18.1		1993	241	8,907	37.0
1969	113	4,028	35.6		1994	208	5,100	24.5
1970	116	1,320	11.4		1995	212	6,200	29.2
1971	104	9,255	89.0		1996	236	7,700	32.6
1972	138	8,604	62.3		1997	251	6,494	25.9
1973	178	4,192	23.6		1998	209	7,049	33.7
1974	144	4,345	30.2		1999	228	4,130	18.1
1975	162	4,049	25.0		2000	286	10,725	37.5
1976	211	6,741	31.9		2001	261	8,768	33.6
1977	202	5,324	26.4		2002	257	10,313	40.1
1978	156	3,334	21.4		2003	237	9,382	39.6
1979	163	4,445	27.3		2004	220	7,209	32.8
1980	164	4,382	26.7		2005	229	10,378	45.3
1981	163	5,300	32.5		2006	226	15,708	69.5
1982	184	6,858	37.3		2007	223	8,964	40.2
1983	215	7,003	32.6		2008	245	14,094	57.5
1984	188	5,381	28.6		2009	234	6,587	28.1
1985	201	5,698	28.3		2010	210	13,175	62.7
1986	211	5,730	27.2		2011	283	7,977	28.2
1987	253	5,064	20.0		2012	274	6,347	23.2
1988	223	8,063	36.2		2013	287	6,727	23.4
1989	259	6,081	23.5		2014	273	5,478	20.1
1990	259	7,804	30.1		2015	341	20,606	60.4
25 Years	4,353	129,130	29.7	Summary	25 Years	6,167	223,590	36.3
Annual Average	174	5,165			Annual Average	247	8,944	

Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Forest Protection

2015 Summary of Forest Ranger Training and Presentations to Others

DEC Region-Zone	1&2	3-A	3-B	4-A	4-B	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	5-E	5-F	6-A	6-B	6-C	7	8	9	Total
Number of S130/190 Training Events				1		1										1		3
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above				15		5										15		35
Number of NYS BWFSC Training Events			3	1	1						1				4	2		12
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above			34	17	22						17				64	38		192
# of 4-Hour DOCS Inmate Training Events							1											1
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above							90											90
Number of Other Fire or ICS Training Events		2	1	2		1					5		1		5	3	1	21
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above		28	40	19		35					104		15		93	61	16	411
Number of Fire Prevention Events		1	4	3	1	1	2		2			3	1		2	1	3	24
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above		150	425	1,200	325	100	222		385			185	2,000		525	200	1,179	6,896
# of Basic Wildland Search Course Events		2	5	3	1	1	3		1		1	2	1	3	2		4	29
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above		67	89	71	15	16	88		11		47	83	6	62	34		97	686
Number of Other S&R or 1st Aid Course Events				3	1	3	7		4		1	3	1		19	4	9	55
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above				85	40	87	64		139		20	52	20		247	85	546	1,385
# of State Land or Outdoor Use Presentations		1		3	1	1			4		3		5				7	25
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above		35		1,733	18	15			59		155		3,215				327	5,557
Number of Career Information Events			3	7	4				7		1	1	1		7	3	11	45
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above			430	533	103				615		10	50	50		204	198	3,697	5,890
# of Other Presentations or Training Events		3	2	2		3	10		4		2	3	5	2	3	6	3	48
Total Number of Attendees at Events Above		291	3,250	37		253	270		650		46	65	217	40	539	215	59	5,932
Total # of Presentations & Training Events	0	9	18	25	9	11	23	0	22	0	14	12	15	5	42	20	38	263
Total Hours of Presentations & Training Events		64	102	142	61	39	141		77		163	45	60	38	200	117	192	1,441
Total Number of Attendees at Events	0	571	4,268	3,710	523	511	734	0	1,859	0	399	435	5,523	102	1,706	812	5,921	27,074

2015 Summary of Activities by Forest Ranger Zones

DEC Region-Zone	1&2	3-A	3-B	4-A	4-B	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	5-E	5-F	6-A	6-B	6-C	7	8	9	Total
# of Assists to Other Agencies at Emergency Incidents	37	25	23	39	31	52	51	7	90	42	15	46	65	110	16	37	41	727
# of Defendants requiring Immediate Arraignment	0	0	2	13	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	29
# of Article 9 Burning Permits Issued by Ranger	0	12	0	82	104	116	308	98	158	11	165	24	2	32	0	0	0	1,112
# of Open Burning Inspections	1	4	3	3	1	6	36	2	22	3	8	2	2	18	0	0	6	117
# of Article 9 Burning Permits issued by Agent	0	952	0	1	165	96	555	2	139	78	187	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,175
# of Camping Permits Issued	0	119	21	45	49	366	19	36	434	103	90	130	61	72	131	71	60	1,807
# of Occupied Camping Sites Inspected	4	563	912	264	178	1,254	584	1,585	1,979	578	82	447	356	651	451	558	600	11,046
# of Patrols of DEC Campgrounds	0	146	7	130	73	245	171	4	354	137	6	68	56	99	0	0	0	1,496
# of Inspections of TRP's, Harvests, Adopt-A-Resource	120	13	33	14	98	6	14	0	20	2	2	5	8	346	45	157	173	1,056
# of Responses to Wildlife Incidents (Car-Deer, etc.)	10	0	0	1	4	5	2	0	23	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	8	63
# of Guides Checked for License Compliance	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	21	606	60	0	1	1	0	11	0	7	710
# of Stream Crossing Permits Issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
# of Stream Crossing or Wetland Inspections	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	6	0	13	0	0	1	0	0	0	31
# of Other ECL Permit Inspections	371	0	2	3	44	0	5	0	49	0	40	0	0	2	0	2	0	518
# of Trail Head or Access Point Inspections	4,845	2,874	5,260	2,398	4,985	3,007	3,242	2,259	4,446	3,918	2,372	4,240	2,990	6,550	4,066	6,162	6,825	70,439
# of CP-3 Compliance Checks	1	22	6	0	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	12	5	13	81
Miles of Non-Roadside State Boundary Line Inspected	390	595	372	122	197	22	323	7	130	9	49	33	49	68	54	119	109	2,645
Miles of Trails or State Land Patrol by Foot/Snowshoe/Ski	1,349	856	1,681	1,464	826	1,379	1,307	2,196	2,360	3,689	534	529	446	864	397	333	1,053	21,262
Miles of Trails or State Land Patrol by Motor Vehicle	1,540	68	2,790	21	53	117	292	48	2,388	552	161	3,874	52	1,469	3,135	1,399	4,028	21,987
Miles of Snowmobile Patrol	230	342	674	123	473	500	3,186	149	7,768	962	348	1,910	1,788	1,608	446	349	1,299	22,155
# of Snowmobile Safety/Compliance Checks	0	171	644	57	155	355	465	72	9,408	269	607	1,158	489	183	912	526	2,058	17,529
Hours of Motorboat/Canoe/Kayak/Raft Patrol	9	0	12	10	0	371	141	5	318	264	4	141	87	31	30	97	12	1,531
# of Navigation Law Checks	0	0	316	58	38	164	57	10	247	60	15	9	28	57	55	712	146	1,972
Miles of Bicycle Patrol	194	36	9	3	0	10	0	0	81	364	0	0	0	656	0	0	112	1,464
# of Conservation Easement Inspections	63	4	0	0	0	64	310	1	173	8	25	278	21	219	2	0	0	1,168
# of NYC DEP Property Inspections	1	32	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45

2015 Summary of Tickets or Arrests by Forest Ranger Zone																		
DEC Region and Zone	1&2	3-A	3-B	4-A	4-B	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	5-E	5-F	6-A	6-B	6-C	7	8	9	Total
Environmental Conservation Law, Rules and Regulation	52	119	166	283	64	13	44	17	102	83	46	45	36	34	55	54	144	1,357
NYS Vehicle & Traffic Offenses	11	239	161	79	9	2	36	0	62	22	82	36	41	77	48	29	75	1,009
Parks & Recreation (Snowmobile & Navigation)	0	0	11	5	1	10	36	7	92	5	2	6	20	36	5	10	30	276
Arrests Turned over to Another Agency	0	0	17	0	0	55	23	2	6	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	9	118
Other (Appearance Tickets or Arrests)	31	7	8	0	0	1	0	4	6	4	3	5	0	2	0	0	16	87
Total Number of Tickets or Arrests	94	365	363	367	74	81	139	30	268	115	134	92	97	153	108	93	274	2,847
Offenses Related to State Land Use	8	325	237	244	28	19	20	10	69	25	91	36	20	21	24	27	88	1,292
Offenses Related to Fire Laws	0	0	8	5	7	1	4	2	5	3	6	2	2	3	5	7	13	73
Offenses Related to Fish & Wildlife Laws	3	3	31	0	4	15	20	2	12	2	2	1	1	4	4	4	25	133
Offenses of High Peaks Rules and Regulations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Offenses Related to Illegal ATV Operation	31	1	17	7	7	0	16	0	0	10	3	15	37	38	23	13	40	258
Offenses Related to Illegal Motor Vehicles on State	27	6	23	73	10	18	11	0	13	46	3	7	9	12	15	11	19	303
Offenses Related to DEC Campgrounds	0	0	0	19	4	0	1	0	22	3	0	4	0	21	0	0	0	74
Offenses Related to Air Pollution	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	18
Offenses Related to Under-age Drinking on State Lands	0	12	8	7	12	0	5	3	7	3	8	0	3	0	1	1	19	89
Offenses Related to other EnCon Law, Rules or Regs	14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	3	3	4	4	35
Offenses related to Other Laws, Rules or Regulations	11	6	26	10	1	20	18	3	15	9	9	11	2	9	16	17	35	218
Offenses Related to Illegal Snowmobile Operation	0	11	3	2	0	8	44	6	125	8	11	11	23	42	14	9	28	345
Total Number of Tickets or Arrests	94	365	363	367	74	81	139	30	268	115	134	92	97	153	108	93	274	2,847

Total of Forest Ranger Work Activities per Category and Year											10-Year
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Protection of State Lands											
Inspections of trailheads/access points	74,524	78,843	82,429	78,188	63,228	69,923	65,701	69,699	72,362	70,439	72,534
Miles of trails walked, snowshoe, ski	20,682	20,398	24,502	23,160	23,669	21,514	18,172	18,580	23,667	21,262	21,561
Inspections of occupied campsites	13,501	15,319	14,006	13,873	12,074	11,279	13,762	9,942	10,641	11,046	12,544
State land camping permits issued	1,958	2,123	2,204	2,207	1,968	2,093	2,030	2,004	2,176	1,807	2,057
Miles of state boundary line inspected	2,544	2,134	2,728	2,692	2,580	3,428	2,079	1,743	2,377	2,645	2,495
Patrols of DEC public campgrounds	1,581	2,379	2,228	2,297	2,105	2,034	1,823	1,545	1,543	1,496	1,903
ATV violation tickets issued	620	745	763	680	369	449	483	557	457	258	538
State land offense tickets/arrests	903	1,006	1,300	1,279	958	1,142	1,733	1,347	1,145	1,767	1,258
Fish and wildlife offense tickets	242	316	319	328	177	178	205	155	120	133	217
Outdoor safety, state land use presentations	125	109	125	116	49	44	60	51	36	25	74
State land use permits inspected	1,197	1,123	1,229	1,294	961	744	1,113	1,197	1,277	1,137	1,127
Offenses related to snowmobile use	29	192	333	480	445	614	298	471	328	345	354
Other EnCon or other law offenses	196	201	265	283	276	481	325	300	301	271	290
DEC permit inspections	1,677	1,076	760	753	492	335	322	432	364	549	676
Wildfire Management Program											
Fires suppressed in the spring	211	131	133	140	98	18	85	85	91	127	112
Fires suppressed in the summer	11	65	15	2	49	19	67	10	10	36	28
Fires suppressed in the fall	9	15	9	17	8	10	25	28	30	12	16
Acres burned	2,323	855	3,634	1,404	1,413	232	2,146	1,058	836	3,924	1,783
Prescribed fires	30	13	21	13	9	9	11	19	13	11	15
Acres of prescribed fire	330	301	211	228	122	172	267	452	349	268	270
Burning permits issued	26,447	19,055	11,998	11,163	3,785	3,543	3,681	2,794	3,542	3,287	8,930
Burning permits inspected	1,147	1,002	622	713	425	176	142	145	86	117	458
Wildfire control/ICS training events	119	91	75	104	57	38	63	50	45	37	68
Fire prevention events	98	112	100	135	65	60	53	67	65	24	78
Fire prevention law violations/tickets	155	115	112	119	70	33	107	103	58	73	95
\$1,000 Grants to rural VFDs	346	365	401	401	466	475	386	370	443	262	392
Search and Rescue Program											
Search missions	144	153	149	144	140	173	162	171	164	179	158
Rescue missions	76	67	92	84	65	102	101	105	100	149	94
Recoveries	6	3	4	6	5	6	11	11	9	13	7
Search and rescue or First aid training events	132	147	117	116	78	117	109	91	89	84	108
Licensed Guide Program											
Licensed guides	2,182	2,090	2,066	2,099	2,074	2,101	2,159	2,196	2,197	2,288	2,145
New guide licenses issued	185	164	207	188	202	191	220	210	215	242	202
Guide licenses renewed or updated	232	277	312	240	254	303	327	428	293	330	300
Guide licenses revoked	4	11	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	0	2
Checks of licensed guide credentials	135	306	338	301	619	134	254	624	678	710	410
Licensed guide violations ticketed	0	8	3	1	7	2	5	3	2	2	3

