



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

2320 S. DuPont Highway, Dover, Delaware 19901 <http://dda.delaware.gov/news.shtml>

To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

Date: December 12, 2007 **Number of pages: 1**

Contact: Michael Valenti

1-800-282-8685 (DE ONLY)

(302) 698-4550

Delaware's Wildland Fire Crew Seeks Volunteers to Join Classes Starting January 19th

Photo: Matt Dotterer from Milton Delaware is a volunteer with the Delaware Forest Service's wildland firefighting crew. Volunteers can call (302)739-4773 to sign up for classes starting January 19, 2008.

(Dover, DE) – Anyone interested in becoming a wildland firefighter can sign up for training when the Delaware Forest Service offers “S-130, Firefighter Training” at the Delaware State Fire School on January 19 and 20, 2008 (Saturday and Sunday). The two-day class, one of four “core” certification courses, will be held from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm each day (lunch is included).

**The Delaware State Fire School is located at 1461 Chestnut Grove Rd, Dover, DE 19904
Participants can call (302) 739-4773 to register for the wildland fire training classes.**

“Last year, we had a really successful class,” said Michael A. Valenti, Assistant Forestry Administrator with the Delaware Forest Service, who helps coordinate the training series. “This course is the first step in getting certified as a “red-card” wildland firefighter, and we’re always looking for dedicated people to join.”

A “red card” qualifies someone to participate in out-of-state wildland fire assignments. In addition to completing S-130, applicants must also complete S-190: “Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior,” I-100: “Introduction to Incident Command,” and L-180: “Human Factors on the Fireline.” Later, usually in early-May, candidates must complete a “pack test,” carrying a 45-pound pack over 3 miles in less than 45 minutes.

S-190 takes place at the Delaware State Fire School on Saturday, February 9, 2008 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. I-100 and L-180 are on Sunday, February 10, 2008 from 9:00 to 4:00 pm. Lunch is included both days.

Extreme fire has been much more common in the western United States recently. In July, 2007, Delaware sent two 20-member crews to battle blazes in Wyoming, Utah and Nevada. In August, it sent another team to fight a wildfire near Missoula, Montana. At any time during the year, individual crew members may be asked to join the National Wildfire Coordinating Group for special assignments as needed.

With its wildland fire program growing, the Delaware Forest Service includes many state personnel in its advanced training program. However, it still relies heavily on the assistance of volunteer firefighters outside of the agency. Several volunteers are now nationally qualified to serve as Squad Boss (team leader of a 6-person squad) and several are on the road to Crew Boss (leader of a 20-person crew) certification. But Valenti feels the program could improve with more participation from the volunteer firefighting community.

“Delaware has the ability and capacity to send out multiple 20-person crews if there are a suitable number of qualified firefighters willing to participate,” he said.