

NCFS-FPET Lessons Learned WNC Fall 2016 Fire Severity

**William A. Swartley
Team Leader**

**Presented to NC Prescribed Fire Council
September 6-7, 2017**



FPET Consisted of Four Team Members:

- **One Team Leader (PETL)**
- **Two Prevention Members (PETMs)**
- **One Information Officer (PIO2)**
- **All Team Members were also PIOs**

FPET Operations:

- **Montreat Conference Center Office**
- **November 7-9, 2016**
- **Focus → Customer Communication (as opposed to products development and delivery team).**



Communication Deliverables

- New Releases & Daily Talking Points
- Media Interviews
- Connected with WNC County Fire Marshals (25)
- NCDOT e-signs (20+) Fire Prevention Messaging
- Ordered Firewise/Fire Prevention Publications.
- Used PIO Resources embedded in FPET to assist with large going fire in McDowell County
- Networked with SACC Regional FPET



Daily Documentation Produced

North Carolina Fire Prevention Education Team I Daily Report: November 8, 2016 (Tuesday)

FPET Office: Montreat CC, Assembly Hall
Office Phone #: 828-419-9842
Email: nctfregion3fpet@gmail.com

Swartley Cell #: 919-218-3179**
Swartley Cell #: 910-818-9209**
Harmon Cell #: 828-337-7187**
Waldrop Cell #: 919-218-9432**
James

** Cell phones only operable away from Montreat CC FPET Office – use F Office (Hard Line) Phone if you need to contact the Team.

Team:

- Bill Swartley
- Carrie Harmon
- Tom James
- Jeremy Waldrop

PETL/PIO1
PETM (TY/PIOF(T)
PETM (TY/PIO2
PETM (TY/PIOF(T)

NCFS, Raleigh, N
NCFS, Elizabeth
NCFS, Raleigh

Accomplishments:

- Opened office; reviewed and implemented action plan for tod
- Connected with 25 Fire Marshals in westernmost NC county
- Ordered Firewise publications and other office supplies for
- Worked with NCDOT to have e-road signs display fire pre
- 20+ signs committed to burn ban and fire prevention mes
- Drafted Talking Points for Wednesday, 11/9/2016.
- Completed planning and strategy meeting for next 24 h
- Sent PETM Tom James to Party Rock Fire to provide
- Conference call with SACC FPET's PETL, Terri Jenk
- Regional Team can assist NC FPET and vice versa
- Worked with Team Liaison and facility manager
- voice mail for primary FPET phone line.
- Additional planning and provided additional
- Team Operations.
- Completed Daily Report and provided additional
- Haines to buy and shuttle to FPET office along

NCFPET #1, Montreat CC
Region 3 Seventy, NCFS
November 7, 2016



NCFPET #1 ACTION ITEMS November 9, 2016 (Wednesday)



SAFETY FIRST- TAILGATE TOPICS!!

- ✓ Watch for distracted traveling "leaf viewers" not looking for you and your vehicle;
- ✓ When parked on road shoulder, use emergency lighting and wear agency-issued reflective vest;
- ✓ Maintain situational awareness while conducting field operations; watch for changing weather conditions throughout the day that can affect fuels and fire behavior; Wednesday is a wind day
- ✓ Carry PPE with you at all times; wear it if delivering information message to media covering a wildfire; provide for media personnel's safety first and storyline second;
- ✓ Stay hydrated – take cooler with ice, water, Gatorade and bag lunch; drink plenty of water;
- ✓ If assigned to field, use Group Me app or call the FPET Office [(828) 419-9842] to check-in;
- ✓ Carry a high band radio if working out of the vehicle; carry extra batteries for clamshell ;
- ✓ Be sure to let DFR District/County staff know that you are working in their area.

FIELD OPERATIONS –

- ✓ Keep a log of your activities and observations;
- ✓ Think about fire prevention education opportunities you may see in communities you vi
- ✓ Record prevention recommendations or ideas on easel pad and plan to share with team
- ✓ Take photos and video clips of fire prevention and fire suppression images;
- ✓ Assist with burn ban communication and new ignitions requiring PIO support.

OFFICE OPERATIONS –

- ✓ Specific Office/Field Deliverables for Tuesday, 11/9/2016
 - ✓ ALL –
 - ✓ 0730h Tailgate Safety, Team Briefing and Assignment Discussion
 - ✓ 1400h Planning and Progress/Feedback Meeting
 - ✓ 1900h Team Wrap-up and Accomplishment Reporting
 - ✓ CARRIE –
 - ✓ Answer FPET Info phone and monitor Gmail account;
 - ✓ Complete Team Talking Points;
 - ✓ Complete News Release;
 - ✓ Complete NCFS FAQ on WNC Burn Ban; email to County Fire ;
 - ✓ Continue updating Region 3 media list specific to radio stations;
 - ✓ Develop Radio PSAs (15s, 30s, 60s)**;
 - ✓ Provide on- and off-camera interviews for visiting media.
 - ✓ JEREMY –
 - ✓ Signal 14/FMARS/Region 3 Ops data mining of ignition type
 - ✓ Develop Radio PSAs (15s, 30s, 60s)**;
 - ✓ Complete NCFS FAQ on WNC Burn Ban; email to County
 - ✓ Maintain availability for PIO assignment to new ignitions ;
 - ✓ Create Excel spread sheet with the names, phone numbers ;
 - ✓ 25 fire marshals – to be used to send prevention informat

Bill Swartley, PETL
NC FPET #1, 11/08/16



DAILY TALKING POINTS FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Current as of Wednesday, November 9, 2016; 9:00 a.m.

- Due to continued drought conditions in NC's mountains and foothills, the NCFS has deployed a Fire Prevention Education Team (FPET) to the Asheville area. The FPET is in place and working out of the Assembly Inn at the Montreat Conference Center. More information on the FPET can be obtained by contacting the Team at 828-419-9842 or nctfregion3fpet@gmail.com. Office Address is: 401 Assembly Drive Montreat, NC 28757
- The FPET will be working with local and regional media outlets, communities, and the public at large to prevent human-caused wildfires
- Western NC is experiencing drought conditions ranging from "Abnormally Dry" to "Extreme Drought." These dry conditions are expected to last into December. You can obtain the latest drought conditions by entering "U.S. Drought Monitor" into your web browser.
- Commissioner Troxler has signed a burning ban into effect for 25 counties in Western North Carolina. The ban took effect on Monday, November 7th at 5p.m. and is active until further notice.
- Macon County has declared a State of Emergency; no burning within 100 feet of a dwelling is permissible. For the other 24 counties inquiries regarding grilling and fire pit use within 100 feet of a dwelling, refer citizens to their respective county's Fire Marshall (see list). Inform inquiring customers that although open flame may be permissible within 100 feet of a dwelling by a given county, it is not recommended due to low fuel moisture and elevated fire weather conditions.
- There is potential for a significant wind event today with the morning passage of the dry cold front. Wind speeds will lessen Thursday and Friday. Another cold front passage Friday will bring little to no moisture and little increase in winds.
- Mandatory evacuations have taken place at Lake Lure for the Quail Ridge area and Huntington Road areas of Rumbling Bald Resort effective 11/8 @ 2:15p.m. Please refer to the Town of Lake Lure news release for further information.
- To prepare an adequate defense for wildfire that could approach your home or property, visit "FIREWISE.org."
- For NC wildfire information, visit INCIWEB at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov>
- An Air Quality Alert has been issued by the National Weather Service for areas affected by the wildfires until midnight tonight. Refer to NWS website for smoke conditions around the region.

NCFPET #1
Fire Prevention Office
Montreat Conference Center

cjh



**So What Happened To NCFS's FPET After Three Days
of Operation?**

Party Rock Fire Lake Lure & Chimney Rock Vicinity

**All FPET members were re-assigned
as PIOs to this fire.**



USFS Backfilled the Vacated NCFS FPET With a “National” FPET:

- Operational 11/14 to 12/9/2016
- Served as both Communication and Products Team.
- Final FPET Report was produced capturing Team successes and deliverables.
- Final FPET Report available as a digital copy by emailing bill.swartley@ncagr.gov



FPET Final Report



Western North Carolina Wildfire Prevention and Education Team Final Report November 14 – December 9, 2016

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Western North Carolina Wildfire Prevention and Education Team Final Report
Prevention messaging was developed using four basic slogans
"One less Spark, One Less Wildfire"

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"Know Before You Go"



OBJECTIVE 3: Participate in community meetings and events providing wildfire prevention information to citizens, when applicable.
Members of the team attended nine community meetings, three high school football playoff games and University of North Carolina Asheville (UNCA) men and women's basketball games. It set up information booths to answer questions and hand out materials. There were 2,500 elementary and middle school children from 23 area schools in attendance for UNCA Education Day at the women's game. Prevention and education packets were prepared and provided to each of schools in attendance. Smokey Bear attended the college basketball games and one of the high school football games where he greeted fans and participated in halftime shows. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) provided by the team were read at the sporting events.

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FPET Lessons Learned

- Use a going fire to deliver both suppression information and fire prevention /defensible space information.
 - This was done with delivery assistance of NCFS PIO and PRF Information Team distributing fire prevention publications.
- Have a backup plan in case your Team is fragmented or redeployed to a higher priority incident.
 - National FPET backfill was an excellent solution but outgoing PETL had nothing to do with facilitation of Team replacement.
- FPET may be used to implement a regionwide burn ban.
 - Team can serve as “frontliner” for media/public inquiries.



QUESTIONS /COMMENTS

