

# **New Hampshire Chapter Report 2009**

2009 was the 14th wettest year on record in Concord, NH with 47.21 inches of rainfall, 9.61 inches above normal. As previously reported the summer months of June, July and August were the fourth wettest on record and the wettest in the last 112 years.

Statewide 281 fires burned 159 acres; all were human caused. No lightning fires were reported. These numbers include 1 fire on the White Mountain National Forest which burned five acres.

Most of the fire activity occurred in the Spring with a few fires in late August and early September which was the only other period of dry weather during the year. In contrast the State of Vermont reported only 83 fires but the 191 acres burned exceeded the acres burned in New Hampshire.

In March the State downgraded lookout personnel from permanent part time employees to temporary employees. With this conversion retirement benefits, health insurance, and leave were lost. Further, lookouts were only allowed to work on Fire Danger Class 3 and higher days instead of a full season. After Memorial Day lookouts only worked a few days in the autumn due to the wet weather. Most of the lookout personnel have other jobs or are retired but this situation may result in a loss of experienced employees in the future. Hiring of State Forest Rangers and other Forests and Lands positions has also been affected.

Despite the extremely tight State budget which resulted in these cutbacks, Forests and Lands was able to replace the tower cab on Croydon Peak and perform some limited maintenance at other towers.

This year for the first time the State of New Hampshire and the White/Green Mountain National Forests sent crews to Alaska in July to help with fire suppression.

New Hampshire Chapter membership increased by 10% during the year with two new members joining. Currently there are 20 paid members and 2 complimentary memberships. FFLA brochures are available at the new White Mountain National Forest facility in Campton which houses the Pemigewasset Ranger Station and the Forest Supervisors Office. This new complex which opened in October, has an excellent visitor center with some photographs of lookouts on display.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chris Haartz