

News Release



**Lenape National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge
Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LENAPE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX PRESCRIBED BURNS

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service wishes to inform the surrounding communities that we will be conducting prescribed burns in late winter to mid-spring throughout the Lenape National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The planned sites include: several tracts of grasslands, shrubs, and woodlands in and around the Refuge Headquarters and Dagmar-Dale Nature Trail areas between the Wallkill River and Glenwood Road at Wallkill River NWR in Vernon Township, NJ; along Pleasant Plains and Whitebridge Roads at Great Swamp NWR in Harding and Longhill Townships, NJ; and, all the grasslands west of Hoagerburgh Road and south of Long Lane at Shawangunk Grasslands NWR in Shawangunk, NY. The use of prescribed fire is part of the National Wildlife Refuge habitat management program.

The actual dates for the prescribed burns will depend on favorable weather and atmospheric conditions; including relative humidity, fuel moisture, and wind speed and direction to achieve the desired objectives and for the smoke to rise and disperse as well as the availability of firefighters. Each prescribed burn is expected to be completed within one day with active burning over several hours. Smoke may be visible from a distance and trails and facilities may be temporarily closed while burning is underway.

Prescribed fire is an approved tool throughout the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge System and is part of the Refuge's fire and habitat management programs. The objectives of the prescribed burns are to maintain and enhance migratory and wintering habitat for songbirds and foraging raptors by removing or reducing undesirable plants and woody vegetation and encouraging growth of native warm-season grasses. Prescribed burns also reduce the occurrence of, and risk associated with future wildfires by removing standing dead vegetation that burns easily.

Air quality and smoke will be monitored in an effort to minimize impacts to the surrounding areas. Local emergency personnel, including the police and fire departments will be notified prior to the prescribed burn. At least 10 firefighters and 4 fire apparatus are required to implement the prescribed burns. Visitors and residents are reminded that smoke may be visible after the burn is completed, but personnel will monitor and patrol the area until the prescribe burns are declared out. Assistance may be provided by firefighters from other U.S. Fish and Wildlife units, the National Park Service, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Rangers. The Refuge has safely conducted prescribed burns, as recently as last year.

For more specific updates related to the prescribed burns, please visit our Facebook pages:

Shawangunk Grasslands NWR: <https://www.facebook.com/SGNWR/>,
Great Swamp NWR: <https://www.facebook.com/GreatSwampNWR/>, and
Wallkill River NWR: <https://www.facebook.com/WallkillRiverNWR/>.

For additional information, please contact the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge Office at 973-702-7266 x 21. The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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