

# West Greenwich Wildfire aka Congdon Mill Road Fire

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After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

April 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 2023

# INCIDENT OVERVIEW

<b>Incident Name</b>	West Greenwich Wildfire aka Congdon Mill Road Fire
<b>Incident Dates</b>	April 12 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> 2023
<b>Scope</b>	This report focuses on the Congdon Mill Road Fire in Big River Reservoir and the response from local fire, state agencies and other assets that worked together to mitigate the fire. It will be limited to the capabilities and objectives identified with the sole purpose of improving outcomes for future events.
<b>Focus Area(s)</b>	Response
<b>Capabilities</b>	Operational Coordination Fire Management and Suppression Operational Communication
<b>Objectives</b>	Life Safety Protection of Property Incident Stabilization
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Wildfire
<b>Incident Scenario</b>	<p>On Wednesday, April 12th, at 12:51 pm, Exeter Fire Department received a dispatch for a reported brush fire at 87 Falcon Ridge Rd.</p> <p>The day began with heightened fire danger warnings due to a combination of factors, including drought conditions, unseasonably high temperatures for the time of year, and strong winds. These conditions had already led to a series of brush fires across southern Rhode Island.</p> <p>At the time of the dispatch, West Greenwich firefighters were already engaged in battling another fire on Division Road, further highlighting the severity of the situation.</p> <p>Upon arrival at 87 Falcon Ridge Rd, Exeter firefighters quickly realized that the reported fire was not located on Falcon Ridge Road itself but was instead across the street in the Big River Reservoir area.</p> <p>West Greenwich fire companies, upon clearing the Division Road fire, swiftly redirected their efforts and responded to Congdon Mill Road, where they joined forces with Exeter to confront and control the rapidly spreading wildfire.</p> <p>It took an intensive collaborative effort spanning three days to contain the wildfire and until April 27<sup>th</sup> to declare the fire under control. Demonstrating the resilience and determination of the firefighting teams involved in managing this challenging event.</p>
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Greenwich wildfire, which occurred in Rhode Island, marked a significant and unprecedented event in the state's history. After more than five decades without a major wildfire, Rhode Island faced an immense challenge due to the wildfire's size, complexity, and the multiple contributing factors.

Several key points stand out regarding the West Greenwich wildfire:

**Magnitude and Complexity:** This wildfire was of an extraordinary scale and complexity for Rhode Island. It quickly became a complex event, requiring the coordinated efforts of over 45 fire departments and resources from four states: Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine.

**Environmental Factors:** The recipe for disaster was brewing as Rhode Island experienced drought conditions, unseasonably warm temperatures, and strong winds. The National Weather Service issued “**Red Flag Warnings**” for that day and the days leading up to the event, forewarning of dangerous fire conditions. The forests in the region had also been impacted by tree die-offs due to insect infestations, including Spongy Moth which significantly increased the available fuel for the fire.

**Resource Shortages:** Reductions in wildland forest fire support resources over the years, including staffing and maintenance, coupled with a period of few major fires in recent history, left the state ill-prepared for a wildfire of this magnitude.

**Extent of the Fire:** The West Greenwich wildfire consumed over 150 acres and posed a significant threat to thousands of acres of woodland. It was a historic event, not only for its size but also for the response it necessitated.

**Unparalleled Response:** The wildfire marked the first time in Rhode Island's history that the Rhode Island National Guard deployed helicopters equipped with "Bambi buckets" to support firefighting efforts through aerial attacks. This proved to be effective in helping contain the fire and limiting its spread.

**Identified Shortfalls:** The complexity and scale of the West Greenwich wildfire exposed several shortcomings in the state's preparedness and response strategies. These shortfalls have been identified and are detailed in this report, providing valuable insights for future wildfire management efforts.

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*A Red Flag Warning means warm temperatures, very low humidity, and strong winds are expected to combine to produce an increased risk of fire danger.*

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## KEY FINDINGS

**Air Operations:** Air operations played a critical role in managing the West Greenwich wildfire and will continue to be vital for future wildfire events. The capability to deliver directed water drops to suppress fires and limit their spread proved invaluable, particularly in Rhode Island's mature forests. Ensuring proper coordination and integration of air operations will remain essential for both accountability and the safety of all personnel involved.

**Fire Suppression and Management:** Rhode Island's unique landscape, consisting of approximately 70% forest with an increasing urban-wildland interface, presents specific challenges for wildfire management. To address these challenges effectively, there is a need for a more robust wildland firefighting capability. This includes an increased presence of wildland fuels management program, the availability of wildland firefighting equipment, and proactive measures such as fire trail maintenance and improved access to fire trails.

**Incident Command:** While Incident Command is commonly used in the fire service across the state, the West Greenwich wildfire demonstrated that complex incidents, driven by a combination of factors, can create unique challenges. This event underscored the need for increased awareness and understanding of the Incident Command System among local first responders, with a specific focus on Unified Command. Training and exercises should be prioritized to enhance the ability to manage complex incidents effectively.

**Operational Communication:** The event revealed weaknesses in the state's communication systems, particularly within Southern Control. The staffing and technology currently in place were found to be insufficient to handle large-scale, complex incidents. Improvements in communication infrastructure and technology are necessary to ensure efficient coordination and information sharing during future events.

**In Conclusion,** the evaluation of the West Greenwich wildfire event has highlighted key areas that require attention and improvement for future wildfire preparedness and response efforts. These findings emphasize the importance of investing in training, equipment, communication systems, and coordination strategies to enhance the state's ability to manage complex wildfire incidents and protect both its natural resources and communities.



## ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

Aligning Incident objectives and capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual Incidents to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the Incident objectives, aligned capabilities, and performance ratings for each capability as observed during the Incident and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Life Safety	Fire Suppression and Mgt		S		
Life Safety	Operational Coordination		S		
Life Safety	Operational Communication		S		
Protection of Property	Fire Suppression and Mgt	P			
Protection of Property	Operational Coordination		S		
Protection of Property	Operational Communication		S		
Incident Stabilization	Operational Coordination		S		

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

### Ratings Definitions:

**Performed without Challenges (P):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

**Performed with Some Challenges (S):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.



**Performed with Major Challenges (M):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: Demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

**Unable to be Performed (U):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each Incident objective and associated capability based by agencies, highlighting key findings, best practices, and recommendations for improvement.



# ANALYSIS OF AGENCIES

## Fire Departments

Over 40 firefighting departments from 4 different states responded to the fire. They were a combination of volunteer, paid and combination departments. The challenge of integrating these different agencies into a common operating force proved to be difficult. Equipment, levels of training, radio frequencies and tactics didn't always agree but in the end the fire was suppressed, and everyone made it home safely. Here is a summary of the key points along with recommended improvements and best practices

### Best Practices:

- **Quick Response:** *The overwhelming response from area departments provided enough resources to manage the fire.*
- **Front End Loader Usage:** *The loader from West Greenwich Department of Public Works was useful to gain access to fire trails. This was very effective and needs to be considered when responding to brush fires on state land.*
- **Nighttime Operations:** *Decision to pull personnel out of the woods during nighttime operations was wise. Develop a clear plan for nighttime operations and rotations.*
- **Run Cards:** *Northern Control has wildfire brush cards. Local chiefs should use these as a model to develop their own.*
- **Utilization of Air Operations:** *Helicopter and Drone capabilities greatly enhanced the firefighting effort.*

### Recommendations:

- **Parking Issues:** *Parking was problematic due to limited space on rural country roads. It's recommended to designate clear parking areas early in the incident and ensure responders follow guidelines for checking in.*
- **Access to Trails:** *Obstacles like stones blocking roads and locked gates hindered access. Develop plans to clear such obstacles quickly.*
- **SOP Review:** *Review standard operating procedures (SOPs) to address issues like parking, access, and communication.*
- **Hose Management:** *Issues related to tactical hose use were identified, including inefficient deployment, hose abandonment, and hose blowouts due to pressure. Retrofitting hoses and proper hose maintenance are ongoing concerns and need to be evaluated.*
- **Incident Command System:** *ICS was not implemented in a clear and consistent manor this led to duplication in resource requests and lack of effective accountability.*
- **ICS Training:** *Conduct Incident Command System (ICS) training for personnel involved, especially at the 300-400 level.*
- **Wildfire Training:** *Provide wildfire-specific training and certifications such as NWCG (National Wildfire Coordinating Group) training. Also, work with RIDEM on course availability and scheduling to provide more opportunities for volunteer departments.*



- **Resource Typing:** Develop a resource typing system for wildfire and brush fire incidents, including a list of available resources such as brush trucks, UTVs, and ATVs.
- **Run Cards:** Update run cards to include brush fire assets (UTV/ATV/brush trucks) and ensure they are followed. Northern Control has created them for their communities, fire departments should consider them as a model.
- **Communication Plan:** Establish a clear communication plan where the jurisdiction of the incident owns the frequency.
- **Accountability:** Implement a robust system for checking in and checking out personnel to enhance safety. Especially if considering nighttime operations.
- **RIDEM Fire Utilization:** Utilize RIDEM fire resources for smaller brush fires when appropriate to build relationships and to develop an understanding of each other's role.
- **Rehab Protocol:** Develop a clear rehab protocol for all firefighters, with a focus on hydration, health, and rest.
- **Proper PPE:** Ensure that firefighters use appropriate wildland firefighting gear, not structural firefighting gear, for such incidents.
- **Dry Hydrant Maintenance:** Regularly maintain dry hydrants to ensure a reliable water supply.
- **Resource Request:** Establish clear channels for requesting resources, including helicopters.

These recommendations aim to improve incident response, coordination, and safety for future wildfire incidents. Regular training and communication improvements are key to successful firefighting operations.





## Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)

This section discusses various aspects of firefighting and land use management, primarily related to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) - Forestry Division and its interaction with the Fire Service. Here is a summary of the key points along with recommended improvements and best practices:

### Key Points:

- **Resources and Equipment:** *There were two personnel on duty with a type 6 Brush Unit pickup truck equipped with a tank capable of holding 200 gallons of water.*
- **Responsibilities:** *The RIDEM personnel typically respond to small fires, assist in firefighting, and support the Incident Commander (IC). Local chiefs desire the RIDEM to act more as advisors within the Incident Command System (ICS) in both command and tactical operations.*
- **Training:** *There is a need for more comprehensive training for wildfire firefighting operations. We understand that RIDEM has been offering these courses but some flexibility in course offerings may be considered to help local volunteer fire departments with the time constraints of volunteers.*
- **Legal Framework:** *The most state laws related to firefighting were written between the 1950-70s and may not be suitable for current firefighting conditions. Updates are recommended to Rhode Island General Law Title 2 Agriculture and Forestry Chapters 2-11 Forest Fire Personnel, and Chapter 2-12 Forest Fire and Prevention.*
- **Role of RIDEM:** *RIDEM Firefighting should be incorporated into the command structure as part of unified command and focus on tactical operations rather than physical firefighting. This can help relieve pressure on the IC.*
- **Hose Program:** *The forestry hose program should be maintained by RIDEM and consider local departments as assets, ensuring adequate inventory of fire hoses statewide, including cities.*
- **Fire Roads and Access:** *Fire roads and access to state forest land need to be maintained to allow easier access for firefighters. Blockages should be prevented.*
- **Contracted Equipment:** *The process for requesting contracted equipment should be streamlined to reduce response delays.*

### Best Practices and Recommendations:

- **Legal Revisions:** *Collaborate with relevant authorities to update and revise outdated firefighting statutes to align them with current needs and conditions.*
- **Unified Command:** *RIDEM should play a more prominent role within the unified command structure during complex incidents to provide support and expertise.*

- **Hose Management:** Continue to provide a comprehensive forestry hose management plan that includes proper maintenance and tracking to minimize losses and ensure local fire departments are still able to utilize this valuable resource.
- **Resource Sharing:** Promote the sharing of wildfire resources and equipment among local departments and RIDEM to enhance firefighting capabilities specifically forestry hose.
- **Access Maintenance:** Work within RIDEM to maintain fire roads and access points on state forest land to ensure swift response to wildfires avoid using rocks and gravel instead use gates so fire departments can quickly access the area.
- **Communication:** Enhance communication systems and notification protocols to streamline coordination during firefighting operations. Consider using the RISCON system as the primary wildfire frequency and encourage that with local fire departments.
- **Funding:** Carry on with the practice of seeking funding to support fire road maintenance, equipment upgrades, and hose programs.
- **Grant Opportunities:** Explore new funding opportunities to acquire necessary equipment and resources for firefighting.
- **NWCG Checklist:** Continue to incorporate the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) checklist for complex incidents in the RIDEM procedures to enhance incident management.

By implementing these improvements and adhering to best practices, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management can enhance its wildfire response capabilities, reduce resource wastage, and ensure better coordination in the face of forest fires.



## Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA)

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) experienced a partial activation scenario where a duty officer received a resource request, RIEMA deployed a command post, and faced some radio communication challenges upon arrival due to multiple frequencies being used and multiple people identifying as Incident Command.

### Best Practices and Recommendations:

- **Checklist for RING Activation:** *Develop a comprehensive checklist that outlines the steps and responsibilities when activating RING support. This checklist should cover resource assessment, communication protocols, and incident support procedures.*
- **Define Response Roles:** *Establish clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or checklists that define the roles and responsibilities of RIEMA personnel when supporting an incident. This should include coordination with other agencies and incident command structures.*
- **Educate Stakeholders:** *Conduct training and awareness programs to educate both local and state agencies on how to effectively utilize RIEMA assets during emergencies. This will enhance coordination and response efficiency.*
- **ICS 300 and 400 Training:** *Provide Incident Command System (ICS) 300 and 400 training during off-shift hours to accommodate volunteer departments and enhance the capacity of personnel to manage complex incidents effectively.*
- **Mutual Aid Plan Evaluation:** *Review and assess the current fire mutual aid plan, both at the interstate and intrastate levels, to ensure it aligns with current needs and capabilities.*
- **Creation of an Air Branch:** *Verify the creation of an Air Operations Branch to better coordinate and manage aerial resources during complex incidents requiring air support.*
- **Include RIDEM Fire in ESF 4:** *Modify Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4 to incorporate the Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Fire resources for a more comprehensive response strategy.*
- **Clarify Command Post's Role:** *Clearly define whether the RIEMA Command Post is meant to support incident command with a team or serve as a communication equipment component. This will prevent confusion during deployments.*
- **Communications Team:** *Ensure that the communications team sent to an incident scene collaborates with incident command to establish a common operating frequency and assist in completing an Incident Communications Plan (ICS 205).*
- **Internal Notification:** *Implement an internal notification system to inform agency staff about activations and ongoing incidents for situational awareness.*

By implementing these recommendations and best practices, RIEMA can enhance its preparedness, response capabilities, and overall effectiveness in managing emergencies and supporting incident command.

## Rhode Island National Guard (RING)

Firefighting operations by National Guard air assets had a tremendous impact on fire control. It is critical for everyone's safety that strict protocols and procedures are followed. This is a list of recommendations and observations related to coordinating and improving support for forest firefighting efforts involving the Rhode Island National Guard utilizing helicopter support.

Below is a breakdown of the key points and actions suggested:

### Best Practices and Recommendations:

- **Streamline Request Process:** Propose improving the process for requesting NG support, ensuring that requests are routed through the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) for proper coordination.
- **Review "REDBOOK" Requirements:** Recommend that all fire departments (FDs) review REDBOOK requirements for employing military assets during firefighting operations.
- **Identify Trained Personnel:** Identify personnel who are properly trained to coordinate aerial firefighting efforts and suggest that the Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) should lead wildfire response efforts involving NG aircraft.
- **Dedicated Air Ops Frequency:** Suggest maintaining a dedicated air operations frequency to ensure effective coordination during firefighting incidents.
- **Fuel Truck at Staging Area:** Advocate for the ability to bring a fuel truck to the staging area for helicopters, reducing the need to return to Quonset for refueling.
- **Establish Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR):** Recommend establishing a TFR in coordination with the FAA to keep drones and other aircraft away from the incident and discuss whether coordination with EMA/IC is necessary for this.
- **Number of Aircraft:** Assess the appropriate number of NG aircraft needed for specific firefighting incidents based on their size and complexity.
- **Onsite Liaison:** Highlight the benefits of having a liaison from the NG team onsite with the Incident Commander (IC) to help coordinate air operations and discuss who this liaison should report to for clear direction.
- **Safety Concerns:** Emphasize the importance of safety during water drops to avoid dropping water over personnel and propose the development of a safety plan.
- **Formalized Dip Site Process:** Suggest formalizing the process for using dip sites, possibly designating a specific point of contact (POC) at EMA for approval.
- **Communication and Coordination:** Stress the need for clear communication and coordination between NG air operations, other aircraft, and drone operators, as well as involving local fire departments in the process.
- **Activation Procedures:** Establish proper procedures for activating NG resources, involving RIEMA, RIDEM, and NG command.
- **Certification of Helicopter Pilots:** Advocate for certification of NG helicopter pilots for wildland firefighting, including obtaining "red card" status or similar training standard.
- **Drop Zone Identification:** Identify suitable drop zones for effective fire suppression while protecting ground personnel.



- **Refueling Location:** Establish a refueling location closer to the incident to minimize downtime.
- **Airspace Deconfliction:** Define clear rules for airspace deconfliction, especially in the presence of drones, and establish altitude zones for different aircraft.
- **Decision Points and Early Coordination:** Emphasize the importance of early decision-making and coordination in time-sensitive wildfire incidents.

It's evident that these recommendations aim to improve the coordination, safety, and efficiency of NG support during wildfire response efforts in Rhode Island. Implementation of these suggestions could lead to more effective firefighting operations.

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*The Red Book is the term used for the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations manual published by the Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management each year.*

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## Rhode Island State Police (RISP)

The Rhode Island State Police (RISP) has been utilizing drones for various purposes, including supporting emergency response efforts such as wildland firefighting. It is critical to coordinate response with other air assets to prevent potential impact. Also, it is important that Incident Command is provided the information gained through flights to help with operations and planning for the incident. The information highlights several key points as it relates to the events:

### Key Points:

- *Temporary flight restrictions were imposed by the Rhode Island National Guard (RING) on the second day over the incident area.*
- *RISP received a call from the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) requesting drone support and deployed a drone near the command post.*
- *The drone was operated at an altitude of approximately 70 feet and had capabilities for tasks like taking pictures, videos, and infrared imaging.*
- *Coordination of drones is managed through the Air Operations Branch.*
- *The drones were used for planning purposes, such as establishing a fire line on maps, but there's a need to streamline information flow through the planning process.*
- *There's a discussion about the potential benefits of providing information gathered by drones to incident commanders for decision-making.*
- *A need for establishing communication frequencies for air operations is recognized.*
- *Deconfliction of airspace between public and private drones is a concern.*
- *The RISP drone operator mentioned challenges, such as not knowing where to send data, and the presence of multiple drones with varying capabilities.*
- *Recommendations include creating an Aviation Branch for reconnaissance and coordination, incorporating drones into standard operating procedures (SOPs) at decision points, and clarifying the organizational chart for operations to include an Air Operations Branch.*

### Best Practices and Recommendations:

- ***Establish Clear Communication Protocols:*** *Define and establish clear communication frequencies and protocols for air operations. This will ensure seamless coordination between various agencies involved.*
- ***Create an Aviation Branch:*** *Develop an Aviation Branch with defined roles and responsibilities to oversee the use of drones and other aerial assets during emergency response operations. This branch should include experts in drone technology and operations.*
- ***Standardize Drone Usage:*** *Integrate the early deployment of drones into standard operating procedures, particularly at key decision points during emergency response operations.*

- **Streamline Data Management:** Address the issue of not knowing where to send drone-collected data by establishing a clear process for data collection, analysis, and dissemination to relevant personnel and agencies.
- **Coordinate with Other Agencies:** Collaborate with agencies like RIDEM Forestry to ensure that drone data is effectively used, such as for mapping fire lines.
- **Deconflict Airspace:** Develop procedures and protocols for deconfliction of airspace between public and private drones, especially in situations like wildfires where multiple agencies may be deploying drones simultaneously.
- **Incorporate Drones into Planning:** Ensure that the use of drones is incorporated into emergency response planning, and that the information gathered is considered in decision-making processes.
- **Training and Education:** Provide training for drone operators to enhance their understanding of how to effectively use drones in various emergency situations.
- **Regular Evaluation and Improvement:** Continuously assess the effectiveness of drone operations in emergency response and make necessary improvements to maximize their utility.
- **Centralize Information Flow:** Establish a streamlined process for information flow, ensuring that data collected by drones reaches the appropriate stakeholders, including incident commanders.
- **Interagency Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between RISP, RIEMA, RIDEM, and other relevant agencies to maximize the benefits of drone technology in emergency response.

By implementing these recommendations and best practices, the Rhode Island State Police can enhance the effectiveness and coordination of their drone operations in various emergency response scenarios, including firefighting efforts.



## Communication

The communication during a large-scale event faced several issues and challenges, primarily related to frequency usage and coordination. There were multiple frequencies in use, including VHF, UHF, 800MHz, cell phones, and RITAC, leading to communication redundancies and resource duplication. The ICS 205, a critical incident communication plan, was not established promptly. Various agencies had their own frequencies, causing complications. Staging channels were repurposed as operational channels, further adding to the confusion. Southern Control struggled to manage the communication challenges, indicating the need for upgrades and evaluation of their capabilities.

### Best Practices and Recommendations:

- **Establish ICS 205 Early:** Ensure that an ICS 205 communication plan is established at the outset of operations to define and streamline communication channels.
- **Frequency Coordination:** Assign a representative from each department to be present at the command post to manage their agency's communication frequency. Encourage agencies to stay on their designated frequencies for internal communication while representatives at the command post coordinate inter-agency communication.
- **Resource Requests:** Implement a centralized dispatch or control center to oversee resource requests, preventing duplication and confusion. Clearly define the process for requesting and allocating resources to avoid overcommitting mutual aid.
- **Staging and Operations Channels:** Maintain a clear separation between staging and operations channels. All trucks in staging should have access to 800MHz, while staging officers and operations personnel have their dedicated channels.
- **Equipment and Frequency Availability:** Ensure that all responding agencies have the necessary equipment and access to compatible frequencies for effective communication. Address issues of lacking equipment and frequencies promptly, possibly through regional dispatch or state EOC support.
- **Interoperability Testing:** Consider conducting interoperability exercises (TTX) to test communication systems and ensure seamless coordination among agencies.
- **Tanker Task Force Channel:** Educate responders about the existence and purpose of the tanker task force channel and encourage its use when appropriate.
- **Run Cards:** Create standardized run cards for incident management, ensuring clarity and consistency in resource allocation.
- **Dispatch Upgrades:** Consider a major upgrade to dispatch boards to accommodate two working stations during large-scale events, improving efficiency. Evaluate the capabilities of Southern Control for handling large-scale events and provide necessary training and resources.
- **Coordination and Leadership:** Appoint a clear incident commander (IC) responsible for determining communication frequencies for all responding agencies.



By implementing these recommendations and best practices, communication and coordination during large-scale events can be significantly improved, reducing confusion, and enhancing overall response effectiveness.



## Appendix A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 1: Fire Suppression and Management	Wildland firefighting tactics and strategies	Take wildfire training courses and maintain courses and certifications	Training	RI Fire Departments aka RI Fire Chiefs Association			
Capability 2: Operational Coordination	Command and Control of a complex incident.	Officers need to take ICS 300 and 400 courses and implementing it into practice	Training	RI Fire Departments aka RI Fire Chiefs Association			
Capability 1: Fire Suppression and Management	Wildland Firefighting team and local fire departments	Continue to integrate wildland firefighting into local fire departments	Training	RI Departmental of Environmental Management			
Capability 2: Fire Suppression and Management	Lack of maintenance to state forests and firefighting program	Maintain fire roads, fire hose and staffing	Organizing and Equipping	RI Departmental of Environmental Management			
Capability 1: Operational Coordination	Support Command and Control at the scene	Offer Training courses in ICS 300 and 400 during weekends and evenings	Training	Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency			
Capability 2: Operation Communication	Support field communication needs	Provide Clear expectations to locals on the capabilities	Planning, Organizing,	Rhode Island Emergency			

		and use of the Mobile command Post as it relates to communication	and Training	Management Agency			
Capability 1: Fire Suppression and Management	Incorporating Helicopters into wildland firefighting	Work with firefighters on deployment tactics and operations	Training, and Exercising	Rhode Island National Guard			
Capability 2: Operational Coordination	No guidance on activation and deployment of air assets	Establish clear policy on response to wildfires	Planning, and Organizing	Rhode Island National Guard			
Capability 1: Operational Coordination	Integrate Drone capabilities into wildfire operations	Create SOP and work with local firefighters on implementing drone use in wildfire response	Planning, Training, and Exercising	Rhode Island State Police			
Capability 1: Operation Communication	Multiple communication issues related to the fire	Evaluate the ability of Southern Control to manage a complex incident.	Planning, Organizing, and Equipping	Southern Control			

This IP is developed specifically for the Town of West Greenwich, Local Fire Districts, RI Department of Environmental Management and other State Agencies as a result of West Greenwich Wildfire incident on April 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>.

## APPENDIX B: WEST GREENWICH FIRE INCIDENT PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
<b>Local</b>
Ashaway Fire Department
Barnstable County Forest Fire Division
Charlestown Fire Department
Chepachet Fire Department
Chopmist Hill Fire Department
Dunns Corners Fire Department
Exeter 1 Fire Department
Exeter 2 Fire Department
Harmony Fire Department
Harrisville Fire Department
Hianloland Fire Department
Hope Jackson Fire Department
Hope Valley Wyoming Fire Department
Jamestown Fire Department
Kingston Fire Department
Lake Mishnock Fire Department
Lincoln Fire Department
Middletown Fire Department
Millville Fire Department
Misquamicut Fire Department
North Kingstown Fire Department



Participating Organizations
North Smithfield Fire Department
North Stonington Fire Department
Oakland Mapleville Fire Department
Pascoag Fire Department
Plainfield Fire Department
Plainville Fire Department
Potterville Fire Department
Richmond Carolina Fire Department
Smithfield Fire Department
South Kingstown (Union) Fire Department
Sterling Fire Department
Uxbridge Fire Department
Voluntown Fire Department
Watch Hill Fire Department
West Glocester Department
Westerly Fire Department
Western Coventry Fire Department
West Greenwich Emergency Management Agency
West Greenwich Emergency Medica Services
West Greenwich Police Department
West Greenwich Public Works Department
Wrentham Fire Department
State
Connecticut Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (Forestry Firefighting Division)

<b>Participating Organizations</b>
Maine Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (Forestry Firefighting Division)
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Agriculture
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (Forestry Firefighting Division)
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Law Enforcement
Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency
Rhode Island National Guard
Rhode Island State Police
<b>Dispatch</b>
Metro-Control
Northern-Control
Southern-Control
West Greenwich Police Dispatch