

Dry Hydrant Installation Program Maryland DNR Forest Service 2004

The Challenge

In rural Maryland, there are often sources of water for fighting fire if a fire truck can get close enough to draft it from the bay, stream, or lake. Without a dry hydrant that allows the drafting of water from an un-pressurized water source, much of that water cannot be used for firefighting. Like most states in the northeast, Maryland is confronted with a rapidly expanding population that is moving to what were formally rural areas. Without a dry hydrant network across the state, fire departments are not able to move enough water to the fire source. The result is more homes and property lost to fire.

The Solution

The Maryland DNR Forest Service has implemented a state-wide Dry Fire Hydrant hazard mitigation grant program in cooperation with rural volunteer fire departments. In 2003, a request for proposals was sent out to volunteer fire departments across the state targeting areas rated as moderate or high risk in the states Wildfire Risk Assessment project. By June 2004 twenty-three dry fire hydrants were installed by fourteen fire departments in eight counties.

A second request for proposal was sent out in 2004 and twenty-seven fire departments received grant awards for the installation of 52 additional dry hydrants in thirteen counties. Hydrants awarded in this round are expected to be installed by spring 2005. A third round of grants is anticipated in 2005 with project completion in 2006. All new dry hydrant locations along with existing dry hydrants are being mapped and a location atlas is anticipated to be produced for use by all jurisdictions.

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Resulting Benefits

- Maryland has 68 dry hydrants in rural Maryland to assist rural fire departments and state wildland fire personnel in wildland and structural fire suppression.
- In 2004, fourteen more communities received dry hydrants to provide water for fire suppression where it did not formerly exist before.

Sharing Success

- Localities in Maryland and other states can use the dry hydrant technology to increase water sources.
- Dry hydrants can improve Insurance Standard Office (ISO) ratings and lower homeowner insurance premiums.
- When strategically located, dry hydrants can help reduce resource losses to wildland fire and facilitate prescribed burning to reduce fuel hazardous fuel loading.



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