

Wildfire

A wildfire is any uncontrolled fire in combustible vegetation that occurs in the countryside or a wilderness area. Other names such as brush fire, bushfire, forest fire, grass fire, hill fire, peat fire, vegetation fire, veldfire and wildland fire may be used to describe the same phenomenon depending on the type of vegetation being burned.

Wildfires can be ignited by both natural and manmade causes. Sources of wildfires range from improper burning to lightning strikes. No matter the cause, their ability to spread can be troublesome for responders attempting to contain and control these blazes.

According to data reported by the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, there have been four documented wildfires in Bradford County. They are as follows:

1. Florida's wildfires began on May 25, 1998, and burnt parts of Northeast Florida. A large area of high pressure settled over Florida in the late Spring, keeping the traditional thunderstorms from forming. Lightning sparked most of the brush fires in hard-to-reach dry woods. Total cost across Northeast Florida will exceed \$200 million. It was reported that approximately 2100 acres burned, two homes were destroyed, and four vehicles destroyed or damaged.
2. Lightning initiated three fires in the vicinity of Camp Blanding (Clay County), Florida on Monday afternoon, May 7th, 2007. Strong winds quickly combined those fires into a single blaze with over 5,000 acres burning by Monday night. The fire area extended from the Starke area to near Waldo in northeastern Alachua County. By Tuesday 700 homes were evacuated with over 1,000 persons displaced from their homes. The fire continued to grow eventually reaching 14,626 acres.
3. The Santa Fe Wildfire was about 5 miles WNW of Lake Geneva in Bradford County. On July 1st, 2011, the fire had burned about 5,679 acres.
4. On April 27th, 2017, dry and unseasonably warm conditions fueled brush fires. Long term drought conditions were realized across much of NE Florida. A 200-acre brush fire was 100% contained in the area of SE 109th Street and SE 38th Avenue in Hampton. The fire burned on land owned by Two Buck Hunting Club.

(Source: <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/>)

Vulnerability

Bradford County is very vulnerable to wildfires due to the extent of forestry, conservation and agricultural land. Bradford County land use is predominately agriculture with forest or private timber company land. Any type of drought condition would augment the possibility of a major forest fire thereby significantly impacting the county.