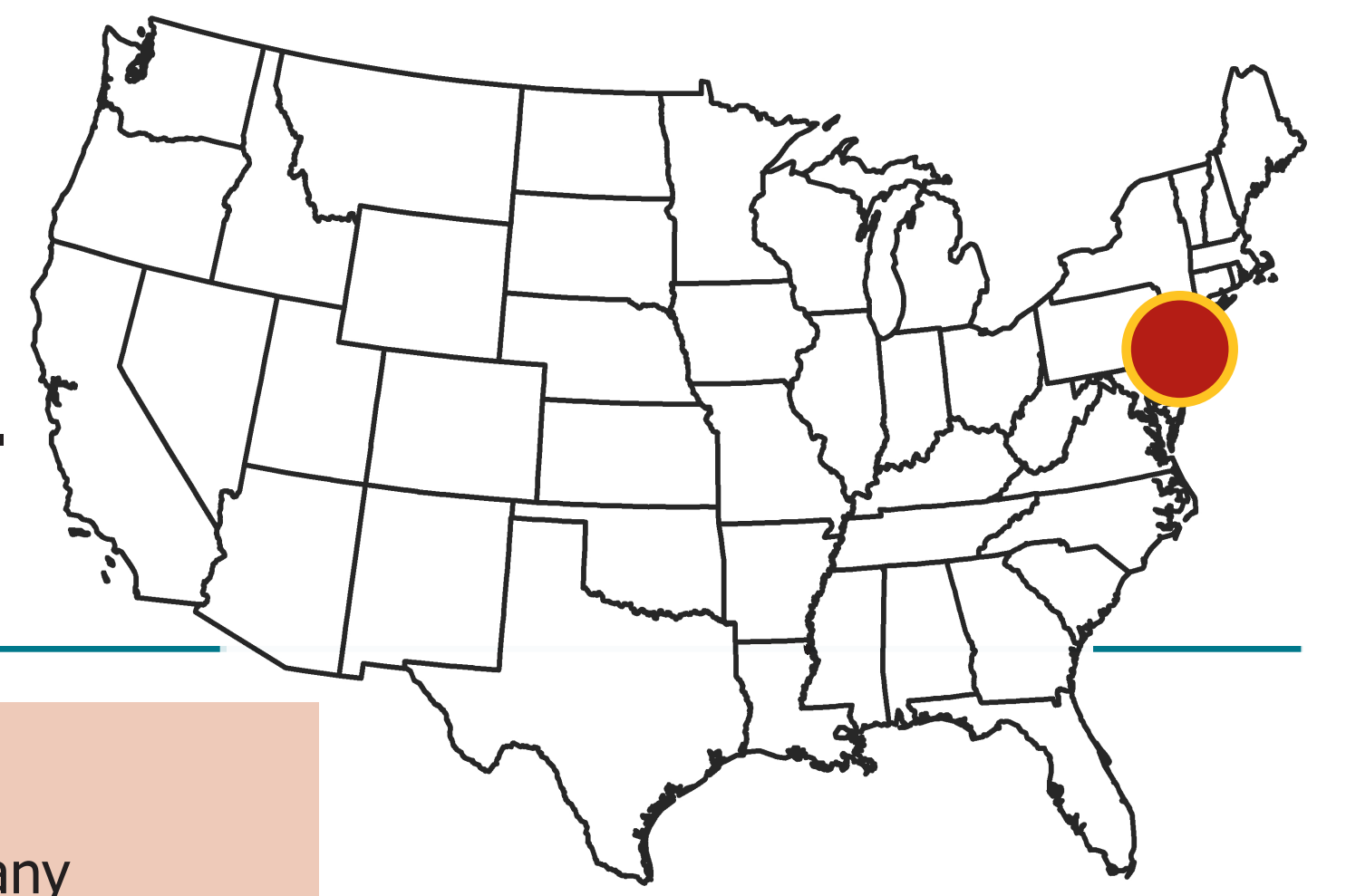


Mercer County Soil Conservation District

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Barnegat Township is “ground zero” for wildland-urban interface (WUI) in New Jersey, as it is located in the heart of the New Jersey Pine Barrens, an extremely flammable ecosystem. The area has become popular with retirees, who are mainly new to the area and have little or no understanding of their fire risk.

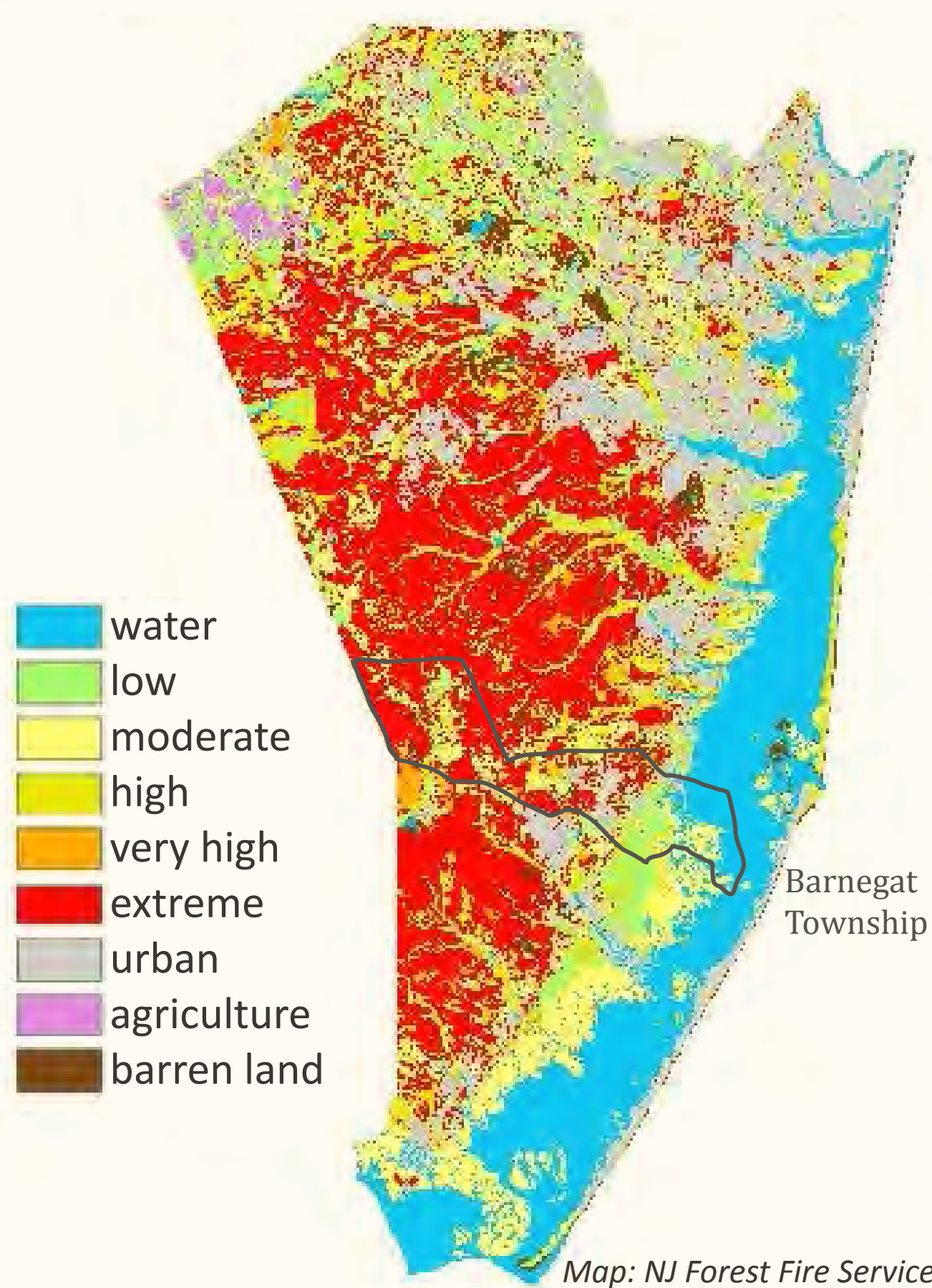
Our fire adapted communities work has been at two scales. At the local level, the Barnegat Fire Company has been conducting workshops with Barnegat Township communities to keep them informed of the risk reduction efforts being made. Two Firewise Communities—Horizons and Mirage—have talented, motivated liaisons that keep their communities informed and productive in reducing risk through mechanical fuel reduction projects. They have also begun spreading the FAC word to other WUI communities in Barnegat Township and beyond. Our top priorities in Barnegat Township are to continue to promote Firewise and Ready, Set, Go! in the most vulnerable neighborhoods, and to create additional evacuation routes for one of our largest WUI communities.

At the state level we are working with the environmental community to promote wildland fire resiliency through the Sustainable Jersey Program. This involves developing a suite of emergency preparedness actions tied to the Sustainable Jersey Program. To reduce their risk and be certified as “sustainable” under that program, communities implement wildfire preparedness programs and other actions. These may include the Firewise and Ready, Set, Go! programs, developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) and Community Forestry Management Plans, and instituting a Fire Safe Council to coordinate efforts at the municipal level. We have worked with Sustainable Jersey to define this suite of emergency preparedness actions, and have drafted a model municipal ordinance that municipalities can adapt to initiate their own Fire Safe Councils.

Being part of the FAC Learning Network has been very beneficial for Barnegat. We have learned about the value and potential for Fire Safe Councils at both the local and statewide levels, and as a result hope to form and support as many local councils as are needed to benefit New Jersey’s WUI residents.

Our long-term goals are to create a network of fire resilient municipalities using existing fire prevention and mitigation programs, and to coordinate those efforts through a statewide Fire Safe Council that trains local members and targets funding to motivated and educated councils where the prevention efforts provide the best return on investment. In this way we hope to bring additional state and federal resources to New Jersey’s FAC efforts.

Wildfire Fuel Hazard for Ocean County



Map: In Ocean County there are 56 retirement communities, with a total of 125,000 residents. Of these, five communities (with 7,400 people) are in Barnegat Township.

Key Partners

Barnegat Fire Company
Barnegat Township
Horizons at Barnegat
Mirage at Barnegat
New Jersey Forest Fire Service
New Jersey Forest Service
Sustainable Jersey



**FIRE ADAPTED
COMMUNITIES
LEARNING NETWORK**

<http://FACNetwork.org>

COMMUNITIES

working in
**Barnegat Township,
New Jersey**

Top: The 2007 Warren Grove Wildfire burned behind businesses on County Route 72 in Barnegat Township.

Photo: NJ Forest Fire Service/Kevin Burke

Bottom: Wildfire burned right to the brink of the mobile home community of Brighton at Barnegat. The FAC Learning Network has led to new relationships with residents and the owner of the community, with an emphasis on the Firewise and Ready, Set, Go! programs and on wildfire resiliency.

Photo: NJ Forest Fire Service

From Uninformed and Apprehensive to Prepared for Wildfire—Eight Observations

Excerpts from a post on the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network blog—for the whole post (including some background on the fire-adapted pine barrens ecosystems in this area) go to <http://facnetwork.org/becoming-fire-adapted-evolutionary-process-pine-barrens/>

1. **People are smart** and quick to apply wildfire messages to their personal lives and their community.
2. **Keep the message simple** and **be patient**. People will ask the questions that need to be asked as they become better informed.
3. People become smarter and make the **right decisions when they are properly informed**.
4. **Technical and financial assistance is available**, and being informed allows residents and communities to better access these resources.
5. **Better informed** residents and communities can **drive the allocation of additional resources**.
6. As a wildfire leader and conveyor of technical assistance we are not the bus driver in this process but the gondola driver, using the resources at hand to **guide informed residents where THEY wish to go**.
7. The importance of **identification and reliance on a local leader** cannot be overemphasized. Once that key person is identified, the single biggest hurdle is cleared.
8. Becoming organized and **having a plan makes people feel they are in control** of their lives. This is a universal need that will drive the fire adaptation process.



March 2010 Paramount Fire in Barnegat Township.

Photo: © Brian Gabriel,
Ocean County Fire Coordinator



The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network is supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Nick Goulette (nickg@hayfork.net).



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