



TOWN OF GILMANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Chief Paul J Hempel III

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Greeley Farm Road / Peaked Hill Incident

On 10/31/22 at 11:19 a.m., the Gilmanton Fire Department was dispatched to a reported smoke investigation in the area of 548 NH Route 140.

Based on early reports, an engine and forestry unit from the Belmont Fire Department was also requested. While responding, the Gilmanton Police Department confirmed a large fire behind the Varney Hill property with access at 548 NH Route 140. The fire was rapidly progressing up Peaked Hill and at 11:29 a.m., a first alarm assignment was requested. First arriving units met with the property owner and a neighbor who were engaged in actively fighting the fire and it was confirmed that a large active wind driven fire was running up the mountain. Due to the weather and manpower conditions, a second alarm was requested bringing in additional resources, including New Hampshire Forest Ranger Tom Trask.

A survey of the scene determined that the fire was burning approximately 10 acres of woodland and some of the incoming units were able to access the fore from adjacent Greeley Farm Road. A third alarm was requested at 12:41p.m. and the Greeley Farm units were able to deploy hand lines and worked up the mountain, while units on Peaked hill worked down the mountain. A fire line was drawn around the fire which successfully contained the spread of the fire and units worked diligently to contain and extinguish the fire.

The fire ultimately consumed approximately 10 acres of dense forest and the topography of the land proved challenging, as crews faced steep inclines and declines. Water for the incident was sourced from the dry hydrant at the Town Offices at the Gilmanton Academy on Province Road as well a private swimming pool located at 83 Greeley Farm Road. The fire was contained and deemed under control at 3:22 p.m. and the scene was secured for the evening for safety reasons with plans to return during daylight hours.

This morning, shortly before 8:00 a.m., units returned to the scene to complete extinguishment and break down the operation and the fire was declared out at 11:35 a.m. There were no injuries and damage was contained to forest and brush.

These departments were:

Alton Fire Department

Belmont Fire Department
Barnstead Fire Department
Franklin Fire Department
Gilford Fire Department
Laconia Fire Department
Loudon Fire Department
New Durham Fire Department
Pittsfield Fire Department
Sanbornton Fire Department
Tilton Fire Department
New Hampshire Forest Service
Gilmanton Police Department

The cause of the fire was deemed accidental in nature and resulted from the improper disposal of woodstove ash.

The Gilmanton Fire Department wants to thank all agencies for their assistance and effort meeting the challenges of this operation. This was a labor intense event and without the effective teamwork, this incident would have had a much different outcome.

Chief Paul J. Hempel, III
Gilmanton Fire Department