

Hinge Lake Fire Update (2005 Aug 29) by Ralph Boston

Source: Rick Chesebrough-Fire Chief

After a major flare up, the Hinge Lake forest fire is now officially out.

A total of 30-40 acres were burnt. As many as 20 firefighters at a time were at the scene. In total 500 man hours were expended over a 12 day period. Firemen from all four South Frontenac Districts were involved. This fire severely taxed Township resources. We were fortunate no other major incident occurred at the same time.

The volunteer firefighters deserve a great deal of credit. The fire was in a remote area. It was inaccessible to regular fire equipment. The fire was fought largely by hand-lugging portable pumps across rough terrain, sawing down large burning trees and digging as much as four feet into the ground to hose down burning roots. It was hot, hard and dirty work.

It must be remembered that the men who fought this fire are volunteers. They are committed to this community service. They are required to attend three-two hour training sessions a month. When a call comes in they immediately respond. And it is not for the money! They receive about \$10 an hour barely enough to cover their costs for gas and clothing. This is why the cost of fire fighting is so low. For this fire it was about \$5,000 for labour and \$1,000 for damaged equipment and supplies.

The Hinge lake fire was second only to the Bedford forest fire last year. These are the largest forest fires in the Township in over a decade. With all the Ice Storm debris still on the ground in the woods and hot dry summers more common, be careful. Be watchful and proactive! Report any sign of fire (911). Do not assume someone else will do so.

Meanwhile express your thanks to the volunteer firemen.