



## Firefighters Gaining Experience Putting Out Grass Fires

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**Raymond, NE--** Firefighters go through a lot of training, but when it comes to a grass fire in Eastern Nebraska, nothing teaches crews better than real-life experiences.

Casey McCoy with the Nebraska Forest Service said when it comes to grass fires; fire fighters don't know what's ahead. For example, what direction the wind will blow or the terrain they're dealing with.

"Part of the value  of training is to prepare fire fighters in their district," said McCoy.

On Monday afternoon, McCoy took advantage of the unfortunate opportunity to learn about the land, charred remains, to help fire fighters in the future.

McCoy says this part of the state doesn't typically have large grass fires, but on Sunday—it proved otherwise. Fire officials say hundreds to even thousands of acres burned, and what caused the fire: a fresh cigarette butt.

Raymond Assistant Fire Chief, Shane Cuttler said what McCoy is doing will help him manage his crew better.

"The guys here, they can see why this happened," said Cuttler. "It's tough to control any fire, but you can always learn."

For firefighters to better fight these grass fires, McCoy says land owners should manage the amount of cedars on their property.

"We were not advocating cutting down cedar trees before they get too big," said McCoy. "Cedar trees are a very good tree for Nebraska as they are a native species and make great windbreaks. But there is a need for them to be managed so that eastern Nebraska doesn't turn into a cedar forest in the future."



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