

The Southern Perspective

Providing Leadership for the South's Forests

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COOPERATIVE FIRE MANAGEMENT EFFORTS LESSEN THE EFFECTS OF WILDFIRE DAMAGES IN FLORIDA

Ronda Sutphen, cooperative fire protection manager, Florida Division of Forestry

sutpher@doacs.state.fl.us

The Florida Division of Forestry thanks all who provided assistance during the 2007 wildfire season. Your combined efforts helped to greatly reduce the loss of timber and property damage throughout Florida.

Early predictions for the 2007 spring wildfire season indicated lower-than-normal rainfall and moderate to severe drought conditions. These predictions came true, and by February, a fire in the bottom of Lake Okeechobee proved to be just the beginning of what was to become a very active fire season.

The worst fears of forestry and fire officials were that Florida could potentially have another 1998 on its hands. State and Federal fire management agencies set up a unified command with the

Florida Division of Forestry, Division of Emergency Management, Division of State Fire Marshal, Florida National Guard, USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the US Department of Interior and began staging pre-suppression resources for statewide rapid fire response.

During the period of January to March, 99 percent of all wildfires in Florida were human-caused. April through June was the most active and driest part of the fire season, but only 63 percent of wildfires during that time period were human-caused. Fire prevention and education efforts to increase public awareness seemed to make a big difference.

Despite prevention efforts, drought conditions persisted, and by May, the average statewide drought index climbed over 600 in all but 10 of Florida's 67 counties. In total, Florida had several large fires and six FEMA-declared complexes. The fire that seemed to pique the most interest was the Bugaboo fire near Lake City. At the height of this fire, there were 271 national resources on the Florida side alone. Florida and Georgia have been swapping fires back and forth across the state line for years. This year, it was Florida's turn to be on the receiving end. This past spring, fire season certainly proved how well interagency cooperation has developed over the years among federal, state and private agencies. You all need to be commended on your ability to work together to get the job done.

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Fire at Highway 98 near Panama City

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**SOUTHERN GROUP
OF STATE FORESTERS**

The Southern Group of State Foresters is comprised of the state forestry directors from the 13 Southern states, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as well as leadership from the USDA Forest Service Southern Region, the Southern Research Station, and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry. Collectively, they provide leadership for the South's forests.





Mike Long, Chairman,
Southern Group of State
Foresters and Florida
State Forester

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I appreciate the opportunity to have the pleasure to serve as your chairman of the SGSF during the coming year. In just the short time since the summer meeting, it appears that we will be facing some interesting challenges at both the regional and national levels. Things like redesign, assessments, competitive funding process, challenges with Forest Service State and Private funding in '09, and the Farm Bill will keep us and the SGSF Team busy. I'm hopeful that everyone will take advantage of some of the opportunities to step up and take assignments on some of the working groups or task forces that address these issues. It is important that we get good representation from the South.

On a regional note, we will need to find liaisons for our committees and task forces. We will be losing two old friends and getting two new state foresters to bring into the group. Right now, the assignments are somewhat lopsided, and we need

to see if we can provide the opportunities to spread the excitement a little more equitably. There is an old saying that you only get out of an organization what you are willing to put into it, and this is your organization so you need to make it a meaningful experience.

Together with all the new enthusiasm, knowledge and leadership in the SGSF, we should be able to engage to support national issues while maintaining a high level of competitiveness to make sure we get our fair share for the South.

If you have an idea or think we need to consider something, please do not hesitate to contact me any time, because, like you, I'm usually not far from work. Together we can make the goals and objectives of our Strategic Plan a reality.

COOPERATIVE FIRE MANAGEMENT...

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From January through May, nearly 2,700 state wildfires burned 296,046 acres across Florida.

Statewide Resource Deployment Summary

Division of Forestry:
Overhead - 527, Equipment - 520,
Crews - 11

**Florida Interagency Coordination
Center (FICC):**
Aircraft - 264, Crews - 503,
Equipment - 1,170, Overhead -
1,787, Supplies - 559

Florida State (ROSS):
Aircraft - 149, Equipment - 2, Overhead - 31,
Supplies - 3

Lake City Tanker Base:
Highest number of aircraft for Georgia and
Florida fires was 80.
Florida had 58 aircraft at the peak.

On the highest-use day, FICC Air Operations had 40 aircraft flying during the day for extended attack, reinforced attack and initial attack.

Air Tankers - 7 Air Attacks - 2
Lead Planes - 2 Helicopters - 21
SEATs - 6 Air Supervision Modules - 2

State Compact Resources:

Dozers and Tractor Plows:

SC - 2 Strike Teams OK - 1 Strike Team
TN - 2 Strike Teams MS - 1 Strike Team
NC - 2 Strike Teams AR - 1 Strike Team

Engines:

VA - 4 Strike Teams MS - 1 Strike Team
KY - 2 Strike Teams

For those of you who came to help, we hope you enjoyed your stay and Florida's fine hospitality. Please forget about the heat, humidity, poison ivy, chiggers, ticks, flying/biting insects, snakes, etc. If conditions persist, we plan to extend our hospitality and invite you back next spring.



Lake Okeechobee fire in
February 2007

PARK FORESTRY PROJECT REAPS BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE, LAND AND WILDLIFE

Mark Jacobs, Boone and Kenton County, Kentucky, Conservation District

The management of parks and open space is a challenging and sometimes difficult task. Traditionally, most park maintenance staff time and effort goes into maintenance of sport fields or mowing acre upon acre of turf grass. People have grown accustomed to associating turf grass with their community parks. Mowed fields are expensive to maintain, creating a huge drain on staff time and budgets. The rising cost of fuel is forcing park managers to explore alternatives for those land areas that do not have a specific use.

The Boone County Conservation District has been working with parks for the last couple of years to find alternatives to mowing low-use areas. The objective is to add or improve areas in the parks that will appeal to broader interest groups, such as bird and wildlife watchers.

In May, Boone County Parks, Kentucky Division of Forestry and the Boone County Conservation District teamed up to convert three acres of mowed grass to a forestry demonstration site at England-Idlewild Park.

Approximately 2,100 trees of seven species were planted. This project will have many long-lasting benefits to the park and the community. This land will no longer have to be mowed after the establishment period, resulting in better use of staff time and budget resources. In time, the planting of a variety of native trees will improve biodiversity and provide improved habitat for native wildlife. Local residents interested in small woodlot forestry practices and wildlife-watching opportunities will benefit as this once empty lawn develops into a mature and diverse part of the forest. Brad Schwenke, supervisor of maintenance for Boone County Parks, said that they like trying things that are

“good for the environment and improve aesthetics of the park for visitors.”

Boone County Parks and the Kentucky Division of Forestry should be commended on their effort to form a strong partnership and improve and restore the natural resources in Boone County for all residents to enjoy and appreciate. Boone County Parks is also working with the Conservation District and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to identify other areas to reduce mowing and convert areas to diverse wildlife habitat.



LESSONS FROM THE 2007 WILDFIRE SEASON: REDUCE DAMAGE, PREVENT FUTURE WILDFIRES AND PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

By Chris Demers, forest stewardship coordinator, University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation
cdemers@ufl.edu

The 2007 wildfire season was another reminder of the importance of preventing damaging wildfires on private forests and protecting property. This article provides tips for evaluating fire damage in forest stands, preventing future wildfires and protecting your property.

Prevent Insect Damage

Insect activity is a normal part of the forest system, but we can take some actions to prevent significant losses of timber from insect damage:

Evaluate Tree Damage

Evidence of any one of the following factors indicates a dead, dying or severely stressed tree:

- ◆ Bark is charred on more than 75 percent of the stem height.
- ◆ No green needles are present in the crown two months following the fire.
- ◆ Resin “weeping” or “bleeding” occurs around the entire circumference of the tree.

Any combination of two or more of the following factors also indicates a dead, dying or severely stressed tree:

tree’s base, creating a sunken ring around the tree.

- ◆ Large lateral roots are exposed and charred in two or more quadrants around the tree.

Recommendations

Salvage: Remove dead, dying, severely damaged and stressed trees as soon as possible to prevent an insect outbreak.

Reinspect: Frequently revisit all remaining areas of residual forest to monitor new pockets of mortality or stress. If bark beetles are present, identify the species so you can determine the appropriate response. Your county service forester can provide assistance.

Delay Some Activities: Avoid forest disturbance (e.g., thinning, burning), if possible, within one-half mile of significant wildfire activity because such disturbances can greatly increase the risk of insect outbreaks. Delay planting within or adjacent to burned areas for one season. Seedlings planted earlier may be killed by debarking weevils.

Beware of Other Stressing Factors: Other factors such as drought, poor soil fertility, severe storms and other disturbances can further weaken trees.

Prevent Wildfires on your Property

It takes only four to six years for heavy understory fuels to reach hazardous levels. Regular prescribed fire is the most effective and practical way to control fuels under pine stands. Where fire is not an option, mechanical and/or chemical alternatives may be used, after which fire may be introduced.

Prevent Fire with Fire

A fuel reduction burn requires specific wind conditions, humidity and temperature. Always have a burn prescription and obtain the necessary authorization from your state forestry agency.



- ◆ Bark is charred on more than 50 percent of the stem height.
- ◆ Resin “bleeding” occurs on more than 25 percent of the trunk circumference.
- ◆ All organic matter (needles, duff, humus) is absent at the

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2007 WILDFIRE SEASON...

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What if I Can't Burn?

On smaller ownerships, near residential or urban areas, or when conditions are not appropriate for using fire, use these techniques to reduce forest fuels:

Hand or machine piling and burning or chipping is effective but can be labor or equipment intensive depending on the fuels. If burning piles, they should be small enough to burn in a day. Repeated treatments are necessary.

Mowing or bush-hogging changes the structure of forest fuels by reducing shrubs to the ground. Repeated treatments are necessary.

Chopping, disking and harrowing reduce fuels to the ground but have more soil impact and can disrupt resprouting of some plants. Repeated treatments are necessary.

Thinning reduces the risk of crown fire by separating trees and is beneficial for other objectives, such as higher-value timber products and wildlife habitat.

Herbicides are relatively easy to apply, provide more long-term control and result in no soil disturbance. Herbicides can be costly, but they are usually less so than mechanical treatments.

Protect Your Property

If you live within ¼ mile of a forested or wildland area, modify your landscape to better withstand a wildfire with relatively simple improvements:

- ◆ Create a "lean, clean and green" landscape within 30 feet of the home by removing highly flammable plants, trimming low-hanging limbs and limbs within 15 feet of the home, replacing pine straw or other organic mulches within one to three feet of the house with lava rock or

gravel, and generally cleaning up dry combustible materials in this area of defensible space.

- ◆ Clean leaves, pine needles and other debris from roofs and gutters.
- ◆ Keep 100 feet of garden hose at an outside faucet.
- ◆ Screen the underneath portions of raised decks or floors so flammable materials cannot accumulate.
- ◆ Locate stacks of firewood at least 50 feet from the home.
- ◆ Install a section (8-10 feet) of non-combustible fencing between any wooden privacy fence and the home.
- ◆ Be sure the home address number is clearly visible at the nearest roadway (4 inches high, non-combustible, reflective letters) to help emergency vehicles find you.



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Anon. 2004. Wildfire Mitigation in Florida. Florida Department of Community Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

(http://www.fl-dof.com/wildfire/wf_pdfs/Wildfire_Mitigation_in_FL.pdf)

Anon. 1998. Insects and the Wildfires of 1998. Southern Pine Beetle Working Group, appointed by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry.

Wade, D. D. and J.D. Lundsford. 1989. A Guide for Prescribed Fire in Southern Forests. USDA Forest Service Technical Publication R8-TP 11 (<http://www.pfmt.org/standman/prescrib.htm>).

See these Web sites for more information on these topics:

Fire in Florida Web page (<http://fireinflorida.ifas.ufl.edu/>)

Interface South (<http://www.interfacesouth.org/fire/>)



BEING WISE AT THE SOUTH CAROLINA FORESTRY COMMISSION

*Scott Hawkins, public
information, South
Carolina Forestry
Commission*

*shawkins@forestry.state.
sc.us*

After you've identified 108 communities in your state at risk for wildfire, your job has only just begun. The question, "Now what?" follows immediately and, as a state agency with a mission to keep wildfires at bay, you're expected to have an answer.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission has just concluded wildfire risk assessments. These are possible through funding from the National Fire Plan. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) help fire chiefs, homeowner associations and community leaders prepare themselves for fire threats the Commission has identified on their behalf. These plans provide homeowners, community planners, fire departments and SCFC wildland firefighters with an outline for keeping fire numbers down and reducing the damage done by fires that do occur. A community that takes action to reduce the risk of wildfire becomes eligible to receive national recognition as a "Firewise Community, USA." (We hope someday that is as impressive as "Tree City, USA.") Workshops aimed at getting communities Firewise have been effective all around the state. Eighteen of them were held last year in South Carolina with attendance by more than 400 people.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission is also making it a point to get the Firewise message across at various conferences, including the annual South Carolina Firemen's Conference. Also, a cooperative effort with the Sandhills Research Center of Clemson University produced a communications plan for addressing Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) with the center's adjoining neighborhoods. Often, we have to educate people about what WUI actually is when you alert them to

the fact that they are part of one. The Commission installed firebreaks for wildfire protection around the Research Center, too. As recreational use on these grounds has increased, so has the threat of fire for the homes nearby.

Wildfire Prevention Teams were implemented in historically high fire risk areas in each of the three geographic regions of South Carolina: Coastal, Pee Dee and Piedmont. The teams had two objectives: 1) to inform the public of safe debris burning practices to reduce the number of escaped debris fires, and 2) to emphasize to property owners their responsibility in protecting their property to reduce the losses due to wildland fire. They operate in a sort of dragnet called a trap line. It's sort of a connect-the-dots of towns along a determined danger zone. These informational blitzes also are great opportunities to distribute products bearing our logo and message. The gear includes door hangers, bracelets, burn notification magnets, cups, pencils, signs and even rain gauges. "Think Before You Burn" is our slogan, and it fits on just about anything!

Our pièce de résistance is a Firewise mobile exhibit. This trailer is a joint project with the USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. We house the exhibit, but all these agencies have access to it considering they helped foot the bill! It boasts a live weather station, interactive "defensible space" meter, illuminated graphics depicting a Firewise home and interactive DVD programs. Towed behind any South Carolina Forestry Commission vehicle, this exhibit enables us to take our message on the road.

In these times of shrinking budgets and growing populations, not only do we have to let people know about the fire danger around them; it's equally important to give them a little know-how for avoiding it.



NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA LAUNCH PILOT FOR URBAN FOREST DISASTER RESPONSE

*Dudley R Hartel, Southern Research Station
dhartel@fs.fed.us*

In 2005, Urban Forestry South (UFS) helped coordinate a national effort to provide assistance to communities and their urban forests affected by Hurricane Katrina. That partnership included local, state, regional and national organizations with a close connection to communities and their urban forests. The response assisted 10 communities in Mississippi and Louisiana with post-disaster hazard tree analysis and provided a “proof of concept” for the use of professional arborists and urban foresters for post-disaster response.

In 2007, the U&CF programs in Virginia and North Carolina requested assistance from UFS to train agency-certified arborists within the states’ Incident Command System for similar response to natural disasters. By working within the states’ ICS, qualified arborists will become available to communities throughout these states and be able to provide local assistance following disasters that affect urban trees.

In August 2007, state forestry agency-certified arborists in North Carolina (6) and Virginia (11), and representatives from three other Region 8 states (Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee) were trained as Urban Forest Task Force (UFTF) members to provide post-disaster assistance to communities within their states and the Region.

Communities will benefit at several levels from the establishment of the Urban Forest Task Force teams:

- ◆ Trained, experienced, certified arborists will be assisting communities with decisions that affect their urban forest.

- ◆ Urban tree management information can be obtained in a timely manner for response and recovery, and assistance can be provided at the stage of disaster response most suitable for the community.
- ◆ With the project based on the ICS, communities are familiar with the disaster assistance process.

Developing and testing this program are Leslie Chadwell, U&CF coordinator in North Carolina, Paul Revell and Barbara White with the Virginia U&CF program, and Dudley Hartel and Eric Kuehler with the USDA Forest Service in Athens, GA. They are working closely with North Carolina and Virginia ICS and Emergency Management staff.



CHANGING FORESTRY AND CHANGING LANDOWNERS MEANS CHANGING ROLES FOR SOUTHERN FORESTRY PROFESSIONALS

Angie Soldinger, conservation education coordinator, Texas Forest Service

Rapid urbanization, land ownership turnover, timber investment management organizations and global competition are major challenges impacting the future of the South's forests, the forestry business and the forestry profession. More and more, the South is experiencing land parcelization and fragmentation fueled by the rapid population explosion into the forests and woodlands, an area known as the wildland-urban interface. Texas has seen its population spike to nearly 23 million while the average tract size has decreased from 100 acres to 17 acres.

Not only is the forest landscape changing, new forest owners are emerging with different motivations for owning land and different goals for managing their forests and woodlands. Their goals are not always in sync with what's best for the trees, forests and related natural resources.

In an effort to embrace these changes, the Southern Group of State Foresters in conjunction with the

USDA Forest Service and University of Florida created the Changing Roles Professional Development Program. It is designed to build skills and provide the tools needed for natural resource professionals to tackle today's interface challenges by understanding the needs, motivations and concerns of interface landowners.

"We knew we needed to form new partnerships and communicate with new clientele in order to effectively address the landowners' different management goals," said Texas Forest Service (TFS) Associate Director Tom Boggus.

Earlier this year, 75 TFS employees completed a 28-hour program, "... but we didn't stop with agency personnel," he added. Consulting foresters serve the same clientele as state forestry agencies, and they also need to understand the goals and concerns of today's new landowners.

In August, a customized 16-hour version of the Changing Roles program was presented to 57 natural resource professionals, including 20 forestry consultants from Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas. Changing Roles in Forestry: Reaching New Markets and Clientele teaches the possibilities of filling a niche that foresters have historically shied away from – small tract management.

One consultant said, "[Changing Roles] opened my eyes to all the available opportunities. I am no longer intimidated in tackling them."

Another participant said, "Have a client I was reluctant to speak with... 15 acres, wooded, gated, very high-value piece of property. [This] program gave me the communication tools and methodology to be able to provide good information to the owner."

Gifford Pinchot taught us that first and foremost forestry is about the people. Even through these changes we are experiencing 100 years later, his beliefs about the forestry profession still ring true. Changing Roles is about how we are going to teach people to keep forests sustainable into the future.



Participants of Changing Roles in Forestry: Reaching New Markets and Clientele, tour the Jansen's land, a beneficial learning activity TFS incorporated into the curriculum.

PREVENTION IS OUR PLAN IN TENNESSEE

Tim Phelps, information/education program specialist, Tennessee Division of Forestry

Tim.R.Phelps@state.tn.us

Like several other southern states this year, a hard spring freeze followed by an exceptional summer drought has set Tennessee up for what could be an exceptional fall wildfire season. In fact, the National Weather Service compares this year's record-breaking weather conditions to similar conditions of 1952 where more than one million acres burned.

One prevention effort involves the launch of TDF's new fire prevention Web site – www.BurnSafeTN.org. The site was designed to provide information primarily geared towards conducting safe debris burning. Included are tips for conducting safe open-air burns; how to obtain a burning permit from TDF, and laws pertaining to the issuance of the permits and penalties invoked. Other related items, such as: fire weather information, the daily fire report and TDF firefighting equipment and personnel-power, are also detailed.

The Tennessee Radio Network (TRN) is running

four public service announcements focusing on safe debris burning and arson from early October through mid-November.

A collaborative effort is underway with Kentucky and Virginia to execute a tri-state prevention plan that will address woods arson problems and solutions, as well as other fire issues in these three states. A fire prevention team is helping spread the word on the severity of wildfire potential this year and what local communities can do to safeguard themselves.

Lastly, our Division is very proud to have two new Firewise communities in the state – Sprucy Ridge and Cumberland Lakes – bringing the total to four such communities statewide. Sprucy Ridge is a community of 45 residents located near Bristol, and Cumberland Lakes is a community of 75 residents located near Crossville. The communities lie in the Southern Appalachian

and Cumberland Plateau physiographic provinces, respectively.



INTRODUCING THE CENTERS FOR URBAN AND INTERFACE FORESTRY

Annie Hermansen-Baez, center manager – InterfaceSouth, Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry, USDA Forest Service

ahermansen@fs.fed.us

The Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry (CUIF) is the result of an integration of two existing centers, formerly known as the Southern Center for Urban Forestry Research and Information in Athens, GA, and the Southern Center for Wildland-Urban Interface Research and Information in Gainesville, FL. This integration combines expertise in urban forestry

and wildland-urban interface (WUI) issues for the southern region and nationwide. CUIF is part of the Southern Research Station work unit SRS-4952: Integrating Human and Natural Systems in Urban and Urbanizing Environments. The urban forestry component of CUIF is now called Urban Forestry South and the WUI component is InterfaceSouth.

CUIF supports and conducts research, disseminates new and existing information, serves as a clearinghouse of WUI and urban forestry information, builds partnerships and collaborative efforts and approaches, and facilitates and creates links to and between other organizations. CUIF's two Web sites, Urban Forestry South Expo and InterfaceSouth, are useful tools for providing

THE CLEAN WATER RESTORATION ACT PROPOSES A NEW DEFINITION FOR WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mike Countess, Southern Group of State Foresters' Policy Analyst

In 2001, the Supreme Court ruled in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) v. Army Corps of Engineers* that federal government authority under the Clean Water Act (CWA) did not apply to non-navigable, intrastate, isolated waters based solely on their use by migratory birds.

Following the ruling, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers issued a rulemaking in January 2003 that precluded application of the Clean Water Act to so-called "isolated" waters, such as non-navigable streams, lakes, ponds and other waters. The Administration later revoked the rulemaking but still left in place a broad and somewhat confusing policy directive.

A wide range of interest groups have been critical of the guidance. Environmentalists remain concerned about reduced protection provisions of CWA, while developers said that without revised regulations contradictory interpretations of wetland rules will continue.

In 2006, the Supreme Court further confounded the interpretation of federal jurisdiction under CWA in a split ruling (*Rapanos et ux., et al. v. United States*) that effectively left determinations to lower courts on a case-by-case basis.

In an effort to clarify federal agency roles and remedy the confusion of incremental court decisions, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee conducted hearings on July 17 and 19, 2007, entitled *Status of the Nation's Waters, including Wetlands, under The Jurisdiction of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act*. Also, legislation captioned as the *Clean Water Restoration Act of 2007* (S 1870-Feingold/ H 2421-Oberstar) has been introduced and referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment within the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The Act provides for the following:

- ◆ Amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act ("Clean Water Act") to replace the term "navigable waters," throughout the Act, with the term "waters of the United States," defined to mean all waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide, the territorial seas, and all interstate and intrastate waters and their tributaries, including lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, natural ponds, and all impoundments of the foregoing, to the fullest extent that these waters, or activities affecting them, are subject to the legislative power of Congress under the Constitution.
- ◆ Declares that nothing in the Act shall be construed as affecting the authority of the Secretary of the Army or the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act related to discharges: (1) composed entirely of agricultural return flows; (2) of stormwater runoff from oil, gas, and mining operations; or (3) of dredged or fill materials resulting from normal farming, silviculture, and ranching activities or from activities with respect to which a state has an approved program, or for the purposes of maintenance of currently serviceable structures or drainage ditches, construction or maintenance of farm or stock ponds, irrigation ditches, or farm, forest, or temporary roads for moving mining equipment, or construction of temporary sedimentation basins on construction sites.

The legislation is supported by numerous environmental and natural resource organizations, including the Clean Water Network and the National Wildlife Federation, but is opposed by groups, such as American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Association of Counties.

For more information on Legislative Happenings, contact:

Mike Countess, SGSF Policy Analyst

Mike.Countess@state.tn.us or (615) 837-5311.



NORTH CAROLINA PARTNERS WITH THE STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TO COMPLETE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS

Shardul V. Raval, staff forester - Fire Control and Prevention, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources

shardul.raval@ncmail.net

As part of an ongoing effort to improve wildfire mitigation and suppression, the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources (NCDFR) partnered with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to form and train a first-in-the-nation, four-member student team to complete 21 Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) in three western North Carolina counties. The plans included assessments of wildland fire hazards demographic information, pre-suppression strategies, and prevention and mitigation capabilities. This information was compiled into a geo-database that was presented to representatives from the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, North Carolina Emergency Management, structural fire departments and impacted communities.

Swain, Graham and Haywood counties are bounded by Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Nantahala National Forest and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian's Qualla land trust. This project was funded by grants from the National Park Service and USDA Forest Service.



Coincidentally, a wildfire destroyed nine homes in a community that this year's crew assessed as being a high-hazard neighborhood just three weeks before its destruction. The CWPP data collected was used extensively by NCDFR during a wildfire after-action review concerning the blaze.

NCDFR plans to continue its partnership with the SCA to assign two additional CWPP crews in the coming year. The 50-year-old organization offers internship programs for high school and college students in parks and forests throughout the nation. Throughout its existence, SCA has provided students with hands-on experience in conservation efforts.

Nation's first Student Conservation Association CWPP crew members, from left, Hannah Burgard, Jeff Dressler, Alison McClusky and Sarah Osborn (in Sylva, NC).

THE CLEAN WATER RESTORATION ACT...

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ENDANGERED SPECIES TAX CREDIT

The Senate Finance Committee recently passed the Habitat and Land Conservation Act sponsored by Crapo (R-Idaho) and Lincoln (D-Arkansas). The bill would provide tax breaks to landowners who participate in certain habitat restoration measures, including donation of conservation easements for animals and plants subject to Department of Interior species management plans. The 10-year

program, estimated to cost \$3.2 billion, would be offset through other revisions in the tax code. The legislation is supported by a wide range of coalitions, including National Wildlife Federation, American Farm Bureau, Environmental Defense, National Association of Conservation Districts, and Ducks Unlimited. A companion bill (HR 1422) is in the House Finance Ways and Means Committee.



COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN: A SUCCESS FOR TAYLOR, FLORIDA

Prepared by Annaleasa Winter, wildfire mitigation specialist, Florida Division of Forestry

wintera@doacs.state.fl.us

Developing the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Florida Division of Forestry, USDA Forest Service Osceola National Forest, Baker County Fire Department and the Community of Taylor jointly developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in September of 2006. This plan was designed to help protect the small rural community of Taylor, which is surrounded by thousands of acres of federal, state and private wildlands and has been affected by many large wildfires in the past. The CWPP committee agreed that the best defense against wildfire would be to establish a perimeter control line around Taylor 25 to 30 feet wide and maintain it annually. This line would serve many purposes for the community, including a fuel break between the pine forests and the residential areas; an anchor point from which to base firefighting operations, and a location where prescribed fire and other fuel mitigation projects could center.

Implementing the Plan

The Florida Division of Forestry and the Osceola National Forest staff worked closely to create an 11-mile long control line that encircles the entire community. Through careful placement of the line, in some locations, it was possible to utilize roads and grades already in place.

Testing the Plan

The new control line was recently tested with the outbreak of the Florida Bugaboo wildfire, May 8, 2007. On May 9th, a strong northeast wind pushed the fire toward the community of Taylor, causing the evacuation of 200 homes. The fast-moving wildfire flanked southwest along the western boundary of

town, burning in the general area for more than four days. Due to the fire intensity and rate of spread, direct attack was impossible. Division of Forestry and USFS firefighters used their resources to assist the volunteer fire department with structure protection by setting backfires along the Taylor control line. This structure protection plan actually guided the fire around the community and prevented the loss of any structures in Taylor.

Summary

The control line provided quick and safe access to the area and allowed the back firing operations to begin almost immediately. With the left flank of the Florida Bugaboo wildfire rapidly spreading toward homes, there simply would not have been enough time to construct a safe anchor point prior to the backfire operations. After the successful burnout, when the left flank of the wildfire hit the back burned area, the black line was more than 300 yards wide and effectively prevented any embers from jumping into the unburned area adjacent to the homes.

Lessons Learned

A valuable lesson learned by homeowners from this experience is that pre-suppression lines will help save property during even the most intense wildfire. With the last catastrophic wildfire to hit the area in 2004, homeowners may have believed that there was no eminent danger. These same residents have learned otherwise; they understand that large devastating wildfires can happen more frequently than expected and that precautions must be taken on a regular basis. Homes must be kept defensible and fire lines must be maintained every year. Residents realize that it requires more than depending on the government to protect homes but on a commitment from the homeowners who chose to live in the wildland-urban interface.



NOW AVAILABLE

“COMMUNICATOR’S GUIDE FOR WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT”

*Bernie Andersen, fire management chief,
Kentucky Division of Forestry*

bernie.andersen@ky.gov

The NWCG “Communicator’s Guide for Wildland Fire Management: Fire Education, Prevention and Mitigation Practices” is an excellent reference tool designed for individuals who are interested in enhancing their wildland fire communication skills.

Researched, developed and produced by the NWCG Wildland Fire Education Working Team, the guide provides information about all aspects of wildland fire and has proven useful to practitioners from all disciplines.

The complete “Communicator’s Guide for Wildland Fire Management: Fire Education, Prevention and Mitigation Practices” can be purchased as a single CD-ROM or as a printed version of chapters 1-10 with the CD and bound in a three-ring binder. http://www.symbols.gov/catalog/products/fire_order_form.html

Chapter Highlights:

1. Introduction

This chapter provides an outline and describes the format for the Guide.

2. Wildland Fire Overview

Basic information communicators should know when talking about fire. A concise section on the science of wildland fire and its role in ecosystems is included.

3. Fire Management

An overview of the interagency fire management network and an introduction to the history of wildland fire, societal influences and a section on

public perceptions and attitudes.

4. Communication Planning and Strategy

Concepts to be considered when designing a communications plan, and descriptions of sample tactics. Written in a general sense, not tied to specific types of fire communication, such as education, prevention or mitigation. Subsequent chapters address sample messages and tactics for specific types of outreach.

5. Communication Materials

Guidelines for various communication tools.

6. Collaboration

This chapter addresses considerations for establishing and managing partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

7. Fire Education

Core NWCG wildland fire messages as well as communication techniques that are specific to this important topic.

8. Fire Prevention

Specific concepts for communicating prevention messages.

9. Fire Mitigation

This chapter presents sample strategies for fostering community collaboration to reduce wildfire vulnerability.

10. Resources

Lists of information found in this Communicator’s Guide, including Web sites, recommended reading and glossary.



Communicator’s Guide for Wildland Fire Management:
Fire Education, Prevention, and Mitigation Practices

Produced by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group
Wildland Fire Education Working Team
April 2007

Additional copies of this document are available through the
National Symbols Catalog
http://www.symbols.gov/catalog/products/fire_order_form.html

11. Appendix

A collection of references and sample materials as you develop and implement your education, prevention, mitigation and communication programs.

For more information about the Wildland Fire Education Working Team, contact your agency representative listed on the Web site at: <http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/wfews/wfeduc.htm#Roster>

WILDFIRE PREVENTION TEAMS EARN PRAISE IN GEORGIA

Sharon Dolliver, Georgia Forestry Commission

dolliver@gfc.state.ga.us

It started as a spark from a fallen power line. It ended in the record books. It was Georgia's largest wildfire in history, and when it became clear it was a force to be reckoned with, volunteers from 44 states, Canada and Puerto Rico rushed to help the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). Rangers with bulldozers, Mop Up Command, Air Operations and a first-of-its-kind Arson Investigation Team were visible components at the center of the firefighting effort. Another group of people worked just beyond the fire's advancing fronts.

On April 16, 2007, the day the fallen power line ignited the Sweat Farm Road Fire, Chief of Forest Protection Alan Dozier resource-ordered a Wildfire Prevention Team. By the time the fire was contained eight weeks later, a total of four prevention teams had been deployed. Rescue workers and residents alike have been praising their efforts ever since.

The teams could not have been successful without the tremendous teamwork exhibited by every rescue organization involved in battling these historic blazes. With the support of the Incident Management Team, Joint Information Center, Arson Task Force, Georgia Emergency Management Agency and the local government departments, the prevention teams fulfilled their mission on every front. They coordinated a massive communication blitz to help area residents cope with the emergency. The teams conducted

Firewise assessments in home-to-home visits. They distributed important publications, such as "Living With Fire" and other material, at the Okefenokee Swamp Park, Laura S. Walker State Park, and many other public venues. The teams announced town hall meetings and placed

information at community message boards surrounding the wildfires. The teams also assisted in the development and distribution of arson posters and table toppers in the south Georgia area.

Roger Lane, team 1 leader and GFC liaison, said people on the receiving end of these fire efforts were hugely appreciative.

"Residents came out of their homes to greet us and some even hugged us. At the Kneeknocker fire in Nahunta, while we were talking to a couple outside of their home, an elderly lady with a walker came out the front door, walked over, hugged us and praised the efforts of the GFC and firefighters. All of the residents thanked us for what we were doing and were very receptive to the information and suggestions we had for them. We always told them the firefighters were the ones to really be proud of. They asked that we pass their feelings on to them."

Those reactions were shared by public officials.

"All of the residents thanked us for what we were doing and were very receptive to the information/suggestions we had for them. We always told them the firefighters were the ones to really be proud of; they asked us to pass their feelings on to them."

Roger Lane, wildfire prevention team 1 leader, Georgia Forestry Commission

"The teams talked with state and county leaders," said Lane. "They were very appreciative and offered to help us in any way we needed. A county commissioner supplied requested county road maps, and a state representative supported the effort by visiting with Incident Management Team members in Waycross. Offers of assistance from community leaders were constant at each of the community meetings."

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WILDFIRE PREVENTION TEAMS...

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The teams' work with the media was highly effective in getting fire prevention messages to south Georgia residents. One media highlight, which gained Georgia-wide exposure, featured nationally known comedian and Georgian Jeff Foxworthy, in radio public service announcements highlighting the GFC wildfire prevention effort. Another coup was the Valdosta Daily Times' distribution of the GFC's "Living with Fire" insert to newspapers in at-risk communities. A total of 160,000 copies were printed and distributed as newspaper inserts by 14 city and county newspapers in south Georgia. Team 3 leader John Warner of the Texas Forest Service arranged for quick printing at significantly reduced rates, which brought the desired results.

"We received much positive feedback from residents about the valuable Firewise information in the insert," said Warner. "The long hours of work on the Fire Prevention

Team were well-rewarded by the appreciation of the people of south Georgia."

The Georgia Forestry Commission extends deep appreciation, once again, to the many members of the southern state forestry agencies that helped fight the Georgia wildfires. The damage suffered would have been far greater without the ready and able assistance of these professionals.



Prevention team member Sandra Taylor speaks to residents about pre-evacuation planning near the entrance of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Edith, GA.

Sandra Taylor explains the pre-evacuation plan to a resident.



A child plays outside wearing a mask to filter the smoke-filled air.



Mayor speaks to the public at a town hall meeting in Fargo, GA.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Fred Allen – SRS/SGSF
Liaison, Southern
Research Station
derfallen@alltel.net

Agrawal, Shruti; Monroe, Martha C. 2006. Using and improving social capital to increase community preparedness for wildfire. In: McCaffrey, S.M., tech. ed. *The public and wildland fire management: social science findings for managers*. Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-1. Newton Square, PA: USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station: 163-167.

Communities with more social capital are better able to work together to cope with problems, such as a wildfire threat. This study found a positive relationship between perceiving greater social capital and participating in wildfire preparedness educational programs. Results suggest that managers can take advantage of existing social capital in communities to improve the effectiveness of community outreach education and they can, in turn, use wildfire preparedness education to increase social capital. <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/18693>

Doran, J. Douglas; Randall, Cotton K.; Long, Alan J. 2004. Fire in the wildland-urban interface: Selecting and maintaining firewise plants for landscaping. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences; USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Southern Center for Wildland-Urban Interface Research and Information. 7 p.

One of the major issues in the southern wildland-urban interface is the loss of homes to wildfire. For homeowners who live in an area with a medium to high risk of wildfire, this document provides useful information for protecting your property. While fire control agencies play an important role in fire prevention and the protection of homes, there are actions that individual homeowners can take to reduce the vulnerability of their home to wildfire. <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/9540>

Fairchilds, Lindsay H.; Trettin, Carl C. 2006. History and legacy of fire effects in the South Carolina piedmont and coastal regions. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-98. Asheville, NC: USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 27 p.

Agriculture, fire suppression and urbanization have drastically altered natural forest processes and conditions in the southeastern United States. Many of South Carolina's forests are dense and overstocked, with high fuel loads. These conditions increase susceptibility to southern pine beetle attack and wildfire. Threats are further complicated by rapid urbanization and forest fragmentation, processes that are rapidly increasing South Carolina's wildland-urban interface. We examined fire regimes, land-use changes and fire research. Knowledge of past land-use and fire's biological and historical roles in land-use change can support effective decision making. <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/25999>

Fege, Anne S.; Blaylock, Christopher; 2007. Educating and engaging the business sector in reducing wildfire property losses. In: Butler, Bret W.; Cook, Wayne, comps. *The fire environment—innovations, management, and policy; conference proceedings*. Proceedings RMRS-P-46CD. Fort Collins, CO: USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. CD-ROM. p. 571-583.

Most wildfire education programs have relied overwhelmingly on homeowner information and education, limiting the role of such business professionals as architects, builders, insurance agents, landscape architects and contractors, planners, media, and realtors. This project was undertaken to engage and educate professionals who design landscapes and homes, work for home and property owners, and make decisions that affect homeowners and communities – and in the long run, to change best management practices in these industries. The project team identified new business practices and cooperative efforts that contribute to property-loss prevention, are economically viable, are likely to be adopted, and extend the reach of the traditional fire and land management professionals. <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/28601>



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS...

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Shiralipour, Holly Johnson; Monroe, Martha C.; Nelson, Kristen C.; Payton, Michelle. 2006. Working with neighborhood organizations to promote wildfire preparedness. In: McCaffrey, S.M., tech. ed. *The public and wildland fire management: social science findings for managers.* Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-1. Newtown Square, PA: USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station: 151-162.

Several government agencies and other natural resource managers have instituted outreach programs to promote wildfire preparedness in wildland-urban interface (WUI) neighborhoods that complement community-wide efforts. Results show that neighborhood organizations

are a ready-made physical, social and political entity capable of playing an important role in helping people reduce their wildfire risk. <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/18692>

Wade, Dale; Mobley, Hugh. 2007. Managing smoke at the wildland-urban interface. GTR SRS-103. Asheville, NC: USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 28 p.

When prescribed burning is conducted at the wildland-urban interface (WUI), the smoke that is produced can sometimes inconvenience people, but it can also cause more serious health and safety problems. The public is unlikely to continue to tolerate the use of prescribed fire, regardless of the benefits, if burn managers cannot keep smoke out of smoke-sensitive areas. This guide describes modifications to the Southern Smoke Screening System for burns at the WUI. It is designed for use

on burns less than 50 acres in size and has undergone several years of successful field testing in Florida. <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/28550>

WUI FIRE INFORMATION FOUND ON INTERFACESOUTH

Annie Hermansen-Baez, center manager – InterfaceSouth, Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry, USDA Forest Service

ahermansen@fs.fed.us

InterfaceSouth of the USDA Forest Service Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry works closely with the University of Florida, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the SGSF and other partners to conduct fire research and develop a variety of technology transfer products.

One study is investigating the flammability of four mulches (pine straw, shredded cypress, and small and large chunk pine bark nuggets) commonly used around homes. Many people use these mulches directly up to and in contact with their homes, yet little is known about their flammability. In initial tests, pine straw tended to flare up immediately, while both sizes of pine bark nuggets tended to continue to burn and generate

heat over a longer period of time. The ability of mulches to hold moisture was found to be a critical factor influencing their flammability. The study is looking at how fire spreads across mulch and from mulch to plants, and how the arrangement of plants affects how fire spreads to homes. USFS researcher Wayne Zipperer cautions that if you live in a fire-prone area, mulches should not be placed immediately adjacent to structures, regardless of mulch type. Final results from this study will be available next year.

In another study, the same researchers looked specifically at the flammability of 34 non-invasive shrub species commonly used in landscaping across the South. Fire specialists in many southern states helped determine the shrubs to be tested by filling out a survey. Once the shrub species were selected, comprehensive burn trials were conducted under controlled conditions at the NIST Building and Fire Research Laboratory in Gaithersburg, MD. Flammability measurements such as: time until ignition, heat release rate and maximum flame height were taken. From these studies, a flammability ranking of the 34 shrubs

was generated for use by fire professionals in the South. This information also helped to validate and refine a flammability key that was developed for use by urban foresters, extension agents, and others so they can create firewise plant lists for homeowners in the areas where they work.

Additional information about these research projects, the flammability key and other InterfaceSouth products can be found on the InterfaceSouth Web site. For more information contact Annie Hermansen-Baez, 352-376-3271, ahermansen@fs.fed.us.

WOOD TO ENERGY OUTREACH PROGRAM MATERIALS MAKE THEIR DEBUT

*Martha Carrie Monroe, associate professor, University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation
mcmmonroe@ufl.edu*

*If you wish to offer comments about the newsletter or Web site, contact
Mike Zupko, Southern Group of State Foresters
Executive Director at
sgsfexec@mindspring.com
or (770)267-9630.*

The Wood to Energy Outreach Program rolled out its set of outreach materials at the September 11-12th Woody Biomass Outreach Training in Atlanta, GA. The training was a joint effort between the Wood to Energy Outreach Program and the Southern Forest Research Partnership's Sustainable Forestry for Bioenergy and Bio-based Products Program. It was attended by 77 representatives from state forestry agencies, energy policy offices, economic development groups and non-governmental organizations from across the South. All training participants received the Wood to Energy Biomass Ambassador Guide, a notebook of materials designed to help them engage in outreach activities in southern communities that are suitable candidates for using wood for heat, power or electricity. The materials include:

- ◆ An outreach guide that provides ideas, suggestions and tools for engaging in effective outreach;
- ◆ 16 fact sheets on a range of topics including basic overview information, economics, environmental concerns and policy;
- ◆ 14 case studies of existing wood-to-energy facilities;
- ◆ 13 community economic profiles (one per state), illustrating the supply and cost of woody biomass in selected counties, as well as the potential economic impacts of wood-to-energy facilities;

- ◆ Presentation slides and notes that can be adapted and used in outreach activities;
- ◆ Resource list;
- ◆ Materials, templates and examples from our pilot test of these materials in Gainesville, FL.

Southern communities in the wildland-urban interface, and particularly those near a thriving forest industry, are well-positioned to explore the possibilities of using wood for energy. Urban and interface activities that generate sources of wood include powerline trimming, land clearing, storm damage and thinning for fire and insect mitigation as well as for ecosystem restoration. Where forests are managed for pulp or timber, periodic thinning and harvesting slash create potential sources. In addition, trees can be grown for energy, even short-rotation woody species.

Wood to Energy is a cooperative partnership between the University of Florida; the USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station; the Southern States Energy Board; and the Southern Regional Extension Forester. All of the Wood to Energy Outreach Program materials are available for download at <http://www.interfacesouth.org/woodybiomass>. Notebooks and CDs of the materials can be requested by emailing Lauren McDonnell at mcdonell@ufl.edu.

INTRODUCING THE CENTERS FOR URBAN AND INTERFACE FORESTRY...

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SOUTHERN GROUP
OF STATE FORESTERS

easily accessible information to partners, natural resource practitioners, and the public. Both Web sites can be accessed through the new portal at www.urbanandinterfaceforests.org.

The Urban Forestry South Expo Web site (www.urbanforestrysouth.org) has a variety of urban forestry resources, such as a document library, tree ordinances, classroom activities, presentations, and much more. This site is also the repository for the national U&CF technology transfer library.

The InterfaceSouth Web site (www.interfacesouth.org) includes up-to-date WUI information, such as current news, events, publications, training and outreach programs, and decision support systems. It also includes reference information such as a literature database, a photo gallery, and links to informative Web sites. The site also allows site visitors to sign up for the Southern Wildland-Urban Interface Network (SWUINET) listserv, through which they can receive the CUIF quarterly bulletin, the InterfaceSouth Update, and the InterfaceSouth Post.