



News Release

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"GOOD FIRE" AWARENESS WEEK FEBRUARY 4-10

Governor Nathan Deal is helping raising awareness about reducing the risk of wildfire by proclaiming February 4-10, 2018, "Prescribed Fire Awareness Week" in Georgia. Deal signed the proclamation in a special ceremony at the state capitol on February 6.

"There's good fire and there's bad fire," said Chuck Williams, Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. "We've seen a great deal of bad fire recently in the west, with wildfires destroying forests, homes and lives. Prescribed fire is 'good fire' because it's used under strict conditions by trained people for specific land management purposes." According to Williams, the Georgia Forestry Commission assists with 1,600 prescribed burns each year for a total of 150,000 acres.

"Prescribed fire is the most economical way to manage our forest and maintain a healthy ecosystem," explained Frank Sorrells, Chief of Forest Protection for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "Prescribed fire reduces forest litter and underbrush that can feed a big wildfire. Prescribed fire is an efficient reforestation tool, and it's also good for wildlife because it opens up the forest for new vegetative growth. That's food that helps every species flourish," he said.

The Georgia Forestry Commission is the agency that issues burn permits, when conditions are safe for burning. On average, 79,000 permits for prescribed burning are issued annually covering about 1.4 million acres of prescribed fire. Another 700,000 permits are given out each year for leaf and limb piles, which can be acquired through our online burn permit system at GaTrees.org, or by calling 1-800-OK-2-BURN. In addition, the GFC facilitates the state prescribed burn certification program.

"Frequent fire is as necessary to the health of Georgia's forests as sunshine and rain," said Sorrells. "Prescribed fire is a critical tool for preventing wildfire and managing forest health."

"Georgia Forestry Commission professionals protect the state from wildfire," said Williams. "Prescribed fire helps us do that job, as it enhances the health of our forests. It's sound insurance for today and tomorrow."

For more information on prescribed burning, becoming a certified burner, burn permits, and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit GaTrees.org.

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