



News Release

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DROUGHT MAY AFFECT OUTDOOR BURNING SEASON

The summer ban on outdoor burning will end Friday, September 30 in 54 Georgia counties, primarily in the northern half of the state. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division sets the restrictions annually, from May 1 to the end of September, to reduce emissions from ground level ozone that may jeopardize air quality.

Burn permits issued by the Georgia Forestry Commission are required for any outdoor burning in the state to help prevent wildfires and problems generated by smoke. This fall and winter, the process may be impacted by Georgia's deepening drought.

"The GFC will be managing burn permitting on a day to day and county by county basis," said Frank Sorrells, Chief of Protection for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "We recognize the importance of and promote prescribed burning for the many forest management benefits it provides, and ask for patience if burning is restricted in your area."

The lack of rain has left about half of Georgia in moderate to severe drought, which increases the potential for above normal wildfire activity. According to Sorrells, these conditions may make it necessary to restrict burn permitting for extended periods of time in some areas of the state.

"Safety is our top concern," said Sorrells, "and we're asking everyone to be extra cautious when doing any open burning, including burning yard debris, campfires, and outdoor cooking or grilling." Sorrells said escaped debris burns are the number one cause of wildfire in our state, and it may be necessary and wise to delay or postpone open burning if local conditions are unfavorable. "It can happen very fast," he said, "so we advise you always keep tools on hand like water, a shovel and a cell phone. Never hesitate to call 911, and never leave your fire unattended," Sorrells said.

The 54 counties whose EPD summer burn bans have been lifted are: Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Crawford, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hall, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Richmond, Rockdale, Spalding, Troup, Twiggs, Upson, Walker and Walton.

For specific information about conducting open burning, permitting requirements and current fire conditions in your area, contact your county's GFC office or visit GaTrees.org.

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