



# News Release

For more information, contact:

Wendy Burnett

478.751.3535

[wburnett@gfc.state.ga.us](mailto:wburnett@gfc.state.ga.us)

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## **EPD'S SUMMER BURN BAN LIFTED**

The summer ban on outdoor burning will end Saturday, 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.

"The GFC will resume issuing burn permits as conditions allow, on a day to day basis," said Frank Sorrells, Chief of Protection for the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Fire danger and smoke management considerations will be taken into account for counties that have been under the EPD burn ban since May 1, as it is in all Georgia locations, Sorrells said. The GFC recognizes the importance of prescribed burning for its many wildfire prevention and forest management benefits, and safety remains the top priority for those burns as well.

"We're asking everyone to be extra cautious when doing any open burning, especially in the wake of Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irma, which left behind a lot of downed trees and vegetative debris," said Sorrells. "Escaped debris burns remain the number one cause of wildfires in our state, and it may be necessary and wise to delay or postpone open burning if local conditions are unfavorable." Sorrells said tools such as a shovel, water, and cell phone should always be on hand, that fires should never be left unattended, and a 911 call is always prudent when flames escape.

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](http://GaTrees.org).

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