



# FLForestry News

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA FOREST SERVICE

## The Florida Forest Service

is a division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and consists of more than 1,250 dedicated employees who manage more than 1 million acres of public forestland while protecting 26 million acres of homes, forestland and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire.

In addition to managing more than 1 million acres of state forests for multiple public uses including timber, recreation and wildlife habitat, the Florida Forest Service also provides services to landowners throughout the state, including technical information and grant program administration.

The Florida Forest Service's forestry programs are implemented by its field operations staff within 15 field units across the state. Field personnel and equipment provide a more responsive and comprehensive approach to land management and wildfire control statewide.



*Miami-Dade County Wildfire*

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## Message from the Florida State Forester



*Jim Karels, State Forester*

As we move through the summer months, I would like to take a moment to highlight the Florida Forest Service's wildfire protection efforts throughout the state. Thanks to quick and effective wildfire response, most wildfires this year were kept relatively small and threats to homes and structures were limited. I'd also like to thank our partnering agencies for working with us to help protect life, property and natural resources in Florida.

This is also the time of year when our folks start deploying to assist wildfire suppression efforts throughout the United States; specifically out West. Florida Forest Service wildland firefighters are a vital part of the national firefighting community. We are dedicated to wildfire protection here in Florida and throughout the nation. Already this summer, we have provided three initial-attack hand crews to California and an array of individuals to other western states, including Alaska. Florida Forest Service deployments are an excellent opportunity to aid our partnering agencies and build upon our expertise

as wildland firefighters. I look forward to yet another year of outstanding work from the Florida Forest Service as we continue to build strong partnerships and assist wildfire suppression efforts abroad.

On the Forest Management end, the Florida Forest Service has had a banner year for prescribed fire. We strongly promote the use of prescribed fire as a safe and natural way to ensure ecosystem health and reduce wildfire risk. This year, we have worked diligently to prescribe burn as many acres as possible on state forest land, while doing so in a safe and conscientious manner. I am proud to say that we have not only broken our own state record, but have set a new national record for acres treated with prescribed fire. I am thankful for our folks throughout the state who worked tirelessly to reach this goal.

As always, I am proud and excited to share Florida Forest Service updates and useful forestry and wildfire information with our readers. Please feel free to visit our website at **FloridaForestService.com** or contact a local **field unit** office for more information about the many excellent programs we have available to the public.



**Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**  
**Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner**



## Florida Forest Service Sets National Prescribed Fire Record

The Florida Forest Service recently announced that more than 246,000 acres of Florida state forests were treated with prescribed fire last year, the highest number ever reported by any state forestry agency in the country. Prescribed fire is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health and reduce wildfire risk.

"I am proud that Florida is home to the most active prescribed fire program in the nation," said Commissioner Putnam. "Prescribed fire helps keep Florida's natural habitats healthy and protects Floridians and visitors by reducing the overall risk of wildfire."

Prescribed fire is an important land management tool used to reduce the buildup of flammable plant materials that fuel and intensify dangerous wildfires. The reduction of hazardous buildup results in increased safety for surrounding areas. In addition, many of Florida's plant and animal communities are dependent on the regular occurrence of fire for a healthy existence. Prescribed fires mimic this natural process, returning nutrients to the soil, providing better forage for wildlife and livestock, and helping to control certain plant and tree diseases. Prescribed fire also helps preserve rare and endangered plant and animal species including the Yellow Fringeless Orchid found on the Blackwater River State Forest.

"Last year, we were fortunate to experience many days with conditions favorable for prescribed fire. Conditions can change quickly and drastically in Florida, so the Florida Forest Service has made it a priority to take advantage of these favorable

conditions whenever they are present," said Jim Karels, Florida State Forester.

To learn more about the benefits of prescribed fire or to obtain a prescribed burning authorization, visit [FloridaForestService.com](http://FloridaForestService.com).



## Become a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager

Because of prescribed fire's important role in Florida's ecosystems, the Florida Forest Service works hand-in-hand with private landowners and partnering agencies to promote the use of prescribed fire throughout Florida. In addition to its record breaking state forest prescribed fire program, the Florida Forest Service boasts the most active overall statewide prescribed burning program in the nation.

As the managing agency for all outdoor burning within the state of Florida, the Florida Forest Service provides a unique program that trains and verifies individuals as Certified Prescribed Burn Managers. I encourage anyone who uses prescribed fire or conducts controlled burns on a regular basis to consider enrolling in this useful and educational program. Certified Prescribed Burn Managers receive certain extra privileges such as liability protections, additional burn time and permission to obtain night-time burning authorizations (when dispersion indices are favorable). Certified Prescribed Burn Managers also have the advantage of being able to submit open burn authorization requests online.

To become a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager, practitioners must take the certification training course (offered in distance and in-class formats) and obtain direct experience conducting at least three acreage burns. Classroom courses will be offered at various times and locations across the state. Certified Prescribed Burn Managers maintain their certification by conducting a minimum of two authorized prescribed burns and participating in a prescribed fire-related class or Prescribed Fire Council meeting once every five years. Further information and application forms can be found at [FloridaForestService.com](http://FloridaForestService.com) or by contacting the **Withlacoochee Training Center** at (352) 797-4172.





## Goods from The Woods

Florida's forests provide more than 5,000 types of consumer goods that most people use on a daily basis. Some are easily recognized, like paper goods and lumber, while others are not. By the time forest products reach consumers, many retain very little resemblance to the trees from which they originated. These products include cosmetics, paint additives, medicines and fabrics used to make clothing. Pharmaceuticals developed to treat cancer have also originated from chemicals extracted from trees. The below list is a sampling of some of the many products that come from Florida's Forests:

Aspirin  
Ice Cream  
Skateboards  
Cell Phones  
Diapers  
Bug Repellent  
Bandages  
Fishing Tackle  
Laundry Detergent  
Crayons  
Paint  
Football Helmets  
Fireworks  
Glue  
Sports Drinks  
Shoe Polish  
Soap  
Cosmetics  
Concrete  
Lotion  
Toothbrushes  
Rayon  
Fragrances  
Mulch  
Paper  
Tissue Boxes  
Cleaning Supplies  
Flavorings  
Eyeglass Frames  
Carpet  
Plastic Twines  
Computer Casings  
Luggage  
Cellophane  
Baby Food  
Cereal  
Musical Instruments

Click [HERE](#) for full list.

## Florida Forestry Economic Highlights

Since the 1930s, natural resource managers have relied on the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program, the most comprehensive forest monitoring and analysis system in existence. FIA is a reliable means of gauging changes to wildlife habitat, timber supplies, the environment and natural resources. In order to monitor forests' natural resource trends in a timely and useful manner, the Florida Forest Service operates under the goal of attaining FIA data on a five-year cycle. The following report focuses on the economic impacts of forestry in Florida and was constructed from the latest 2013 FIA data available and the 2013 Summary of Economic Contributions of Forestry and Forest Product Manufacturing Industries in Florida by Implan Group, LLC.

### Economic Output:

Of Florida's 17.3 million acres of forest land, 15.4 million acres of timberlands support economic activities in Florida. These economic activities generated \$14.52 billion in total output impacts in 2013. This was 13% less than 2012 output impacts, but 4% more than in 2008, the lowest point in the recent economic recession.

### Employment:

In 2013, the Florida forest products industry supported 74,500 full and part-time jobs, which were 9,800 fewer jobs than in 2012. However, this also represents a 16% increase in employment when compared to its lowest point in 2008.

### Export Value:

At \$5.54 billion in 2013, the export value of Florida's forest products to out-of-state destinations decreased by 6% since 2012. However, this number also represents a significant increase of 40% when compared to low 2008 export values.

### Fiscal Impacts:

In 2013, production and imports of Florida forestry and forest products industries generated \$442 million in tax impacts. Of that, \$354 million were generated by the pulp and paper sector, \$34 million by forest tract management and logging activities, \$40 million by secondary products manufacturing, and \$14 million by lumber, veneer and panel manufacturing industries.

### Forest Ownership:

In 2013, Florida timberland ownership, which supports the forest products industry was 71% private (66% non-industrial, and 5% forest industry), 18% state and local, and 11% federal.

### Annual Wood Harvest:

Between years 2009 and 2013, Florida on average harvested 472.5 million cubic feet of wood annually. Of that amount, approximately 90% was harvested from private and 10% from publicly owned timberlands. Nearly 63% of all harvested wood was either slash pine or longleaf pine. Collectively, all southern yellow pines supplied 425.6 million cubic feet, or 90% of all harvested wood annually. The remainder of wood harvest consisted of cypress and hardwood species.

To view the **full report** or to find more information about Forest Utilization and the Forest Inventory Analysis program, visit **[FloridaForestService.com](http://FloridaForestService.com)** or contact Dr. Jarek Nowak at (850) 681-5883 or **[Jarek.Nowak@FreshFromFlorida.com](mailto:Jarek.Nowak@FreshFromFlorida.com)**.





## 2015 Wildfires Smaller, More Frequent

For thousands of years, naturally caused wildfires have burned regularly in Florida's forests. Each year, Florida averages 3,000-5,000 wildfires statewide. "Wildfire" is the term applied to any unwanted, unplanned, damaging fire burning in forest, shrub or grass. On average, Florida experiences the second highest number of wildfires in the nation. During dry years, Florida experiences severe wildfires- wildfires that destroy homes, disrupt people's lives and impact the economy.

Since January, the Florida Forest Service has responded to more than 2,000 wildfires that have burned more than 65,000 acres. Compared to 2014, there have been more wildfire occurrences so far this year; however, wildfires have also been smaller. When compared to the same time period in 2014, wildfires have burned approximately 27,600 fewer acres.

The most frequent cause of wildfire so far in 2015 has been lightning, which was responsible for 735 wildfires, accounting for 70 percent of all acres burned. This year's Lightning-caused wildfires have almost doubled compared to 2014. The most frequent human cause of wildfire was escaped debris and yard trash burning, followed by arson.

The Florida Forest Service expects to see continued lighting wildfires through the summer as thunderstorms remain prevalent. The Florida Forest Service is encouraging citizens to diminish wildfire risk around their homes by removing dry and flammable plants and debris that could carry flames from a wildfire to their home. They are also asking all Floridians and visitors to be careful with all outdoor fires, including campfires and grills.



## Wildfire Prevention in Florida

A key component to addressing Florida's wildfire concerns is the prevention of wildfires. The goal of the Florida Forest Service's fire prevention program is to prevent unwanted human-caused wildfires. Each of the Florida Forest Service's 15 field units houses a wildfire prevention team that plays an important role in helping to reduce human caused wildfires locally. These teams conduct wildfire prevention education and Smokey Bear programs for local schools and groups, and share important information at community events.

While there are many activities that can limit damage from wildfires, wildfire prevention programs can be particularly beneficial in reducing the number of wildfire ignitions. A study conducted by the US Forest Service's Southern Research Station found that every one dollar spent on wildfire prevention in Florida reduced wildfire related losses and suppression costs by 35 dollars. Wildfire prevention is a sound investment toward protecting Florida from the dangers of wildfire.

To learn more about wildfire prevention or to schedule a fire prevention program for a school, youth or civic group, contact a Florida Forest Service **wildfire mitigation specialist** near you. Link: <http://www.freshfrom-florida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Communities/>