



News Release

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SOMETIMES FOREST FIRES ARE GOOD

When people hear the words “forest fire,” they likely become alarmed. But fire in the forest is not always a bad thing, and the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and Governor Sonny Perdue want that message to resonate with Georgians.

“When fires in the forest are carefully controlled, they actually improve the health of the forest,” said Neal Edmondson, Prescribed Fire Program Manager for the GFC. “Foresters know this tool as ‘prescribed fire.’ This type of burning helps protect the forest from devastating wildfires by reducing hazardous tinder on the forest floor that fuels wildfires and threatens homes and property.” Edmondson explained that prescribed burning also enhances reforestation, aesthetics and forest access, and is beneficial for many types of wildlife.

February 8-14, 2010 is Prescribed Fire Awareness Week in Georgia. Governor Sonny Perdue annually declares the first full week in February as a time to recognize this valuable tool for improving the health of Georgia’s 24 million acres of forest land.

To further educate Georgians about the benefits of forests and prescribed fire, the GFC and Southern Group of State Foresters are launching a special communications campaign. The new campaign leads Internet users to www.visitmyforest.org, which lists forested public areas by zip code. The site also provides messages about the benefits of burning, and offers access to www.goodfires.org, which details how prescribed fire helps maintain and manage forestlands. Television and radio advertisements will also be used in the campaign.

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