



News Release

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FIREFIGHTING COALITION BATTLES SOUTH GEORGIA WILDFIRES

More than 200 firefighting professionals from the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and other emergency management agencies are battling fires in south Georgia that have blackened over 10,000 acres and destroyed several homes.

"This one will go into the history books of wildland fires in Georgia," said Frank Sorrells, GFC Waycross District Ranger, of the Ware County-Sweat Farm Road fire. "We're pulling equipment and personnel in from all over Georgia and more are on standby to put out this dangerous fire." The fire has scorched an area measuring 11 miles long and one mile wide and is spreading into the Okefenokee Swamp. An estimated 1,000 homes in the southern part of Waycross were evacuated Tuesday afternoon. The Okefenokee Swamp Park has also been evacuated.

The Georgia Forestry Commission's Incident Management Team is managing this fire and several others in southeast Georgia. Fires have burned some 3,000 acres in Brantley and Wayne counties. "Conditions have been extremely dry," said Sorrells, "and the humidity remains very low. Winds are out of the northwest at about eight to ten miles an hour, so that's pushing the fire further south." Smoke from the wildfires is affecting areas as far away as Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Florida.

Sorrells is urging residents close to these fires to stay tuned to news reports and refrain from outdoor burning until further notice.

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