



# News Release

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## **PUBLIC HELP NEEDED TO FIND ARSONIST**

The Georgia Forestry Commission is asking for assistance from the public to help solve a series of arson fires in Clinch and Echols Counties. GFC Law Enforcement investigators say three fires were intentionally set on Tuesday, April 25 in southern Clinch County, and two additional fires were set in northern Echols County. The fires were deliberately started along rural dirt roads near the Clinch-Echols County line, in an area between Homerville, Statenville, and Fargo. The five fires destroyed approximately 113 acres of timberland.

Clinch County experienced several arson fires in other parts of the county in 2016, but authorities have not determined if those fires are connected to the recent series of arson fires. In the past nine months, Clinch County has been the site of 20 arson fires.

Current dry conditions in southeast Georgia have increased the potential for severe wildfires. Firefighters are currently battling a wildfire in the Okefenokee Swamp, less than 20 miles from the Clinch and Echols Counties area. The Okefenokee fire has already burned more than 80,000 acres.

Georgia Arson Control, Inc. is offering rewards of up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of an arsonist. In addition, a privately held natural resources company which has been victimized by several arson fires, has offered a \$10,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for setting arson fires on their property. The Georgia Forestry Association (GFA) also has a reward program for the arrest and conviction of those responsible for timber arson that occurs on property belonging to GFA members.

Any wildland fire should be reported to your local fire department and/or 911. Anyone with information about these arson fires, or any other suspected wildland arson fires, should contact the Georgia Forestry Commission at 1-800-GA-TREES (428-7337) or [enforcement@gfc.state.ga.us](mailto:enforcement@gfc.state.ga.us). Callers may remain anonymous. GFC investigators are working with the Echols and Clinch County Sheriff's Offices, which should be contacted about any suspicious activity in this area.

For more information about wildfire and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit [GaTrees.org](http://GaTrees.org).

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