



News Release

For more information, contact:
Wendy Burnett
478.365.6233
wburnett@gfc.state.ga.us

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ENHANCED WEATHER TOOL BOOSTS FIRE SAFETY

As fall gets underway, so does the season for outdoor burning in Georgia. Wildfires and prescribed fires are two different types of fire, the “bad” and the “good.” Both are greatly influenced by weather.

To better serve customers, the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) is transitioning to National Weather Service (NWS) fire weather forecasts on October 1. The two agencies have long been partners in fire weather forecasting, and this shift will provide the highest level of technical features for continuity across the state and even the nation.

“Weather forecasting becomes more critical this time of year,” said Georgia Forestry Commission Chief of Protection Frank Sorrells. “Weather is the most important factor that affects fire behavior, followed by fuel and topography. Online access to interactive tools and maps will enhance fire weather forecasting, as well as safety for citizens.”

To conduct any type of outdoor burning, a burn permit must be obtained from the GFC, either at GaTrees.org or by calling 1-877-O-K-2-BURN. Fire weather forecasts are used by the GFC to determine if burn permits will be issued for the day, and this enhanced partnership allows all users, including GFC’s wildland firefighters, to access the same information and adjust responses for the highest level of service to Georgians. Fire weather forecasts are vital and necessary when planning for any open burning and prescribed burning operations.

To access the NWS fire weather forecast users can still use the GFC website GaTrees.org, and then look in the “Online Services” section at the top right of the web page and click on “Burning Permits Online” to reach “Area Weather Forecast.” The user-friendly NWS fire weather forecast portal contains an interactive map that allows for multiple choices. Users can click on the county for which they desire fire weather information, zoom/scroll in to a specific location on the map, or search by zip code or name of the nearest city. All other weather related information will continue to be available with no changes within GFC’s Online Fire Weather System, including fire danger ratings, useful and quick reference maps concerning drought index, fire danger, fuel moistures and more, and well as links to other weather related websites.

“Our Forest Protection staff and our GFC meteorologist have been working with their NWS counterparts to provide the most accurate information to Georgia customers,” said Sorrells.

“Along with educating everybody about good fire and bad fire, this is a solid step forward for the safety of all Georgians.”

For more information about fire safety and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit GaTrees.org.

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