



## News Release

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### **GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION EARNS NATIONAL FIREFIGHTING AWARD**

For the third time in a decade, the Georgia Forestry Commission has been nationally recognized for its work in wildland fire management. As part of the collaborative South Georgia-North Florida Fire Initiative, the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) has been named recipient of the 2015 Pulaski Award. The award was presented to Initiative members on November 19 in Fargo, GA.

"The Pulaski Award recognizes groups demonstrating outstanding performance in the areas of interagency collaboration, cooperation and coordination," said Frank Sorrells, Chief of Forest Protection for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "It takes into account the safety of wildland firefighters and the public during a wildfire, group performance in wildland fire management activities, and the development of partnerships and communication tools. This is a great honor for our team," Sorrells said.

The South Georgia-North Florida Fire Initiative is composed of several organizations and private landowners, including the Georgia Forestry Commission, Florida Forest Service, US Forest Service, Osceola National Forest, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners (GOAL). The group earned the 2015 Pulaski for its collaborative work with private landowners and federal and state agencies, which has resulted in exceptional partnerships in wildland fire management and serves as a model to inspire and form similar relationships nationwide. Fire directors at the National Interagency Fire Center annually choose the recipients of this prestigious award.

The Pulaski is a half-axe/half-hoe tool designed for wildland firefighting and named in honor of Ed Pulaski, a forest ranger who led a crew to safety through thick smoke, heat and

flames during devastating fires of 1910 in Montana and Idaho. The Pulaski Award is a 30-inch bronze model of one of three eight-foot statues of firefighters, which stand at the Wildland Firefighters Monument in Boise, Idaho.

In addition to this year's honor, the Georgia Forestry Commission received Pulaski Awards in 2005, as part of its collaboration with GOAL, and again in 2007, with the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council, in which the GFC is actively engaged.

"All Georgians can share the pride of this recognition," said Robert Farris, Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. "These professionals are working hard to prepare for, respond to, and learn from the incidences of wildfire. That enhances safety for our citizens and our property, and we are proud to be nationally recognized for these achievements."

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

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