



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Caution Urged with All Burning

With no significant precipitation in the weather forecast for the remainder of the week, the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) is advising people to use extreme caution with all debris burning and outdoor fires. With lower relative humidity and March winds, fires can quickly spread out of control, not only endangering homes and property, but also threatening lives, as well as resulting in damage to Alabama's forests.

Both number and size of wildfire occurrences have already increased. As of 4:00 p.m. CST today, AFC wildland firefighters are currently battling 24 wildfires across the state. Over the last three days, 70 wildfires have burned more than 2,360 acres of forestland in Alabama. This includes a 560-acre wildfire in St. Clair County, two 400-acre fires in Cherokee and Cullman counties, and one for 200 acres in Escambia County. Most of these fires escaped from permitted prescribed burns.

"Extra care is required with any fire when relative humidity values fall under 25 percent and wind speeds exceed 15 mph or higher," said State Forester Rick Oates. "Although no burn restrictions have been issued, the Forestry Commission encourages everyone to be very cautious until conditions improve."

It is Alabama state law to obtain a burn permit **before** burning any woodland, grassland, field, or wood debris greater than one quarter acre or within 25 feet of flammable material. All necessary safety precautions should be exercised when doing any type burning. Be sure to clear down to mineral soil around the area to be burned. Have enough tools, equipment, and manpower to safely control any fire. Once started, stay with the fire until it is completely out. To obtain a burn permit or for more information, call the Alabama Forestry Commission at 1(800) 392-5679.

The mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission is to protect and sustain Alabama's forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principles and education, ensuring that the state's forests contribute to abundant timber and wildlife, clean air and water, and a healthy economy. For more information about the fire situation in your area or any other forestry related issues, contact your local Alabama Forestry Commission office or visit the AFC website at www.forestry.alabama.gov

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