

Release

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



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Forestry Commission lifts statewide Red Flag Fire Alert

Risk of wildfires escaping and spreading to decrease with coming weather changes

The South Carolina Forestry Commission will lift its Red Flag Fire Alert for all counties at 7 a.m. Monday, Feb. 16. The alert was issued Friday morning because of unusually high winds and low relative humidity, which together with dry fuels on the ground contributed to an elevated fire risk around the entire state.

A low-pressure system bringing mixed forms of precipitation is forecast to move into South Carolina from the northeast Monday, and will combine with much lower wind speeds and higher relative humidity to create a decreased risk of wildfire.

“We appreciate people paying attention to the Red Flag Fire Alert this weekend and postponing their outdoor burning for the most part,” said Darryl Jones, SCFC Fire Chief and Forest Protection Director. “That doesn’t mean, however, that the inherent danger of outdoor burning is over. People should still always exercise discretion and extreme caution when dealing with any type of fire.”

Although the end of the Red Flag Fire Alert means the highest risk of outdoor fires escaping and spreading rapidly may be over for now – as are any subsequent local/country restrictions on outdoor burning that were triggered by the alert – the Forestry Commission reminds citizens that they must make notification of any outdoor burning by calling the Commission’s toll-free notification line for their county. The list of phone numbers to call for each county can be found at:

<http://www.state.sc.us/forest/fyard.htm>

The Forestry Commission responded to **59 fires** over the weekend, burning at least **112 acres** and resulting in nearly **\$45,000 in property loss and/or damage**, though all figures from Sunday’s 27 fires have yet to be tallied.

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As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 13.6 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.

