

Press Release

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



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SC Forestry Commission arrests suspect in trespassing, unlawful burning case

GLOVERVILLE, S.C. — Officers with the South Carolina Forestry Commission have charged an Augusta, Ga., man with trespassing and burning lands of another without consent.

Joshua T. Reese, 33, was arrested near Myrtle Street Friday, Nov. 14 by an SCFC law enforcement officer who was the first to respond to a dispatch from the Aiken County Sheriff's Office regarding a person setting the woods on fire.

When the officer arrived on scene, he observed a man near a small fire in the woods and asked the suspect if he set the fire. The man said he did and that he always does this.

Upon further questioning, the suspect said that while riding his bicycle, he became cold, entered the woods and started the fire. He also said he did not own the property and did not know who did.

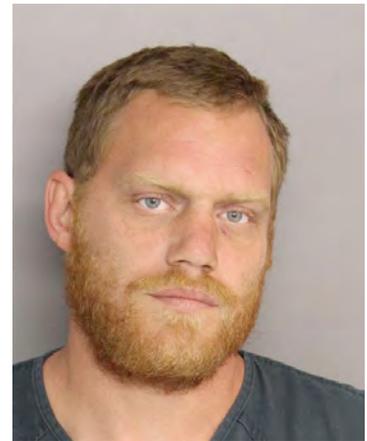
The landowner arrived shortly thereafter and confirmed that the suspect did not have consent to enter his property, which was posted with no-trespassing signs. He also stated that the same tract of land has been burned six different times; on two of those occasions, the same responding officer had visited the site for suspicious fires.

The Langley Fire Department extinguished the fire, which burned approximately a small area of leaves and brush. After the arrest, the Aiken County Sheriff's Office transported Reese to the Aiken County Detention Center.

Reese posted \$5,000 bail for the felony burning charge Monday, Nov. 17. His preliminary hearing date has not been set. A judge set Reese's bond for misdemeanor trespassing at \$470 and will hear the trespassing charge Dec. 15.

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The South Carolina Forestry Commission assumes the primary responsibility for statewide forest fire law enforcement, which is an important part of forest fire prevention.



Joshua T. Reese