

Media Advisory

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Forestry Commission issues burning ban for 5 SC counties

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission has issued a State Forester’s Burning Ban, effective immediately, for five Upstate counties: **Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg.**

State Forester Gene Kodama enacted the ban today because of weather conditions in the Upstate that present an elevated risk of wildfire. Forecasts for the aforementioned five counties over the next week include gusting winds and very low relative humidity, which combine with dry fuels on the ground to create the potential for outdoor fires escaping easily and spreading rapidly.

A State Forester’s Burning Ban prohibits outdoor burning, which includes yard debris burning and burning for forestry, wildlife or agricultural purposes. While campfires and open-fire cooking are not included in the ban, the Forestry Commission strongly encourages all citizens in the five counties to refrain from any unnecessary burning.

“The ongoing drought, combined with leaf fall, low humidity and high winds, is making conditions ripe for wildfire,” said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. “The intent of this burning ban is to help us avoid the number and severity of wildfires that we’re seeing in all of our neighboring states.”

Residents in counties not subject to the burning ban are cautioned to be extremely vigilant when burning yard debris and/or conducting prescribed burns. State law requires that citizens outside of unincorporated areas notify the Forestry Commission before burning outdoors. The notification is a quick, easy, automated process, and the toll-free numbers for each county are provided at the link below:

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

Forestry Commission officials confirmed earlier today that the blanket of smoke covering much of South Carolina is coming from several dozen wildfires in western North Carolina, northeastern Georgia and southeastern Tennessee. Jones also said the smoke likely will not dissipate until either the Appalachian wildfires are controlled or the state receives significant rainfall.

While no South Carolina communities are at any immediate risk, Forestry Commission officials encourage people with respiratory issues be mindful of the smoke and possible increased particulate matter in the air.

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT:

Darryl Jones
SCFC Fire Chief
(803) 667-1039

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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 12.9 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.

Did you know...?

An astounding 98 percent of all wildland fires are caused by human activities, and escaped debris burns are responsible for nearly 50 percent of them. South Carolina Forestry Commission firefighters respond to an average of 2,500 wildland fires every year, burning about 18,000 acres annually.