Media Advisory

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission

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SC Forestry Commission has issued statewide burning ban until further notice

COLUMBIA—With the approach of Hurricane Matthew, the South Carolina Forestry Commission has issued a State Forester's Burning Ban for all counties, effective at 7 a.m. today.

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 advises all citizens to be extremely vigilant until the ban is lifted.

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.

After consultation with Gov. Nikki Haley and other emergency response organizations Tuesday morning, State Forester Gene Kodama decided to declare the ban to reduce possible wildfire ignitions. This will allow the Forestry Commission and local fire departments to focus on evacuation and other emergency operations.

In addition to performing its normal wildfire suppression operations, the Forestry Commission is deploying about 40 firefighting and law enforcement personnel and resources to coastal regions to support the state's coordinated evacuation procedures.

The ban will stay in effect until further notice, which will come in the form of an official announcement from the Forestry Commission and SC Emergency Management Division.

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT:

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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.