

Release

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Smoke from neighboring states' wildfires covering much of SC

COLUMBIA— Residents from the Upstate to the Midlands and even as far south as Aiken are reporting seeing and smelling a pervasive smoky haze that has been intensifying slightly for the last 24 hours.

Forestry Commission officials confirm that the smoke is coming from several dozen wildfires in western North Carolina, northeastern Georgia and southeastern Tennessee. There are currently no large wildfires or prescribed burns occurring in South Carolina.

A cold front that passed through the southern Appalachians Monday night helped push a blanket of smoke southeast toward the Palmetto State, more than half of which is now covered with light smoke.

With very little rain in recent months, low relative humidity and extended drought conditions affecting much of the region, a series of wildfires has broken out to our west and northwest over the last few weeks.

Forestry Commission Fire Chief Darryl Jones said the smoke likely will not dissipate until the Appalachian wildfires are controlled, the northwesterly winds change direction and/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.

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.

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.