



Southern Fire Exchange: First Year Report (June, 2011)

- The Southern Fire Exchange (SFE) began in mid 2010 as a Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) Regional Consortium. To date, the SFE has accomplished its three initial goals.
 - **Creation of a technology transfer system** that uses multiple venues to ensure that fire managers and landowners efficiently access and apply fire research results.
 - **Establishment of a governance structure** and operating guidelines.
 - A Steering Committee of the SFE management team and key leaders from fire management and educational organizations in the region provide overall direction to SFE planning and projects.
 - An Advisory Board of 20 people representing the geographic region and range of public agencies, Prescribed Fire Councils (PFCs), private landowners and NGOs interested in fire management provide end-user priorities and evaluation.
 - **Initiation of a research assessment protocol** for fire managers to share their research questions with the scientific community, with two potential research topics presented to the JFSP Board.
 - **Conclusion:** SFE is positioned for significant growth in scientific exchange between fire practitioners and researchers.
- **Technology transfer occurs through four primary venues:** a new website, written products, direct interaction between researchers and fire managers, and public education tools.
 - The new one-stop **SFE Resource Center** (www.southernfireexchange.org) is designed to meet requests expressed during a regional needs assessment. The Resource Center includes many innovative and interactive features.
 - A discussion forum for fire researchers and practitioners.
 - An "Ask An Expert" forum for answers to specific technical questions from fire practitioners.
 - Fire science libraries grouped on a single page, including the Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Database (<http://www.talltimbers.org/fedb-intro.html>, which has been expanded with SFE support and will now be available through the FRAMES website), JFSP Fire Science Briefs and the Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science.
 - A calendar of fire-related events and trainings.
 - Fire models and tools grouped on a single page for ease of access.
 - Information to facilitate the process of planning prescribed fire, including burn permits by state, fire weather information and fire data maps.
 - SFE products such as fact sheets, *Fire Lines* newsletter, presentations and research summaries.
 - A list of professional development activities such as webinars, workshops and field days.
 - Written **SFE publications** include newsletters, fact sheets and research summaries. New fact sheets and research summaries will increase significantly in the second year as we solicit assistance from a larger number of scientists through a mini-grant process. Since January 2011, we have published eight documents.
 - Four issues of our monthly **Fire Lines newsletter** containing information about new and existing resources, new research or publication highlights, and upcoming events.

- Four two-page **factsheets** covering topics prioritized by the Advisory Board, such as getting detailed weather forecasts, planning for nighttime smoke and fog dispersal, optimizing use of the TTRS Fire Ecology Database and predicting smoke movement with models.
- **Direct communication between the research and fire management communities** occurs at Prescribed Fire Council meetings across the South, and through webinars and field demonstrations.
 - Science application and SFE marketing talks were presented at the OK, NC, SC and three FL PFC meetings in the past year.
 - Our first field demonstration and four webinars are scheduled in the next six months.
 - We have a standing offer to provide science application talks at all PFC meetings and training academies in the South.
- **Marketing** the SFE is ongoing through a new brochure and presentations at biannual Southern Group of State Foresters Fire Chiefs' meetings and PFC meetings; other presentations in the first year were at the national Society of American Foresters annual meeting and several prescribed burn manager training academies. The PFCs and Southern Fire Chiefs have agreed to forward communications about new SFE products through their email distributions. To date, we have over 3,300 fire practitioners, managers, and researchers in our contact database. Over 170 of those have been identified as fire science researchers.
- **Summary:** All the key ingredients are in place, and being implemented, so that SFE can be a long-term viable partner in fire science delivery and application in the South. Our efforts will be enhanced by ongoing collaboration with neighboring consortia in the Appalachian uplands and woodlands/prairies at the western edge of the region. In recognition of our success so far, JFSP extended our startup funding into 2013, with plans for a longer service to the fire management community.

SFE Team:

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Southern Fire Exchange

A Regional Partnership

