



## Southern Fire Exchange: Second Year Report (June, 2012)

- The Southern Fire Exchange (SFE) began in mid 2010 as a Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) Regional Consortium covering Coastal Plain and Piedmont ecosystems in 11 states. In its second year, the SFE significantly expanded its role in fire science information exchange related to its two primary goals:
  - **A technology transfer system** that uses multiple venues to ensure that fire managers and landowners efficiently access and apply fire research results.
  - **A research assessment protocol** for fire managers to share their research questions with the scientific community, with several potential research topics presented to the JFSP Board and on the short list for next year's RFAs.
  - **Conclusion:** SFE has made significant progress in scientific exchange between fire practitioners and researchers.
- **Technology transfer occurs through four primary venues:** a website, written products, direct interaction between researchers and fire managers, and public education tools.
  - Our "first-stop" **SFE Resource Center** ([www.southernfireexchange.org](http://www.southernfireexchange.org)) includes many innovative and interactive features that were refined this year at the same time as we added new products and features.
    - "What's New" is constantly updated.
    - SFE products such as fact sheets, *Fire Lines* newsletter, presentations and research summaries, as well as reports prepared by SFE team members.
    - 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 also 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 professional development activities such as webinars, workshops, field days and training opportunities.
    - 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.
    - A discussion forum for fire researchers and practitioners.
    - An "Ask An Expert" forum for answers to specific technical questions from fire practitioners.
  - **SFE publications** are prepared by a diverse cadre of researchers as volunteers or through a mini-grant process. Since June 2011, we have published 17 documents.
    - Eight issues of our monthly ***Fire Lines* newsletter** containing information about new and existing resources, new research or publication highlights, partners, and upcoming events.
    - Five two-page **factsheets** covering topics such as optimizing use of different online fire resources, season of burning effects on birds, and smoke prediction with VSMOKE.
    - Three technical reports on: prescribed burning and longleaf pine for SERPPAS, a multi-agency workshop on particulate matter in smoke (TTRS), and stakeholder priorities for burning.
    - An article in the *Forest Landowner* magazine on actions to take after a wildfire on private land.

- **Direct communication between the research and fire management communities** occurs at Prescribed Fire Council meetings across the South, through webinars and field demonstrations, and at training academies and conferences.
  - Science application and SFE update talks were presented at the GA, NC, SC, OK, LA, TN and North FL PFC meetings in the past year.
  - A field demonstration in north Florida and four webinars were conducted in the last half of 2011, with at least three more webinars 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 and intend to provide significant information exchange opportunities at the 4<sup>th</sup> Fire Behavior and Fuels conference in Raleigh next February.
  
- **Marketing** the SFE is ongoing through a brochure, poster, and presentations at biannual Southern Group of State Foresters Fire Chiefs' meetings and PFC meetings; other presentations in the past year were at the Southeast Society of American Foresters annual meeting and the Natural Resource Extension Professionals annual meeting. The PFCs and Southern Fire Chiefs often 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. A new two-year refunding proposal will be a major activity in the next six months.

**SFE Team:**

University of Florida: Leda Kobziar, Annie Oxart, David Godwin

North Carolina State Univ: Toddi Steelman, Joe Roise, Chet Buell, John Diaz, Jennifer Costanza, Justin Shedd

Tall Timbers Research Station: Kevin Robertson, Alan Long, Carol Armstrong

US Forest Service, Southern Research Station, InterfaceSouth: Annie Hermansen-Baez

