



# SOUTHERN Fire Exchange

A JFSP Knowledge Exchange Consortium



## FIRE LINES

A Joint Newsletter of the Southern Fire Exchange and the Southeastern Section of the Association for Fire Ecology

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### IN THIS ISSUE

SFE: New Regional Consortium	1
New Fire Planning Tool (IFT-DSS)	1
Getting Detailed Point Weather	2
Online Fire Resources	2
Upcoming Events	2

### New Regional Consortium: Putting Fire Science on the Ground

Greetings from the Southern Fire Exchange (SFE)! In 2010, the **Joint Fire Science Program** (JFSP) created a nationwide network of regional knowledge exchange consortia to strengthen on-the-ground application of fire science. Representing 11 southern states, the SFE is working to build on the long history of fire science delivery and outreach that already exists in the South. The consortium is led by the University of Florida, North Carolina State University, Tall Timbers Research Station, and US Forest Service InterfaceSouth, with multiple partners from non-profit organizations, federal and state agencies, and other fire-related programs. A Steering Committee and Advisory Board provide leadership and strategic direction.

Based on a thorough needs assessment conducted with fire managers across the southern region, our activities focus on four areas.

1. Consolidating southern fire information into an online resource center
2. Planning and delivering webinars, field days, and demonstrations to bring together fire researchers and managers
3. Disseminating fire research results through our newsletter, research syntheses, fact sheets, and presentations
4. Providing fact sheets, presentations, and other resources to assist your efforts in public education

#### SFE MISSION

To increase the availability and application of fire science information for natural resource management and to serve as a conduit for fire managers to share new research needs with the research community.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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We are excited to present this first issue of our newsletter and look forward to engaging with the southern fire community for many years to come. Please contact us by email [sfe@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:sfe@ifas.ufl.edu) with any questions or comments.

### Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System (IFT-DSS)

An array of models and software tools have been developed over the last two decades to aid fire managers and fuels specialists in different planning tasks for fuel treatment projects. Such tasks range from predicting fire behavior to estimating vegetation development after treatments such as prescribed fire. Unfortunately, few of the tools and models mesh together easily and planners are often frustrated in efforts to move results from one software application to another in order to meet all the requirements of their plans. Although federal agencies are often burdened with this dilemma more than other fire managers, project managers in other organizations may equally benefit from a new planning system that organizes software and databases into a seamless user environment. The Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System is now at a prototype stage, being tested by fuels and fire specialists across the country. A user test group in the Southeast includes people from most federal agencies. *continued on page 2*

## Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision *continued from page 1*

The new planning framework will be briefly described and demonstrated at the annual Southeast Society of American Foresters meeting in Tallahassee, February 21-22 and in several webinars this spring. You can learn more about the IFT-DSS in a recent [JFSP Fire Science Digest](#) or you can [click here](#) to view project reports and related papers on the JFSP website. The Fire Science Digest concludes: “IFT-DSS will make fuels-treatment decision making less time consuming, more scientifically rigorous, and easier to explain to stakeholders.”

Questions may be directed to Dr. H. Michael Rauscher, JFSP IFT-DSS Application Steward, by emailing [mrauscher@bellsouth.net](mailto:mrauscher@bellsouth.net).

## Weather Forecasts for Prescribed Burning

Detailed point weather forecasts are critical components of fire management planning. Whether comparing your burn prescription to the expected weather or conducting suppression activities, precise hour-by-hour forecasts for your exact location are vital. Although these forecasts are available in some states through forestry agencies, many burn managers may not be aware that they can obtain a 48-hour detailed forecast for any location in the South as long as they have internet access. A new Southern Fire Exchange fact sheet explains the short, easy steps for accessing forecasts on local [National Weather Service](#) webpages or through the [NOAA Fire Weather](#) page. The key is to precisely locate your fire on the appropriate map and then click on “Hourly Weather Graph” under “Additional or Point Forecasts & Information.” For more information, see the new fact sheet *Detailed Point Weather Forecasts – Get Them When You Need Them*. You can request a copy by emailing [sfe@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:sfe@ifas.ufl.edu).

## Online Fire Science Resources at Your Disposal

Several established online resources provide the fire community with ready access to fire science information. The [Tall Timbers E.V. Komarek Fire Ecology Database](#) began in 1987 and now contains nearly 25,000 bibliographic citations for fire science and research literature. Although the database emphasizes the Southeast and North America, it is worldwide in scope. A thesaurus of keywords on the website is the first step for the Database search engine. Your keyword search results in a list of related references and publications, with an abstract for most of the citations. Full documents are not available from the Database for most citations, but can often be located through university or public libraries.

The [Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science](#) was initiated in 2002 and came online several years later. The Encyclopedia is a searchable synthesis of current information and research subdivided by seven major topics: fire behavior, fire effects, fire and people, prescribed fire, smoke management, wildfire, and fire ecology. It is regularly updated with new information and will be undergoing transition to a wiki-like platform in the near future. The homepage states that it was designed to “provide you with the tools you need to understand and manage fire.” So, use it often; and while you are on that site, you might also use the other encyclopedias in the collection: Environmental Threats, Southern Bioenergy, and Southern Appalachian Forest Ecosystems.

*Stay tuned for new SFE factsheets in 2011 that will provide additional guidance on how to optimize your use of both these online resources.*

## Tell us your research needs and ideas!

As part of the effort to increase the relevance and application of fire research, we are collecting potential ideas for new research from the southern fire community. Based on your feedback, we will convey two or three key topics to JFSP early this spring. Please send your ideas to [sfe@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:sfe@ifas.ufl.edu).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit the [SFE Calendar](#) to learn more about these and other upcoming workshops, trainings, field trips, demonstrations, and other opportunities for knowledge exchange and education. You can search the calendar by region or month.

**2011 Southeast Society of American Foresters Annual Meeting**  
February 20-22, 2011  
Tallahassee, Florida

**2011 Wildland Urban Interface Conference**  
March 27-31, 2011  
Reno, Nevada

**Prescribed Fire Workshop for Agency Administrators**  
April 3-9, 2011  
Southeast (location TBA)

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildland Fire Safety Summit**  
April 5-8, 2011  
Missoula, Montana

**Fuel Management Workshop, SFE and UF**  
May 2011 (TBA)  
Oluisee, Florida

**5<sup>th</sup> International Wildland Fire Conference**  
May 9-13, 2011  
Sun City and Pilansberg National Park, South Africa

**4<sup>th</sup> Fire in Eastern Oak Forests Conference**  
May 17-19, 2011  
Springfield, Missouri

**If you are planning or know of an event to add to our calendar, please send the event information to [sfe@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:sfe@ifas.ufl.edu).**