SFE Webinar: Mark your Calendar for October 5th

Wildfire Effects on Forest Structure and Soils in Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida
October 5, 2012; 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm (EDT)

We are excited to announce our first webinar this fall! Adam Watts, Postdoctoral Research Ecologist at the University of Florida, School of Forest Resource and Conservation Fire Lab, will present the results of studies conducted in Big Cypress National Preserve (Florida) on delayed mortality from wildfire in pondcypress and on smoldering combustion in the organic soil found in cypress swamps. Although infrequent, fires in wetlands such as cypress swamps can shape their composition and structure. These effects arise through direct mortality and indirectly from the consumption of soil. This webinar will highlight the role and effects of fire in cypress swamps and provide implications for natural resource managers. For webinar access information, click here.

Dr. Watts also recently prepared a SFE fact sheet that summarizes these findings and highlights the role and effects of fire in cypress swamps for natural resource managers. Click here to view the fact sheet.

Partner Spotlight: US Department of Defense, Eglin Air Force Base

The US Department of Defense manages large tracts of land in the Southeast and maintains an active prescribed fire program on many of its properties. In particular at Eglin Air Force Base, fire is frequently used as a tool to reduce wildfire risk and to maintain and enhance fire-adapted ecosystems located on the 464,000 acre base in Florida’s panhandle. With a history of burning for more than 50 years, Eglin has expanded its program and is now home to the new Air Force Wildland Fire Center. This Center “serves a mission of environmental sustainment alongside military mission support and demonstrates how both can thrive through careful fire management.” This new program will include responsibilities for other Air Force lands nationwide—setting wildland fire policy and standards, tracking Air Force firefighter qualifications, and assisting other Air Force bases with program planning and implementation. In addition, Eglin provides both National Wildfire Coordinating Group and experiential trainings onsite. Department of Defense employees, along with US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agency firefighters have received both field and classroom instruction though these trainings. Click here to learn more about the Air Force Wildland Fire Center.
New SFE Fact Sheets for Public Education Efforts

The Southern Fire Exchange recently published fact sheets to assist with public education and communication efforts around the Southeast. Thanks to author and SFE team member John Diaz of North Carolina State University!

Two of the fact sheets address common questions the public often asks about prescribed burning. Although they are specific to Florida and North Carolina, many of the answers are equally applicable in other states. If you have resources you would like to see included or specific questions for your state that should be addressed, please let us know.

* Effects of Prescribed Fire and Wildfire: Frequently Asked Questions from North Carolina
* Effects of Prescribed Fire and Wildfire: Frequently Asked Questions from Florida

Health effects of smoke and economic impacts of wildfire are topics that are frequently raised by community members during and after a wildfire. To help managers address these topics, we have two new fact sheets that summarize related research findings.

* Economic Impacts of Wildfire shares results from two studies to illustrate that impacts are significantly larger than the often-quoted primary indicators of suppression costs and homes lost. This information can help public officials, community leaders, and local citizens understand the larger wildfire impacts on economies, infrastructure, and society in general.
* Health Effects of Wildland Fire Smoke summarizes five studies that have documented health effects in the United States, Canada, and Australia. It provides a valuable resource that fire managers, public information officers, and others in similar roles can use for answering some of those difficult questions about wildland fire smoke.

Workshops in Raleigh: February 18, 2013

A slate of 17 different workshops is available for professional development at IAWF’s 4th International Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, February 18-22. Workshop topics range from NWCG’s RX-310 (Introduction to Fire Effects) to basic use of BehavePlus and smoke models for prescribed fire planning to new, highly technical smoke dispersion models. Check out the full list of workshops and then register for one or more of them. This is a rare opportunity in the South to combine professional development training and a top notch international conference on topics and issues directly related to your job.

US DoD, Eglin Air Force Base continued from page 1

Eglin is also the site of cutting edge fire research that is being conducted as part of the RxCADRE—the Prescribed Fire Combustion and Atmospheric Dynamics Research Experiment. This team of collaborators from U.S. Forest Service Research Stations, Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, University of Idaho, University of Montana, San Jose State University, and the Rochester Institute of Technology pooled their operational and in-kind resources to collect fuels, fire, and meteorological data on prescribed fires in 2008. The RxCadre was recently awarded $2 million for a 5-year project that will begin this fall. Read more about the RxCadre in a recent CompassLive article or Fire Lines 2(1).

Eglin fire program members have played key roles in the Southern Fire Exchange by providing feedback and direction on our Advisory Board and by contributing to our newsletter and forums. You can keep up with current Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment news on Twitter @USAFCCEE and Department of Defense natural resource management news @DoDNatRes. Another Department of Defense installation, Camp LeJeune Marine Corps Base in North Carolina, will be the destination for the field trip at the end of the 4th Fire Behavior and Fuel Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina February 22, 2013.
Online Tool: TACCIMO

TACCIMO, the Template for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Management Options, is a web-based tool that connects forest planning to current climate change science. This interactive resource, developed by the USDA Forest Service, is for federal, state, and private land managers. You can Explore quotations from scientific literature related to many factors, including fire. Under the fire section, you’ll find information related to effects of climate change and management adaptation options for fire suppression, fuel treatments, general impacts, wildfire impacts, and wildfire trends. You can also Generate a Report of climate change projections for states, counties, and national forests, or a report of science literature based on a series of user-defined selections. Quick start and comprehensive How to Use Guides are available for each of TACCIMO’s tools. One of the workshops in Raleigh next February (see article on page 2) will focus on how to optimize your use of TACCIMO.

Updated Manual:
Introduction to Prescribed Fires in Southern Ecosystems

For many years, A Guide for Prescribed Fire in Southern Forests has been the standard handbook for prescribed fire managers and practitioners in the South. The USFS Southern Research Station recently updated the publication (Introduction to Prescribed Fires in Southern Ecosystems) to include current fire science research and management practices. Led by Tom Waldrop and Scott Goodrick, the updated version has several rewritten sections and a list of up-to-date suggested readings. This guide helps “resource managers plan and execute prescribed burns in southern forests and grasslands” and includes sections on reasons for prescribed burning; environmental effects; weather and fuel considerations; fire techniques; smoke management; and planning, executing, and evaluating prescribed burns. The weather and smoke management sections are particularly noteworthy for the new information they contain.

Cohesive Strategy Monthly Updates

The Southeastern Regional Strategy Committee is sharing monthly updates to keep the southern fire community informed about Cohesive Strategy activities. The September Update provides information about input opportunities that will guide the regional action plan and subsequent implementation activities. Each monthly update features a southern success story with the Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal being highlighted in August’s update and Georgia’s Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners (GOAL) being highlighted in September’s update.

New Book: Modelling, Monitoring, and Management

A new collection of papers presented at the Third International Conference on Modelling, Monitoring and Management of Forest Fires is now available. Modelling, Monitoring and Management of Forest Fires III includes papers that discuss the latest research and applications of available tools to analyze and predict the spread of forest fires both to prevent or reduce major loss of life and property and to avoid damage to the environment. Click here to read a description of the book. You can also view the conference abstracts.