



Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service, Southern Region
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February 1, 2012 (FMS 1204)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**USDA FOREST SERVICE REDUCES WILDFIRE THREAT BY IMPLEMENTING STATEWIDE
PRESCRIBED BURNS**

(Columbia, SC)— The USDA Forest Service has begun implementing annual prescribed burning on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. Contingent on weather factors, burning may continue as late as June.

“We conduct prescribed burns under very specific and controlled conditions to imitate fire that naturally occurs in forested areas,” said Francis Marion and Sumter Fire Management Officer Brian Schaffler. “The burns improve forest health, enhance habitat for native species like wild turkey and songbirds, and prevent the excess buildup of forest fuels (dead or downed trees and other vegetation) that could result in catastrophic wildfire.”

The USDA Forest Service conducts prescribed burns using ground personnel with drip torches. The agency also uses helicopters to burn more acres in less time, allowing for rapid dispersal of smoke. Burns are scheduled when weather conditions are most likely to reduce the risk of escaped fire and smoky conditions. Although USDA Forest Service employees will work to avoid any inconveniences, motorists or residents near the national forests may see smoke columns or encounter reduced visibility in low-lying areas and additional traffic along Forest Service roads. Motorists who encounter smoke on any road should reduce their speed and pay attention to any warning signs or directions from road patrol officers.

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South Carolina's National Forests
Celebrating 75 Years of Restoring Forests, Protecting Water and Reducing Catastrophic Wildfires.

2-2-2 Forest Service Working to Reduce Wildfire Threat by Implementing Statewide Prescribed Burns

If you have questions about a burn or smoke near the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests, please call the following offices:

District Office	Phone Number	Hours
Enoree Ranger District Offices	(864) 427-9858 (803) 276-4810	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Long Cane Ranger District Office	(803) 637-5396	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Andrew Pickens Ranger District Office	(864) 638-9568	8 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Francis Marion Ranger District Office	(843) 336-3248	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

For more information on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms>.

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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