

A Crossroads of Land Management and Fire Science Research in the Osceola National Forest: “The Juice is Worth the Squeeze”

In early April 2017, land managers and scientists met at the Osceola National Forest in Florida for an informative tour highlighting the extensive fuels management strategy that has been developed and implemented based in-part on research plots established by the Osceola National Forest back in 1957.



USFS Southern Research Station Fire science researcher Joe O' Brien discusses USFS fire return interval (FRI) study results with field tour participants including JFSP Governing Board members

Photo Courtesy David Godwin, Southern Fire Exchange

An innovative approach combines mechanical fuel treatment using roller-chopping and mastication followed by prescribed fire. Results on the ground have demonstrated that “the juice is worth the squeeze” in terms of successful ecosystem resoration to paraphrase USFS Olustee District Ranger, Ivan Green.

Research results and the basis for and methodology of the fuel management strategy were presented and demonstrated to the JFSP Governing Board and program staff during the field tour that was co-hosted by the JFSP-funded Southern Fire Exchange and professionals from the Olustee district, Florida Forest Service, Department of Defense, and the USFS Southern Research Station.

For additional information, visit the following:

Factsheet discussing fuel treatments in the Osceola and in longleaf pine flatwoods
http://southernfireexchange.org/SFE_Publications/factsheets/2015-1.pdf

Information about the history of the Olustee Fire Plots:
<https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/2014/08/07/the-olustee-experimental-forest/>

For managers: the SFE mechanical fuel treatment photo guide from work in the Osceola
http://www.southernfireexchange.org/Models_Tools/etc/Fuel_Treatments_Photo_Guide.pdf

Short videos from a 2015 field tour in the Osceola for fuel treatment options:

Prescribed Fire Demo:
<https://youtu.be/4iBAZoHZQLU>

Mechanical Fuel Treatment Demo:
<https://youtu.be/-PTR7cYNxV8>