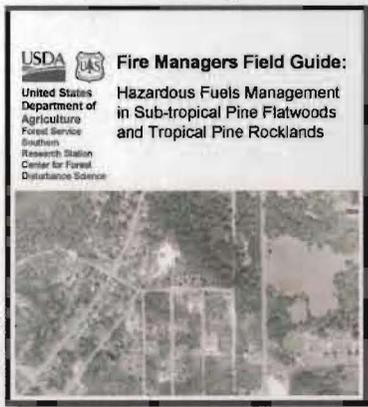


Available Winter 2007:

**Fire Managers Field Guide:
Hazardous Fuels Management
in Sub-tropical Pine Flatwoods
and Tropical Pine Rocklands**

Produced by the Forest Service
Southern Research Station,
funded by the Joint Fire Science
Program

This guide is a synthesis of the
pros and cons of various
hazardous fuels management
techniques currently being used
in Florida. This guide includes
summaries on the ecological,
economic, and social effects of
different fuel management treatments as
well as a compendium of techniques to
aid land managers in selecting the best
treatment option for a given situation.



To request a free copy of this guide
contact Joe O'Brien at:

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Phone: 706-559-4336

An electronic version of the guide will
also be available at:

<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/ffp/>

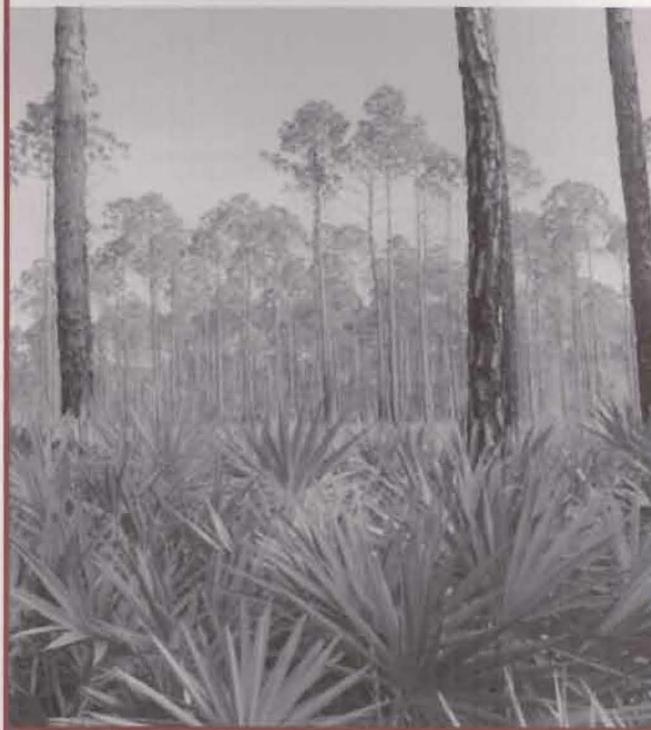
Fire is one of the most critical ecological
processes required for the maintenance and
restoration of many Florida ecosystems.

Fire maintains the landscape that provides
habitats for the many plant and animal species
unique to Florida.

Prescribed fire is one of the most important and
cost effective tools employed by natural areas
managers and helps to reduce surface fuel loads,
decreasing the potential for more severe,
catastrophic wildfires.

Learning how to safely live in and around fire
dependent ecosystems is critical for Floridians.
Becoming "Firewise" is not difficult but requires
commitment and knowledge. Contact the
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to make your home and community safe.

http://www.fl-dof.com/wildfire/firewise_index.html



The 2007 Florida Firewise Conference

**Best Management Practices
for Florida's Hazardous Fuels**

*A Survey of Land Managers
on Wildland Hazardous Fuels
Issues in Florida*



DEC 03 2007

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A Survey of Land Managers on Hazardous Fuels Issues in Florida

Due to a rapidly expanding human population in Florida, wildland fire management has become hampered by urban encroachment, smoke management issues, and forest fragmentation. For these and other reasons, fire has been excluded from many stands, resulting in the buildup of dangerous fuel loads. These fuel loads have begun to result in recurrent destructive wildfires. Already, different communities are responding to these dangerous fuel loads in various ways. As part of a larger project to synthesize methods available for hazardous fuel management in pine flatwoods and pine rocklands in Florida, a survey was distributed to a variety of land managers in Florida to investigate fuel management practices already in place. We provide a synthesis of the results here.



Pine rockland with heavy fuel load.

Survey Results

Hazardous Fuel

Eighty-four percent of respondents who took the survey said that they had a hazardous fuel problem on the land that they managed. Respondents managed anywhere from 5 to 1.5 million ac, with an average of approximately 130,000 ac.

Respondents were asked to choose all of the factors that hindered use of prescribed fire. The highest-ranking hindrance (86%) was smoke management. The second was the wildland urban interface; it is more difficult to conduct prescription burns in residential areas. Other hindrances included lack of personnel and equipment (40%), lack of public acceptance of fire (24%), lack of institutional support (18%), fear of litigation (16%), laws/regulations (11%), and lack of money (2%).

Prescribed Burning

Ninety-one percent of managers reported that they used prescribed fire to treat hazardous fuels. 90% of managers ranked prescribed burning as “very useful.” When asked how frequently they needed to burn to effectively control fuels, the average response was 3 years, although responses ranged from 1 to 15 years. Respondents noted that prescribed burning was both the most cost effective and the most ecologically beneficial and sustainable way to manage fuels.

Mechanical Fuel Reduction

Seventy-eight percent of respondents used some type of mechanical fuel treatment. Fifty percent of respondents used chopping, 47% used chipping, and 72% used mowing to manage fuel. Respondents noted that this is particularly effective in urban environments.

“Pros” for chipping included its effectiveness in preparing areas for prescribed burning and the low level of disturbance and low cost. “Cons” included the mechanical problems with chipping machines, wildlife mortality, and creation of an artificial duff layer that may cause problems with prescribed burns.

Herbicide

Forty-one percent of survey respondents used herbicide to manage hazardous fuel. Fifty-nine percent of those who used herbicide used it on 25% or less of their land, and no one reported using it on more than 75% of land managed. When asked about the type of herbicide used, many respondents replied that they used glyphosate, imazapyr, and triclopyr. Most needed to repeat herbicide treatments 1–2 times a year to manage fuels effectively. “Pros” listed for herbicide included prevention of regrowth by eliminating the hazardous fuels source and effectiveness for edges and small target areas.

Grazing

Only 15% of respondents used grazing for fuel management. Of those, 4 people used grazing on 25% or less of their land, and 33% used grazing on 50–75% of their land. Eighty-three percent of respondents said that they used cattle for grazing (often leasing out grazing rights); one respondent planned to use goats.

Manual Methods

Forty-six percent of respondents used manual (hand clearing) fuel removal. Of those, 82% used hand clearing on 25% or less of their land, 1 respondent used hand clearing for 75–100% of their land, and 12% used hand clearing on 25–50% of their lands. Land managers responded that they used hand clearing on a wide range of species and fuel types.



Prescribed fire in Osceola National Forest

Conclusion

This survey highlights some trends in the hazardous fuel management communities of Florida. Treatments tend to be combinations of management techniques. Many respondents first reduced the hazard of the fuels (for example, removing ladder fuels) and then used prescribed burning to treat the dead fuels. Others adjusted management techniques according to the ecological sensitivity of the area to be managed. It is clear that prescribed burning will continue to be the most important means for hazardous fuel reduction but also that other alternatives must be available.

L. Wolcott, J. O'Brien, & K. Mordecai, 2007. A survey of land managers on wildland hazardous fuels issues in Florida: a technical note. *Southern Journal of Applied Forestry*. 31(3) 148-150.