



# OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

## MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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[www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Burn Bans Remain in 76 out of 82 Counties: Drought Conditions Persist**

**JACKSON, Miss.** - In Mississippi, 76 out of 82 counties remain under burn bans. The Governor's partial state level ban and all individual county bans remain in effect through the weekend. The dry cold front coming in today will make conditions favorable for an increase in the frequency and severity of wildfire activity.

To see a complete list of burn bans in Mississippi, visit: [www.mfc.ms.gov/burn-bans](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/burn-bans)

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) measures the water content of the soil and duff layers; the scale ranges from 0 – 800 with 800 meaning there is no soil moisture available for vegetation. The number on the KBDI index increases each day the area does not experience rainfall. The KBDI is currently 700 + in most areas of the state, which means that our area is experiencing severe drought conditions. Visit <http://bit.ly/KBDI2016> for a current KBDI drought conditions map.

In September and October, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) responded to and suppressed 732 wildfires that burned 6,525 acres. During this time, 1,103 structures were threatened by wildfire activity and saved by MFC wildland firefighters. 38 structures were damaged or destroyed.

“Please, don’t do any outdoor burning if your county is under a burn ban,” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester. “Wildfires can start with just a spark and spread quickly to endanger forestland, homes, and lives.”

A burn ban means no outdoor burning of ANY KIND.

**Not allowed:** Campfires, bonfires, fire pits, fire rings, burn barrels, debris burning, fireworks, field burning - anything with an open flame that produces an ember. The wind can carry floating embers away from the original fire and start a spot fire up to one-half mile away from the burning area.

**Allowed:** Propane/ gas grills, propane/ gas heaters, and charcoal grills. Propane/ gas grills, propane/ gas heaters, and charcoal grills should be utilized as described by their manufacturer’s instructions, located safely away from combustible materials, and never left unattended.

**Safety tip:** Charcoal grill briquettes can be dangerous if they are not disposed of properly after use. Always let the coals cool completely and douse in water before disposing of them in a metal container. The residual ash should be cold to the touch before disposal. The MFC has responded to wildfires in the past that were started by improperly disposing of charcoal grill ash.

Any person who knowingly and willfully violates a burning ban is guilty of a misdemeanor and may be fined not less than \$100 and not more than \$500. Fines are enforced by the local Sheriff's Department in that county. In addition, anyone that sets a fire is responsible for that fire and the smoke generated by that fire. If a fire escapes and burns or damages the land/ property of another, the person that set the fire is liable for those damages.

Governor Phil Bryant issued a partial state level burn ban on October 11th, which included 52 counties. The 52 counties listed have no exemptions and will be in effect until lifted by the Governor:

ADAMS, ALCORN, AMITE, ATTALA, BENTON, BOLIVAR, CARROLL, CLAY, CHICKASAW, CHOCTAW, COAHOMA, DESOTO, GRENADA, HINDS, HOLMES, HUMPHREYS, ISSAQUENA, ITAWAMBA, LAFAYETTE, LAUDERDALE, LEAKE, LEE, LEFLORE, LOWNDES, MADISON, MARSHALL, MONROE, MONTGOMERY, NESHOPA, NEWTON, NOXUBEE, OKTIBBEHA, PANOLA, PONTOTOC, PRENTISS, QUITMAN, RANKIN, SCOTT, SHARKEY, SUNFLOWER, TALLAHATCHIE, TATE, TIPPAH, TISHOMINGO, TUNICA, UNION, WARREN, WASHINGTON, WEBSTER, WINSTON, YALOBUSHA, YAZOO

24 additional counties are under burn bans issued by their County Board of Supervisors and approved by the Mississippi Forestry Commission:

CALHOUN, CLAIBORNE, CLARKE, COPIAH, COVINGTON, FORREST, FRANKLIN, GEORGE, GREENE, JASPER, JEFFERSON DAVIS, JONES, KEMPER, LAMAR, LAWRENCE, LINCOLN, MARION, PEARL RIVER, PERRY, PIKE, SIMPSON, SMITH, WALTHALL, WAYNE

#### **Help prevent destructive wildfires:**

- Before doing any outdoor burning, find out if there is a burn ban in your area. For a complete list of burn bans, visit: [www.mfc.ms.gov/burn-bans](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/burn-bans)
- Check the local weather forecast – don't burn on dry, windy days. The wind carries embers long distances, which can cause spot fires as far away as one-half mile from the burning area.
- To report a wildfire, dial 911 or call the Central Dispatch Center for your area, visit: [www.mfc.ms.gov/wildfire-report](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/wildfire-report)

Nationwide, nine out of ten wildfires are human-caused and could have been prevented with proper care. Please do your part to help prevent wildfire activity by checking burn bans and weather conditions before doing any outdoor burning. One less spark - one less wildfire.

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*Established in 1926, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) protects the state's valuable forest resources from wildfire, manages approximately 480,000 acres of forested School Trust Land, and delivers quality forest management services and assistance to both rural and urban landowners. Our mission is to provide active leadership in forest protection, forest management, forest inventory, and effective forest information distribution, necessary for Mississippi's sustainable forest-based economy.*

*There are approximately 19.8 million forested acres in Mississippi. The forestry and forest products industry has a \$12.3 billion economic impact on the state of Mississippi and represents almost 70,000 jobs.*

Resources:

Mississippi Forestry Commission Website - [www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)

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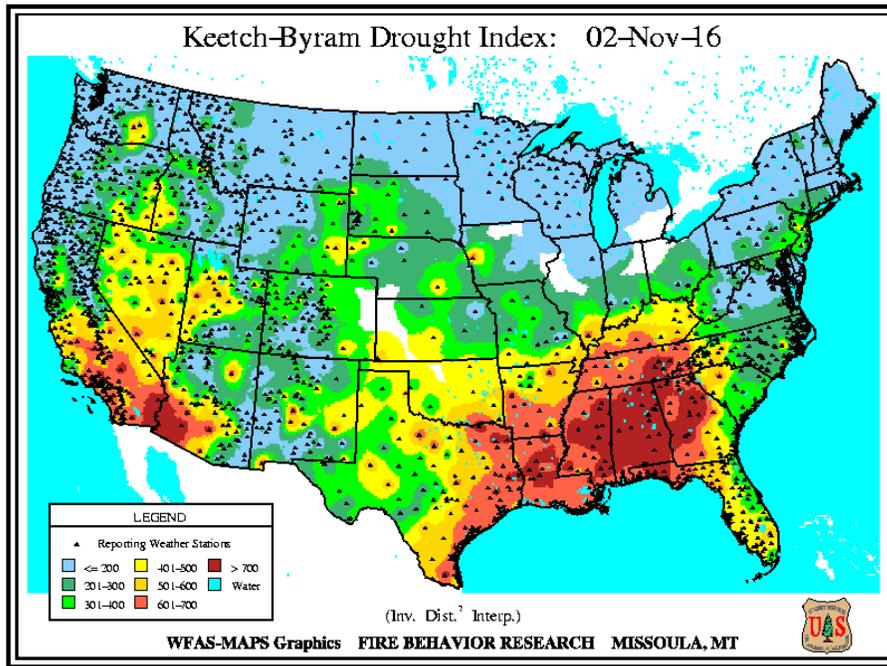
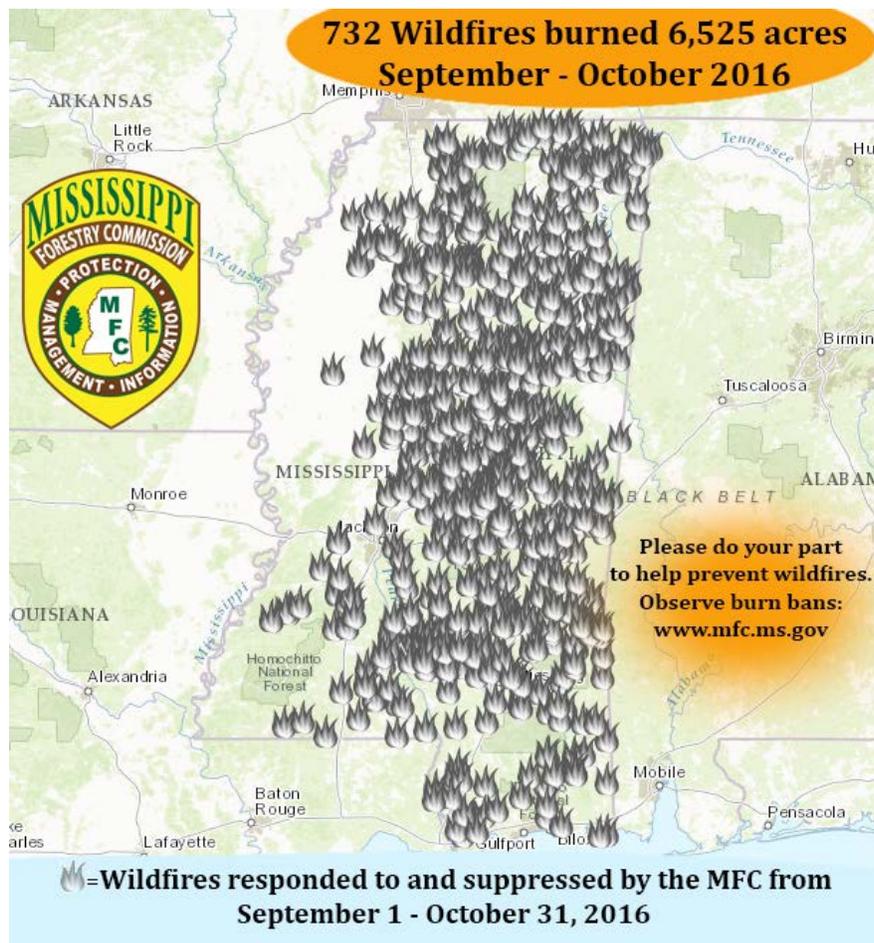
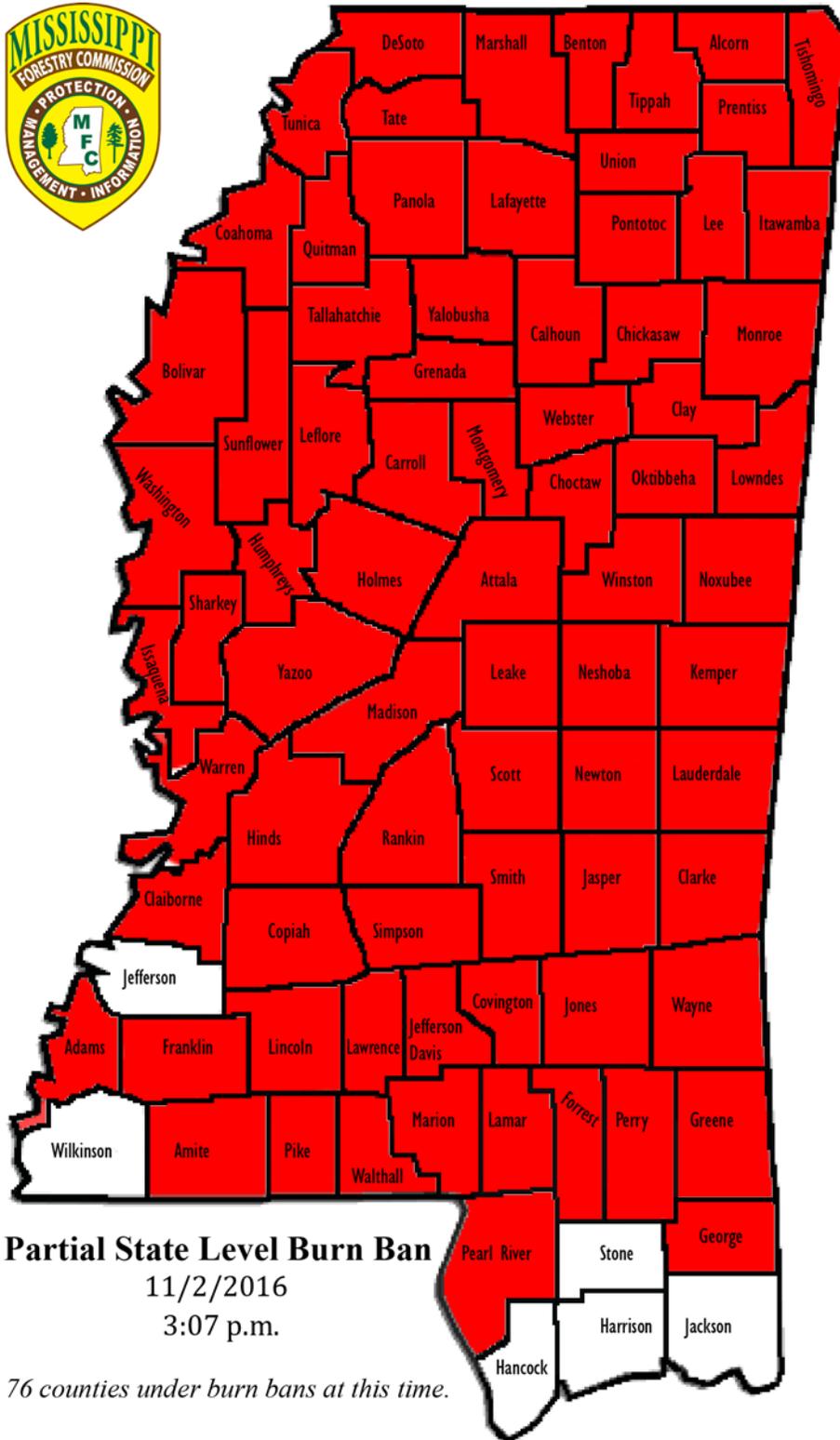


Photo credit: <http://www.wfas.net/images/firedanger/kbdi.png>





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