



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

660 North Street, Suite 300
Jackson, MS 39202

www.mfc.ms.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:
Brighton Forester
Public Relations Director
(601) 359-2821 office
(601) 500-0489 cell
bforester@mfc.state.ms.us

Forestry Commission Warns of Increased Fall Wildfire Risk

JACKSON, Miss. – As the weather transitions from summer to fall, dry vegetation and lower humidity have the potential to increase wildfire activity statewide. Since June 1, 2016, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) has responded to and suppressed 259 wildfires that burned 2,363 acres in the state of Mississippi. MFC wildland firefighters were able to save 348 structures from being damaged or destroyed. During the 2015 fall wildfire season, MFC wildland firefighters responded to and suppressed 1,195 wildfires that burned 14,144 acres. As a result, Governor Bryant enacted the first Statewide Burn Ban issued in Mississippi since 2010.

“We would like to ask the public to exercise caution with any outdoor recreational burning, such as campfires and outdoor grills this fall. Wildfires can start with just a spark and spread quickly to endanger forestland, personal property, and lives” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester. “Please do your part to help prevent wildfires by observing local burn bans and exercising proper fire safety.”

To see a complete list of burn bans in Mississippi, please visit: www.mfc.ms.gov/burn-bans
Burn bans are subject to change at any time. Please check our website frequently to stay up-to-date on any new burn bans that are issued.

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is 500 - 700 in most areas of the state. The 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 index increases for each day an area does not experience rain. High values on the KBDI means that the area is experiencing a severe drought and conditions are favorable for an increase in wildfire activity. In order to view a current KBDI map, visit: bit.ly/KBDIMap

Wildfire prevention tips:

- Find out if there is a burn ban in effect for your area before burning. For a complete list of burn bans, visit: www.mfc.ms.gov/burn-bans
- Check the local weather forecast - do not burn on dry, windy days. Wind carries embers long distances, which can cause spot fires as far away as one-half mile from the burning area.

- Choose a safe burn site for outdoor recreational burning - keep campfires small, only burn untreated wood debris (waste, plastic, rubber tires, and other manufactured products may not be burned), and keep a garden hose or source of water easily accessible. To view the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality standards regarding outdoor burning, visit: bit.ly/MDEQOpenBurning
- The same preventive measures apply when using charcoal grills. When you are finished using a charcoal grill, always let the coals cool completely and douse in water before disposing of them in a metal container. Never leave a grill unattended.
- To report a wildfire, dial 911 or call the Central Dispatch Center for your area, visit: www.mfc.ms.gov/wildfire-report

Nationwide, nine out of ten wildfires are caused by people 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 recreational outdoor burning.

For more information, please visit our website: www.mfc.ms.gov

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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.

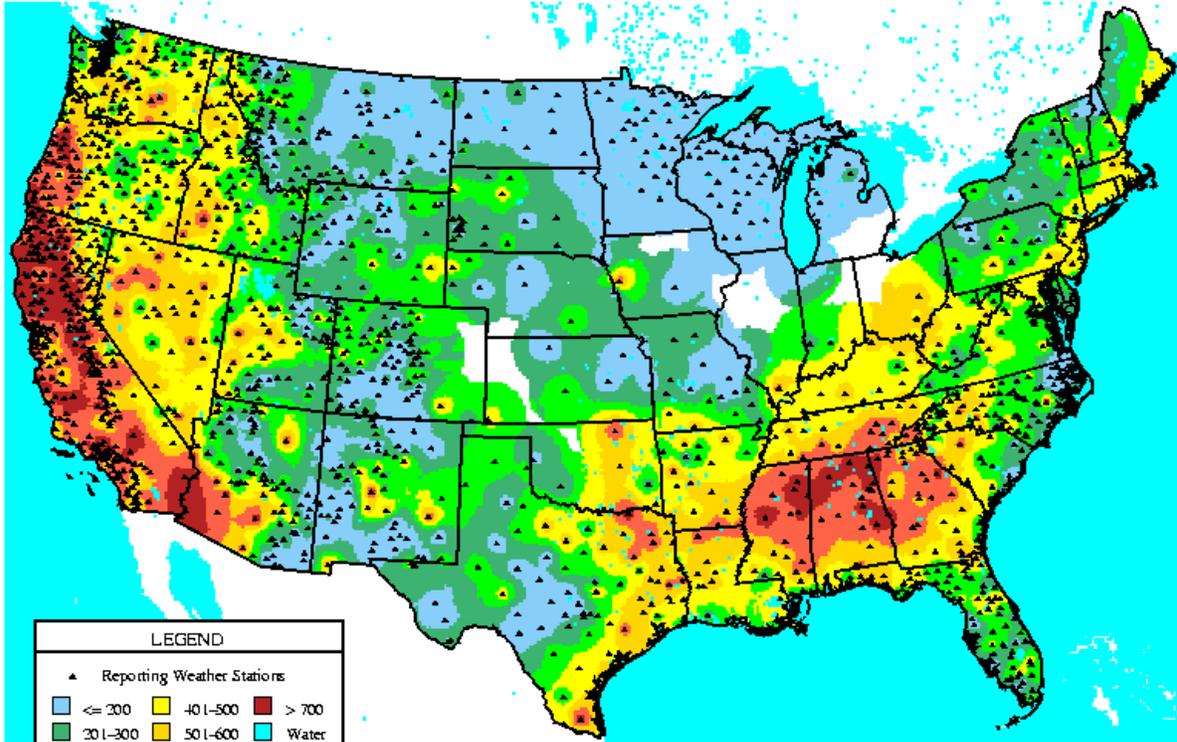
Resources:

Mississippi Forestry Commission Website - www.mfc.ms.gov

Click [here](#) to visit the MFC on Facebook

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Keetch-Byram Drought Index: 27-Sep-16



(Inv. Dist.² Interp.)

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