



# 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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### Missing Person Found by Mississippi Forestry Commission Employee

*EUPORA, Miss.* - Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) employee, John David Morelan is a hometown hero. Last Thursday, April 6, 2017, Mr. Morelan was assisting in a search party effort for a person who had been missing since the previous Sunday, April 2, 2017. Mr. Morelan was off work, taking a few hours of personal time, but his firefighting instincts kicked in when he saw smoke from a wildfire, "I saw some smoke and had to call it in," said Mr. Morelan. "We followed the smoke and found the missing person nearby." Mr. Morelan notified the rest of the search party, and the missing person was reunited with their loved ones. After that, Mr. Morelan went home to pick up his wildland firefighting equipment, returned to the scene, and spent the next four hours working with MFC crews to contain the wildfire.

"He [John David Morelan] is a very determined individual, which is why I think he never quit looking for the missing person. He gives 150% every time he's given an assignment," said Jordi Card, Webster County Forest Technician, Mississippi Forestry Commission. "He will not give up on something until it's complete and to his liking. He is very dedicated to being a perfectionist in his work, and I'm proud to have him on my crew."

Mr. Morelan has been employed with the Mississippi Forestry Commission for 10 years; he currently serves as a Forest Ranger.

Four Mississippi Forestry Commission Wildland Firefighters were on the scene of the wildfire with two bulldozer units. The final report showed that the wildfire burned 33 acres.

"Our MFC Wildland Firefighters engage in heroic actions every day protecting lives, homes, and forestland from the devastating impact of wildfires," said Charlie Morgan, State Forester, Mississippi Forestry Commission. "Last week, Mr. Morelan went above and beyond the call of duty - we are very proud to call him one of our own."

Mississippi has 19.8 million forested acres - 77% of that acreage is privately owned. The State of Mississippi benefits from forestry, which contributes \$12.79 billion to the state's economy, over \$20 million (on average) toward education through School Trust Land timber sale revenue, and employs almost 70,000 people.

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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.*

Resources:

Video footage of the Webster County wildfire: <https://youtu.be/4PKxTo6BzG4>

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

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

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*For more information on the missing person case, please contact the Webster County Sheriff's Department.*



John David Morelan's ID badge photo, courtesy Mississippi Forestry Commission