

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

Wildfire Prevention Month

Jackson, Miss. – March is Wildfire Prevention Month in Mississippi as stated by Governor Phil Bryant’s proclamation. Historically, March has one of the highest wildfire occurrence rates of the year due to the weather transition from winter to spring, dry vegetation, and windy conditions. Since January 1, 2017, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) responded to and suppressed 491 wildfires that burned 9,422 acres. MFC Wildland Firefighters saved 1,072 homes and structures. Wildfire activity destroyed or damaged 28 homes and structures. Sadly, 2 wildfire-related fatalities were reported.

“Nationwide, 9 out of 10 wildfires are human-caused, which means 9 out of 10 wildfires could have been prevented with proper care. Wildfire prevention month allows us to highlight the responsibility of Mississippi’s citizens to help protect lives, homes, and forestland by focusing on how to prevent wildfires,” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester.

Please do your part to help prevent wildfires by following the tips below:

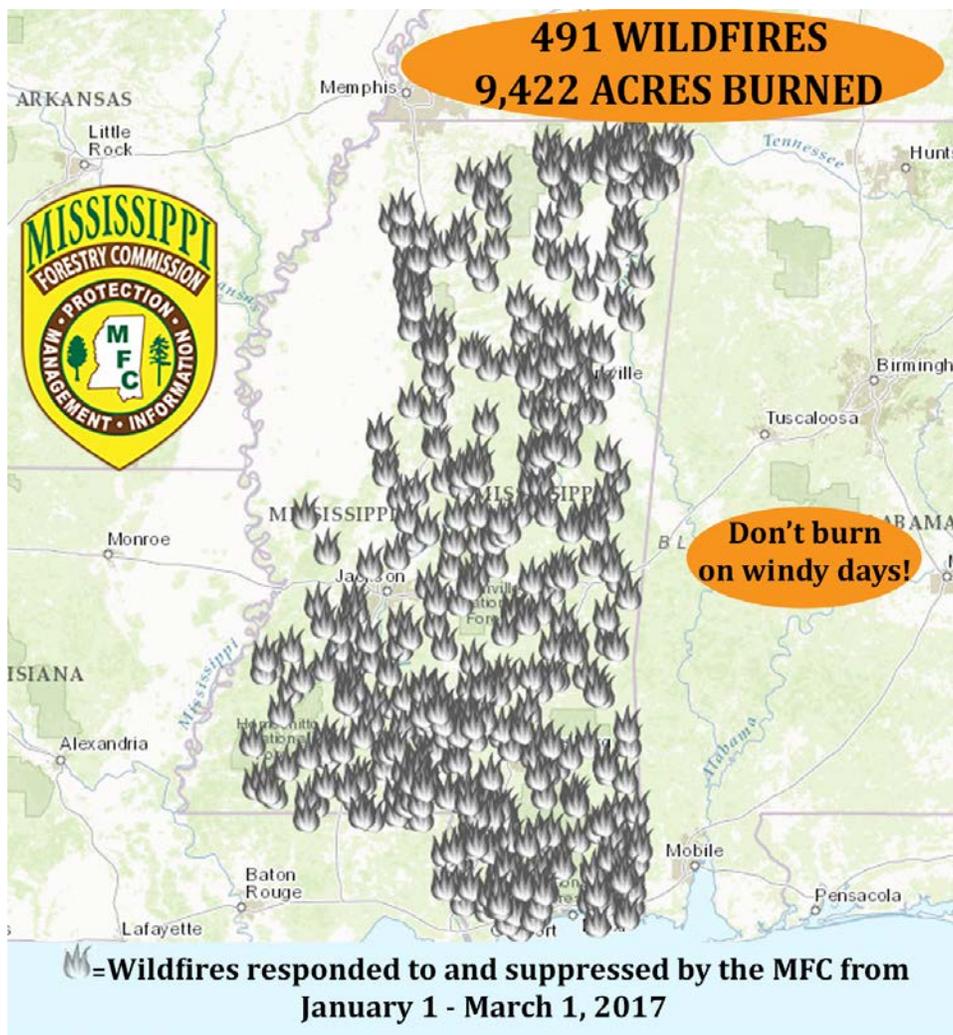
- Check the local weather forecast - do not engage in any outdoor burning on dry, windy days.
- If the purpose of the burn is agriculture or forestry related, call the [MFC Central Dispatch Center](#) for your area to obtain a [burning permit](#).
- Always find out if there is a burn ban in your area before doing any outdoor recreational burning. To see a list of burn bans, click [here](#).
- Check local laws and city ordinances in your area to make sure outdoor recreational burning is allowed.
- Choose a safe burn site - the ground around the burn site should be surrounded by gravel or dirt and clear of vegetation that could catch fire (minimum of 10 feet in all directions).
- Only burn untreated wood debris (waste, plastic, rubber tires, and other manufactured products may not be burned). Click [here](#) to view the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality standards regarding outdoor burning.
- Keep campfires small and never leave an outdoor fire unattended.
- Always have water on hand to put out the fire and stay until it has been completely extinguished.
- When homes are near wooded areas, prescribed (or controlled) burning can be utilized responsibly by a Certified Burn Manager to reduce fuel for wildfires. Prescribed burning clears underbrush and other flammable vegetation that builds up on the forest floor. A burning permit from the MFC is required for this activity. To learn more about becoming a Certified Burn Manager, click [here](#).
- Make Firewise preparations to help defend your home in the event of a wildfire. The Firewise program equips homeowners and community leaders with the information they need to help design, construct, landscape, and maintain homes and communities to better withstand wildfires. To learn more about how to have a Firewise home, click [here](#).

- To report a wildfire, dial 911 or call the [Central Dispatch Center](#) for your area:
 - Northwest Region: 1-877-226-5414
 - Northeast Region: 1-800-681-8760
 - Southwest Region: 1-888-823-3473
 - South Central Region: 1-800-736-9115
 - Southeast Region: 1-800-240-5161

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. 64% of Mississippi's land area is covered in forested acres.

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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:

- Click [here](#) to visit the MFC on Facebook
- Click [here](#) to visit the MFC on Twitter
- Click [here](#) to view burn bans
- Click [here](#) to view the Central Dispatch Center for your area
- Click [here](#) to learn more about the MFC's Firewise program
- Click [here](#) to view Governor Phil Bryant's Wildfire Prevention Month Proclamation
- Click [here](#) to view more information about becoming a Certified Burn Manager