



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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MS Forestry Commission Deploys Wildland Firefighting Strike Teams to Oklahoma

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) deployed two bulldozer strike teams and one Strike Team Leader to Oklahoma, where they will assist state and federal partners with wildfire suppression efforts. Five MFC Wildland Firefighters are scheduled to arrive in Weatherford, Oklahoma, this evening. Their names will be released upon their safe return home to Mississippi in approximately two weeks. Several members of this group also served on the Texas and Oklahoma deployments last month.

“We appreciate our employees taking part in these efforts to help our state and federal partners in Oklahoma – especially the ones going back out on detail so soon. Fighting the destructive power of wildfire means that our Wildland Firefighters are working in extreme conditions protecting people’s lives, homes, and forestland,” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester. “We are proud of their service and look forward to their safe return home in approximately two weeks.”

The Oklahoma Forestry Services reports that the “Rhea” wildfire has burned approximately 245,000 acres at this time; 3% contained.

How the Mississippi Forestry Commission fights wildfires

MFC Wildland Firefighters “fight fire with fire”. They create a fire line (aka fire break) by using bulldozers to plow through vegetation (down to mineral soil) around the perimeter of the wildfire, then they light a controlled backfire along the inner edge of the fire line to consume additional vegetation – this lack of “fuel” for the wildfire creates a barrier to slow or stop the spread of the wildfire. However, their job is not yet finished – even after containment has been reached, wildland firefighters continue to monitor the area. Since the wind can spread hot embers across fire lines, new spot fires may occur as far away as one-half mile from the original wildfire that must be suppressed. Depending on the size, location, wind conditions, and intensity of the wildfire it may have to be monitored anywhere from several hours to several days to make sure the wildfire is no longer a threat to life, property, or forestland.

To learn more about wildfires in Mississippi, please visit our [website](#) and follow us on social media: [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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About the Mississippi Forestry Commission

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. The MFC looks forward to the continued privilege of caring for Mississippi's trees, forests, and natural resources. There are approximately 19.8 million forested acres in Mississippi. Mississippi's forestry and forest products industries have a \$12.79 billion economic impact and employs almost 70,000 people. Forestry consistently ranks as the state's second most valuable agricultural commodity, right behind the poultry industry.



MFC deploys Wildland Firefighting Strike Teams to assist with wildfire suppression in Oklahoma.