



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2018

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MS Forestry Commission Deploys Wildland Firefighters to Oklahoma

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) is deploying a bulldozer strike team and two division supervisors to Oklahoma to assist state and federal partners with wildfire suppression efforts. Eight MFC Wildland Firefighters will travel overnight to arrive in Shawnee, Oklahoma the morning of Friday, March 16, 2018.

“We are extremely proud of our employees who are taking part in these efforts to help our state and federal partners in Oklahoma. 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 wish them a safe trip and look forward to their return home in approximately two weeks.”

Oklahoma has several active wildfires, including one that is estimated to have burned more than 27,650 acres across Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma ([Stateline Fire](#)). At this time, the west half of Oklahoma is under a burn ban. With exhausted resources and high winds in the forecast, several states are headed to help under the South Central Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact. These states include Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, Georgia, and Alabama.

How the Mississippi Forestry Commission fights wildfires

MFC Wildland Firefighters “fight fire with fire”. They plow a fire line (aka fire break) with bulldozers around the perimeter of the wildfire, then light a controlled backfire along the inner edge of the fire line to consume the 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 the MFC’s [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.

