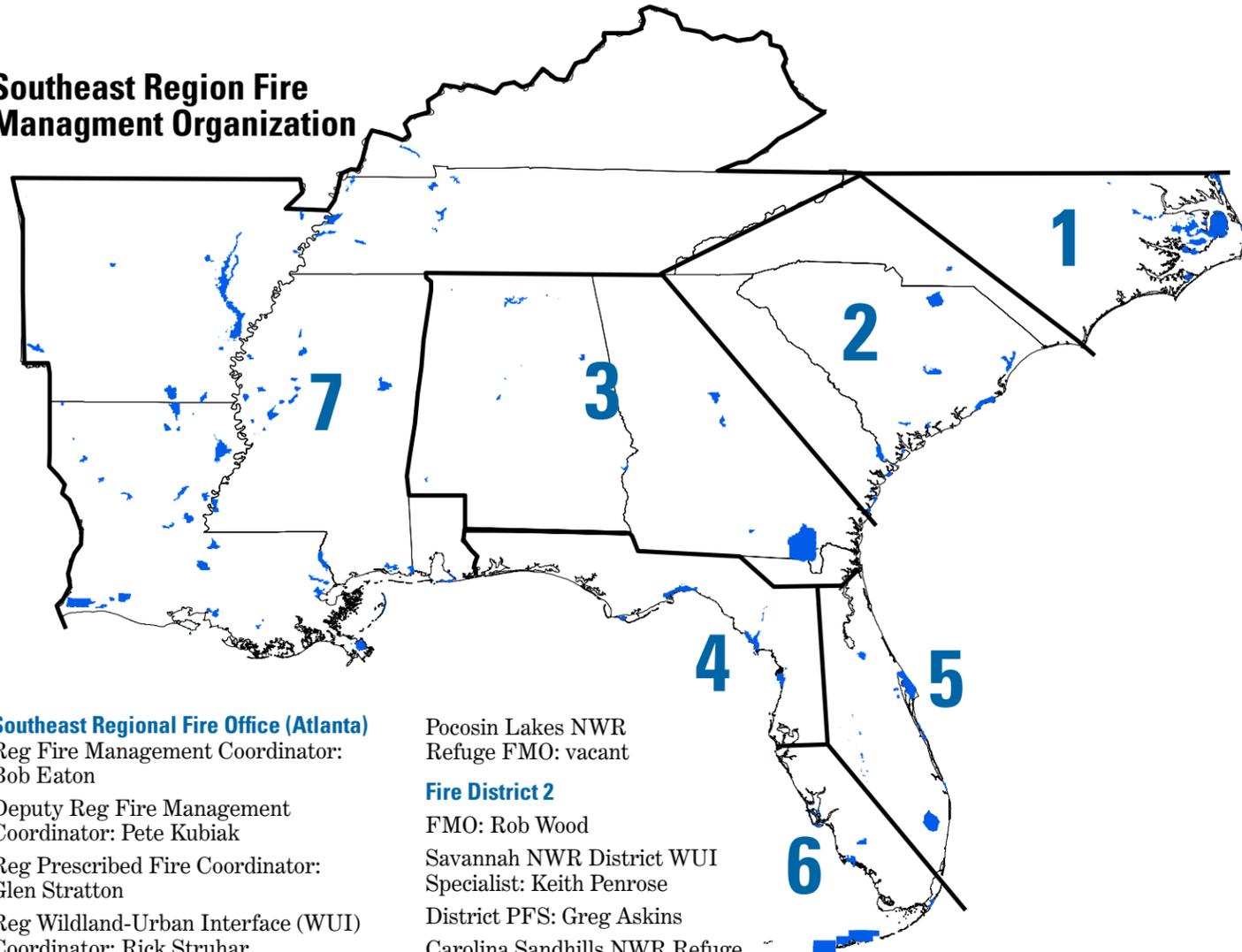


# FY2010 Fire Division Report



## Southeast Region Fire Management Organization



**Southeast Regional Fire Office (Atlanta)**  
Reg Fire Management Coordinator: Bob Eaton

Deputy Reg Fire Management Coordinator: Pete Kubiak

Reg Prescribed Fire Coordinator: Glen Stratton

Reg Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Coordinator: Rick Struhar

Reg Fire Program Assistant (Budget): Sherrie Matthews

Reg Fire Office Assistant: Margaret Hale

Reg Fire Ecologist: Vince Carver

Fire Management Specialist (Planner): Josh O'Connor

Fire Office Assistant: Yolanda Smith

**Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC)**  
SACC Assistant Coordinator: Pat Boucher  
SACC Meteorologist: Kevin Scasny

**Tallahassee Regional Fire Office (TLH)**  
Prescribed Fire Training Center Director: Mike Dueitt

Fire Planner: Phil Weston

**Slidell Regional Fire Staff (SLI)**  
Reg Fire Ecologist: Sue Wilder

**Fire District 1**  
FMO: Tom Crews

Alligator River NWR PFS: vacant

District WUI Specialist: Kelley Van Drueten

Pocosin Lakes NWR Refuge FMO: vacant

### Fire District 2

FMO: Rob Wood

Savannah NWR District WUI Specialist: Keith Penrose

District PFS: Greg Askins

Carolina Sandhills NWR Refuge FMO: Mark Parker

### Fire District 3

FMO: Mike Housh

Okefenokee NWR AFMO: vacant

Piedmont NWR PFS: John Mason

### Fire District 4

FMO: Greg Titus

St. Marks NWR District PFS (WUI): Jennifer Hinckley

Lead Fire Tech: Joey Lord

Lower Suwannee NWR Refuge FMO: Victor Doig

### Fire District 5

FMO: Patrick Pearson

Merritt Island NWR Reg Aviation Coordinator: Glen Cullingford

PFS (MIR): Michael Good

Wildland Fire Suprs. Off.: Rob Vernachio

ARM Loxahatchee NWR PFS (LXR): Jon Wallace

### Fire District 6

FMO: Cass Palmer

PFS (FPR): Greg Suszek

Caribbean Islands NWR: James Padilla

National Key Deer NWR Fire Management Spec.: Dana Cohen

### Fire District 7

FMO: Tony Wilder

Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR AFMO: Sami Gray

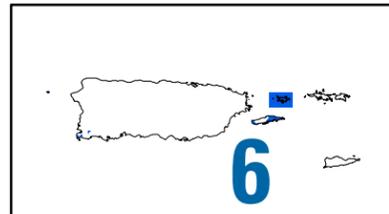
District PFS: Scott Saucier

Southwest Louisiana Complex FMO: Matthew Johnson

Southeast Louisiana Complex FMO: David DeMeyere

Noxubee NWR FMO: Paul Roberts

Felsenthal PFS: Bobby Schat

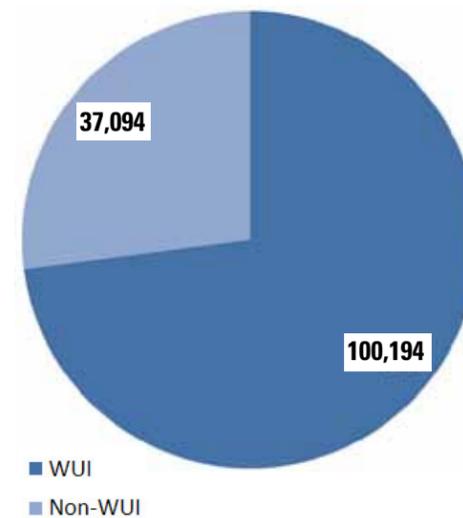


# Introduction

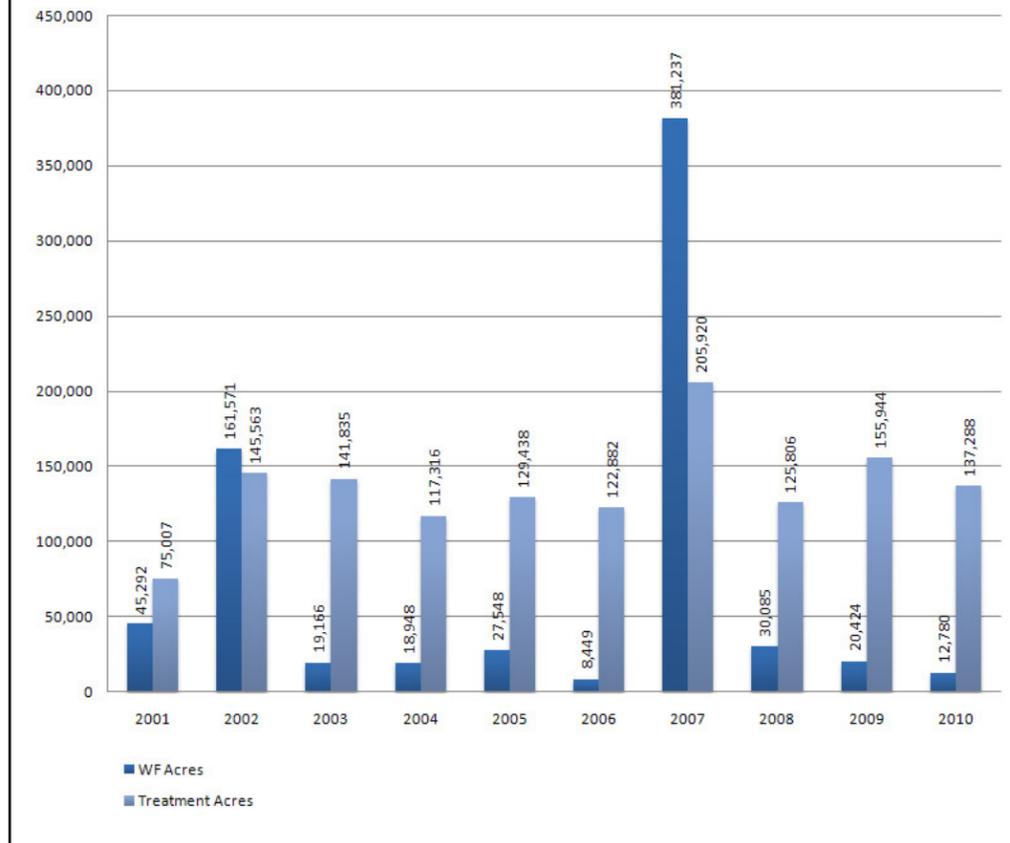
*Hello and thanks for taking the opportunity to read the FY2010 Annual Narrative for the Southeast Division of Fire Management. This document is the first in what will hopefully be a continued documentation of annual wildfire and fuels work, training, and a snapshot of our staff.*

*The table and graphs seen on this page provide a data look at the history of wildfire and prescribed fire. The season of wildfire and fuels work table is interesting when considering that many of our refuges conduct prescribed fire or manage a wildfire every month of the year. It is indeed a year round workload.*

### FY10 R4 Treatment Acres



Region 4 Wildlife and Treatment Acres on FWS lands Reported 2001-2010



### FPU Fire Season for FWS Region 4 FPU's

FPU	Start Date	End Date
Mississippi	1/12	11/4
Puerto Rico	1/22	5/11
Southern Ozarks	7/19	4/19
Eastern Arkansas	7/24	4/22
North/Central Louisiana	8/4	5/28
Tennessee-Green Rivers	8/12	4/21
North Carolina Piedmont	9/3	5/30
South Carolina Midlands	9/9	6/9
Central Georgia	9/18	6/24
Alabama/Florida Panhandle	10/4	7/5
Louisiana Delta	10/6	6/30
SE Mississippi	10/16	7/3
Southern Appalachian	10/16	6/21
SE Georgia/NE Florida	10/30	8/14
Florida Big Bend	12/3	9/1
Central Florida	12/9	8/27
South Florida	12/19	8/24
SW Louisiana/NE Texas Coast	12/27	10/28
North Carolina Coast	12/31	8/14

\*Season start and end dates were created to capture 90 of historical wildfire ignitions within the season range. This represents the 90th percentile of fires and not the 90th percentile of fire days.

# From the Chief



I am very thrilled to announce the first annual narrative for the S.E. Region's Fire Management program. We are excited to share some of the success stories of our Program as well as some of the challenges that we face every month of the year.

Here in the Southeast Region, there used to be two very distinct fire seasons, spring and fall, but as we have witnessed over the last dozen years, our fire season has transpired to a year round season for fighting unwarranted wildland fires and treating hazardous fuels and improving wildlife habitat through prescribed fire and mechanical manipulation. We are treating more acres in the growing season which extends our season to a 12 month period and we are also responding to an increasing number of All Hazard Incidents (hurricanes, floods, ice storms, oil spills, ect.) which adds an additional strain and workload to our ever decreasing workforce.

As budgets decrease and demands from the public on our natural resources increase, we realize that to be successful, we have to build "relationships" with our other Federal, State, and Local partners in order to address the tough issues and do the "right thing" for the resource. This narrative will illustrate some of these challenges that we face and will continue to face over the upcoming years.

We have a very dedicated Regional and Field Staff of Fire Management Specialists that work extremely hard to manage these natural resources for all of the U.S. citizens. It is my pleasure to invite you on this journey around the region and familiarize yourself with our Region from the coastal habitat to the piedmont and the hills of the Southern Appalachian mountains.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert S. Eaton".

Robert S. Eaton, Chief,  
Division of Fire Management

# District 1

## *Year overview-Alligator River, Pocosin Lake, Mackay Island, Matmuskeet, and Cedar Island NWR*

The district implemented the use of a new helicopter contract an "Indeterminate Delivery, Indeterminate Quantity" (IDIQ). This contract is for a five-month period with Heloair out of Richmond, Virginia. Rather than having the helicopter stationed at Alligator River for the duration of the contract, it was on-call with a 12-hour notice. This allowed for a substantial savings (50-70%) for a comparable period over the exclusive use type contract. This is the first time that this type contract has been used for a fire control helicopter in the Southeastern U.S. by a federal agency.

District 1 refuges helped organize, plan and facilitate the Annual NC Fire Management Cooperator's meeting in Winston Salem in January. This was the first state-wide fire cooperator's meeting in which Agency Administrators from each organization attended.

The district administered RFA grants to rural volunteer fire departments in seven counties in northeastern NC.

- Alligator River NWR received the first phase of funding for construction of a fire facility located at the East Lake Operations Center. This includes a new Fire Operations Building housing the dispatch center, crew briefing, training room, crew locker with shower rooms, physical training room, bunk room and FOS office. There will be a separate fire cache built and the engine bay will be enlarged.
- Jeff Swain was recognized for excellence in leadership during the time he covered supervision of the fire crew at ARNWR during FOS Harris' sick leave.



*Aerial ignition of a prescribed fire at Cedar Island NWR - USFWS*

### **Wildfire**

The refuges in North Carolina staffed for 156 Preparedness Level 3 days, 22 PL4 and 18 PL5 days this past year, primarily in the spring when drier conditions prevailed. Wet conditions from the previous fall and early winter turned suddenly dry, causing most of the prescribed burn plans to be halted. This was due to fire danger suddenly increasing in March and April. Energy Release Component (ERC) values reached record highs during this time.

### **Fuels Management**

Most of the prescribed burning was completed at Pocosin Lakes and Mackay Island NWR. This was accomplished earlier in the year prior to the increased fire danger. Other district refuges were initially too wet to burn. Once these refuges dried out, fire danger became too severe to initiate any burning. Alligator River fire staff prepared and reviewed 30 Prescribed Fire Plans for 30,000 acres of treatments for NC Refuges. Staff also peer reviewed 30 Prescribed Fire Plans for approximately 25,000 acres of treatments in District 7.

### **District Staff Assignments**

The East Lake Operations Dispatch Office at Alligator River:

- Dispatched 23 refuge staff and 57 Administratively Determined (AD) employees to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster.
- Dispatched 20 refuge staff for wildland fire assignments.
- There were a total of 8365 hours contributed to the oil spill response from NC Refuges.

### **The following FWS personnel from North Carolina responded to the Oil Spill**

Bonnie Strawser – Public Information Officer (three tours); Greg Suszek – Helicopter Manager (two tours); Tom Crews – Incident Commander; Cory Waters – Helicopter Manager (two tours); Helen Czernik – Expanded dispatcher and Finance (continuing to assist with

AD hiring); Eric Meekins – Taskforce Leader; Mike Morse – Biologist; Bobby Govan – Biological Assistant; Jon Powers – Biological Assistant; Lisa Borel – Biological Assistant; Kelley Van Druten – Helibase Operations and Administration (Check-in/Status, Dispatch) plus a weekend stint as Plans Section Chief to relieve an individual who went on R&R; Ryan Nordsven – Biologist; Mike Morse – Biologist; Jay Eddy – Law Enforcement Officer; Melvin Walston – Biological Technician; Anthony Davis – Biological Technician; Vince Carver – Incident Commander; Kenney Powell – Biological Technician; John Stanton – Biologist; Rose Railey – Biological Technician; Chris Smith – Law Enforcement; Frank Simms – Law Enforcement; Howard Phillips – Law Enforcement

### **Staffing Changes**

This past year we saw several changes in the fire staff in North Carolina:

- Fire Program Administrative Assistant Helen Czernik was promoted from GS-6 to GS-7.
- Fire Control Officer Donnie Harris was promoted to Fire Operations Specialist GS-9.
- Prescribed Fire Specialist Greg Suszek was promoted from GS-9 to GS-11.
- Jordan Black was selected as the Fire Technician at Mackay Island NWR in September, replacing Jon Beck who transferred to Blackwater NWR.
- Matthew Howle was selected as the Fire Technician at Pocosin Lakes replacing Stacey Tromley.
- Prescribed Fire Specialist Greg Suszek took a new assignment as PFS at Florida Panther NWR.
- Currently the District Prescribed Fire Specialist position is vacant.

# District 2



*Firefighter Andy Heisey (Savannah NWR) on a prescribed fire at ACE Basin NWR in South Carolina – Keith Penrose/USFWS*

## *Year overview-Savannah Coastal, ACE Basin, Santee, Carolina Sandhill, and Pee Dee*

A new Fire Management Officer for the district arrived at the end of the fiscal year. Rob Wood came from Wichita Mountains NWR in Oklahoma. Welcome Rob! The district supported wildfire and prescribed fire details, in region and out. The district fire personnel were called on several times for hurricane reponse preparation and one mobilization.

### **Wildfire**

Under the terms of the agreement with the South Carolina Forestry Commission, the commission is responsible for the detection and suppression of wildfires on the refuge. There were no wildfires to report in 2010.

### **Fuels Management**

The coastal Refuges treated 45 prescribed burn units totaling 3,460 acres. Carolina Sandhills treated 24 prescribed burn units for 5,250 acres.

Carolina Sandhills fire staff assisted by the refuge staff prepped approximately 700 RCW trees for the 2010 Rx season. The fire crew also prepped many miles of firebreaks and roads for prescribed burning operations.

In March, the Rx season was in full swing. The refuge hosted a Prescribed Fire Training Center module for six days, providing training opportunities for ENGB, FIRB, FEMO, and RXB2. Chris Wright from Lake Woodruff NWR detailed to the refuge as a trainee RXB2 for one week.

April was very dry, and burning on the refuge became difficult. Henley and Parker assisted with Rx operations at Mountain Longleaf and Piedmont NWR's.

Rx plan and equipment preparation continued for the 2011 season.

Prescribed burning is a very important habitat management tool utilized on Carolina Sandhills Refuge.

The objectives of our burning program include:

- Reducing wildfire hazards through fuel reduction
- Maintaining habitat diversity in fire maintained ecosystems
- Maintaining and restoring habitat for endangered and threatened species of plants and animals such as the red-cockaded woodpecker
- Assisting in the restoration of the longleaf/wiregrass community and hardwood control in upland pine stands.

During the 2010 burning season 5,335 acres of woodlands and fields were prescribed burned on the refuge using both aerial and ground ignition techniques. Aerial ignition on the refuge utilized the Okefenokee NWR exclusive use aircraft on two different occasions. In addition the refuge staff assisted in the prescribed burning on other refuges within Fire Management District 2 and the USFWS Southeast Region

### **District Staff Assignments**

Savanna Coastal Refuges had close to 300 staff days committed to the Gulf Oil Spill Response.

Keith Penrose did a 30-day detail assisting the FWS Fire Operations Staff in Boise. Bert Wyatt completed a two-week training detail with the Jackson Hotshot crew. Four of our fire staff were committed to South Arkansas/Northern LA FWS Severity detail.

For the next several months, May through October, the fire staff assisted with refuge projects including May's Lake Pier reconstruction and the implementation of new boardwalks along Tate's Trail. FMO Parker was able to complete TFLD training to meet IFPM requirements.

In November, Temporary Seasonal, Dan Nielsen began work assisting fire staff with equipment preparation for the 2011 Rx season.

EO McLain attended the USFWS R4 Fire Management workshop, while FMO Parker attended the Southeast Region Aviation Workshop.

### **Training**

Employee	Training Taken
Nancy Jordan	S271, RT 130, RT-PLDO
Mark Parker	L580, RT 317, RT130, S230, 231, 270, RT-PLDO
Randall McLain	SE FWS FM WS, RT-130

Ready Reserve training accomplished by Savanna Coastal Refuges for the fire departments at the counties of Effingham, Bryan, Sandhills, Blufton, and Mount Pleasant. Training that was given to the fire departments were S-190, S-130, S-215, and L-180.

Numerous other employees did the RT-130; Rude, Henley, Culpeper, Bohan, Smolik, Cockman, Askins, Mason, Sutkowski

### **Staffing Changes**

Rob Wood started in September of 2010 as the new Fire Management Officer for District 2.

David Boyd came on in April as the Fire Administrator.

In January, Andy Heisey joined Savannah Coastal refuges as the Forestry Tech.

In January, the 2010 Carolina Sandhills temporary Seasonal Crew; Eric Smolik, Dereck Bohan, Jay Rude, and Brian Henley began work.

# District 3

## *Year overview-Okefenokee, Piedmont, Eufaula, and Mountain Longleaf NWR*

The year in review for District 3 can easily be summerized in these words: excellent prescribed burning accomplishments, and the oil spill response. Prescribed burning accomplishments were largely completed in the winter and spring, before the La Nina patterns returned and our attentions was focused on the Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill response.

Throughout the summer and continuing into the fall, fire staff again and again returned to lend a helping hand where needed. The refuge and district experienced the typical La Nina weather patterns, drying over the summer and extending into the fall and winter when the Okefenokee swamp could only be described as extremely dry, with very low water levels. The refuge considered a severity request but conditions never became extreme. However, the long term weather pattern and forecast remained dry, prompting an effort to partner with the Georgia Forestry Commission to contact and educate landowners adjacent to the Okefenokee to be prepared for extreme wildfire conditions. This effort was to continue well into 2011.

Other items of note were our continuing work at supporting the Kentucky Tennessee Fire Academy, with Mike Housh serving on the Steering Committee and a number of district personnel serving as instructors or academy staff. Other training was accomplished at the Southern Area Advanced Aviation and Fire Academy in Jacksonville, Florida.

Terri Jenkins assisted with the 100<sup>th</sup> National Boy Scout Jamboree in Virginia, providing outreach and recruitment information to approximately 40,000 Scouts and scouting supporters over a three day period.



*Firefighters from Savannah Coastal NWR, Okefenokee NWR and Lake Woodruff NWR burn along a road during the prescribed burn at Mountain Longleaf NWR. Firefighters from eight refuges assisted in the burns that took place in April of 2010. – Josh O'Connor/USFWS*

District Fire Staff provided educational materials and information at Earth Day, and the Okefenokee Festival to several hundred participants.

The district administered RFA grants to four volunteer fire departments; one in Florida, one in Alabama, and two in Georgia.

### **Wildfire**

It was a relatively quiet year in the wildfire arena. The refuges in District 3 staffed for four PL4 days this past year, primarily in the fall and winter when drier conditions prevailed.

The district responded to two wildfires that burned 6.1 acres of FWS lands.

Okefenokee fire staff assisted National Park Service's Cumberland Island on wilderness wildfire in August. No personnel responded to out of region incidents as most personnel were committed to the oil spill incident.

### **Fuels Management**

The district completed 86 fuels treatments for 19,076 acres, 72 of the treatments were prescribed fire completing 18,220 acres. Prescribed burning was completed at Okefenokee NWR, with 7,603 acres, Piedmont NWR with 7872 acres, Mt Longleaf NWR with 2,545 acres, and Eufaula NWR with 223 acres. As always, the prescribed burn at Mt Longleaf was accomplished with the assistance of personnel and equipment from several USFWS fire districts and cooperators. District 3 district staff prepared and reviewed 11 Prescribed Fire Plans for 20,000 acres of treatments for Georgia and Alabama refuges and peer reviewed 12 Prescribed Fire Plans for around 30,000 acres of treatments in District 4.

# District 3 continued

## District Staff Assignments

The Okefenokee Dispatch Office:

- Dispatched a total of 33 resource requests for personnel, equipment and AD's, to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.
- Dispatched seven staff for wildland fire assignments.
- There were a total of 6700 hours contributed to the oil spill response from District 3 Refuges.

## The following FWS personnel from District 3 responded to the Oil Spill

Mike Housh – Incident Commander (three tours); Reggie Forcine – Helicopter Manager (two tours); Nathan Gilmore – Helicopter Crewmember (two tours); Brantley Boatright – Aviation dispatcher (four tours); Rocky Chesser – Taskforce Leader; Sara Sorenson – Helicopter Crewmember (three tours); Cory Bryant – Biological Assistant; Judy Drury – Status/Check-in; Beverly Derouin – Finance (two tours); Mike Ward – Task Force; Terri Jenkins – THSP VOO Liaison (2 tours); John Mason – Helicopter Manager (9 tours); Carl Schmidt – Taskforce Leader (3 tours); Andrew Hammond – Biological Technician; Nathan Herron – Helicopter Crewmember (3 tours); Toby Price – Biological Technician (3 tours); Herman Smith – Biological Technician; Jake Tuttle – Biologist

## Staffing Changes

Fed Privett, Heavy Equipment Operator/Firefighter arrived at Okefenokee NWR in October, having spent many years at Florida Panther NWR; we were thrilled to welcome Fed “back home.”

Firefighter Thomas D. Crews (the other Tom Crews) joined the fire staff in November and Terri Jenkins joined the fire staff in May as a Fire Management Specialist.

Mike Ward left the District Prescribed Fire position to accept the Regional Prescribed Fire Specialist position with the National Park Service in Atlanta, Georgia.

## Training

Employee	Training Taken	Instructor Experience	Taskbooks Initiated	Taskbooks Completed
M Housh	WFDDS, S430, Aviation COR, S480	S230, S270, S231		
N Gilmore	S290, L280, S372 FireFit			FALB, FFT1
S Sorenson	S260, L280, FFEM, FireFit			
B Boatright		L380		
R Forcine	L380, WFDDS, M581			TFLD
H McCullough	Ecological Forestry			
M Ward	WFDDS			TFLD
T Jenkins	L480, CISM		EQPM	

There are currently two positions open on the fire staff: the District Prescribed Fire Specialist, and a Firefighter position at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

# District 4

## Year overview- St. Marks, St. Vincent, and Lower Suwannee NWR

St. Mark's NWR accomplished several ways for outreach to our communities. Fire Staff attended several Fire Awareness Days; conducted a booth at SAF National Convention in Orlando, Florida and made contact with 3,000 individuals; purchased books for local schools on fire ecology. Gave out reusable cloth grocery bags with a Fire Wise message on it; and had five staff members trained on Project Learning Tree. These individuals were: Travis Pollard, Joshua Havird, Chirstopher Wescot, Megan Gamble, and John Ball.

- St. Marks and St. Vincent NWR completed Level 1 monitoring at all points in their burn units.
- Lower Suwannee NWR nearly double the previous best years burning. This would not have been possible without significant assistance from cooperators such as the FL Division of Forestry, crew from St Marks and Merritt Island NWRs, PFTC modules, a top-notch dedicated LSR fire crew, and a couple of good AD employees.
- They acquired and outfitted fire equipment service truck.
- Made progress on implementing station Fire Monitoring Plan: Level One monitoring complete in all burned areas, Level Two in 6 blocks.
- Completed construction of four additional pole barn bays to house fire equipment.
- Lower Suwannee NWR had a perfect safety record – no major injuries or equipment damaged.

## Wildfire

The district had a quiet fire season with eight fires on FWS lands for less than one acre.



*This prescribed fire was ignited on St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge in October 2007 in an area called Dry Bar. Jennifer Hinckley/USFWS*

# District 4 continued

## Fuels Management

The district treated 32,760 acres with 112 treatments. Lower Suwannee NWR completed a 400-acre timber sale / mechanical thinning for habitat restoration and completed 14 mechanical clearing/burn prep projects for 122 acres, mostly along refuge and compartment boundaries.

## District Staff Assignments

Lower Suwannee Fire Staff assisted with many refuge projects (road and facility maintenance, road and parking area resurfacing, kiosk construction, exotic plant control, hunter check station operations, wildlife surveys.

Lower Suwannee NWR had these individuals completed assignments: V. Doig Glenwood Complex TFLD-t detail, USFS, Virginia, 9 days in April and MSC252 Lakefront Helibase HMGB-t detail, Louisiana, 14 days, in August; J. Farmer Jackson Fire HECM-t detail, USFS, Appalach NF, Florida, 3 days in May and MSC252 Lakefront Helibase HECM-t detail, Louisiana, 8 days in July; A. DiMaggio MSC252 Mobile Operations, BIOL detail, panhandle FL, 14 days in June and again MSC252 Mobile Operations, Boat Operator detail, Gautier, MS, 14 days in August.

Oil Assignments: Besides the 4 MSC252 assignments above, Refuge and Fire staff worked under 11 additional Resource Orders on oil response activities for much of the summer at the home refuge and away (only full time fire staff away trips detailed above).

All Fire Staff and most Refuge Staff took 24 hour HazMat and Oiled Bird Handling Lower Suwannee staff assisted with instructing fire trainings (RT-130, PLDO, So. Area Engine Academy).

## Training

Employee	Training Taken	Instructor Experience	Taskbooks Initiated	Taskbooks Completed
Jennifer Hinkley	L480,S215	M581, RT130, S230, RX301		
Greg Titus	L480, LE SUPV, I300	S230, RX301, M581		
Barton Rye	S490, L381, FEMO,	L180		
Travis Lee Pollard	B3, MOCC, L280, S290, PLT, Water Distching			
Christopher Wescott	S212, S131, S133, PLT			
James Farmer	RX301			RXB2, HECM
Anthony DiMaggio	S270, S271		ENOP, FALB	
Victor Doig	M581, Ecol Forest W/S		TFLD	
Joey Lord	L381, Helicopter & Ecological Forest W/S			
Trixie Smith	FL Certified Burn Course			

# District 5

## Year overview-Merritt Is, ARM Loxahatchee, Lake Wales Ridge, and Pelican Is NWR

A research program was initiated with the USFS Missoula Fire Science laboratory to look at various topics of concern for firefighters nationwide. The first program is focused on validation of the safety zone model. This model's output is the ideal safety zone size given a fire's intensity. This model had never been tested before and is now being validated at the refuge. The second project is to validate the new Fire Tech model which is a three dimensional fire behavior program which will eventually replace the current spread model. This model is being tested and validated nowhere in the country except at Loxahatchee.

A.R.M. Loxahatchee hosted the television show "Dirty Jobs" at the request of the Washington office public outreach division. This program focused on prescribed fire for exotics control on the refuge. The fire staff also completed numerous talks to school groups, politicians, volunteers, and a delegation from China about fire in the Everglades.

## Wildfire

Fire management personnel also responded to 31 wildfires in the district for 3,540 acres.

## Fuels Management

Fiscal year 2010 was a busy year for District 5. The district had 105 treatments on 50,270 acres in this fiscal year.

Loxahatchee completed 4 burn units for slightly over 20,000 acres.

The Loxahatchee fire program hosted the Prescribed Fire Training Center for two of these four burns.

## District Staff Assignments

Fire management personnel were involved in off district detail assignments as well last year. Joe Sharbaugh did a detail on the Redding Interagency Hot Shot crew, Chris Wright did a detail



Firefighters at Merritt Island NWR use a Terra Torch to ignite a prescribed fire in 2009. USFWS

with the Las Vegas Helitack Crew, and Ryan Sharpe did an Engine Boss detail to the Mid Columbia NWR Complex in Washington.

- Gifford participated in a three week detail to the South Arkansas Refuge Complex as an engine boss. He did two details to the oil spill as a helicopter manager trainee.

- Wallace participated in numerous virtual details to support fires with fire behavior products in four geographic areas.

- Wallace and Gifford travelled to several Florida refuges and Everglades National Park to assist with prescribed fire and wildfire support.

- Wallace served as a primary Division Supervisor on the Southern Area Type 1 "Blue Team" and as a back-up Fire Behavior Analyst for the other two southern teams.

- Fire management personnel were involved in off district detail assignments as well last year. Joe Sharbaugh did a detail on the Redding Interagency Hot Shot crew, Chris Wright did a detail with the Las Vegas Helitack Crew, and Ryan Sharpe did an Engine Boss detail to the Mid Columbia NWR Complex in Washington. Ryan Sharpe and Rob Vernachio participated in a detail to assist the South Arkansas Refuge Complex on a severity assignment. Joe Sharbaugh, Ryan Sharpe, Chris Wright, and Rob Vernachio all did 2 week assignments to the oil spill. Cynthia Branham did three 2 week assignments to the oil spill.

## Training

Employee	Training Taken	Taskbook Initiated
Rob Vernachio	S-339	DIVS
Dave Moran	L-380	
Joe Sharbaugh	S-200	ICT4
Ryan Sharpe	RX 301/341	RXB2
Jessica Vincent	S-271 and S-290	ICT5

## Committees

Wallace was the FWS national representative to the FDSSC Fuels Decision Support Sub Committee, and the FWS national representative to the NWCg Fire Danger Committee. He is on the science team for the national cohesive strategy group, and is the FWS representative on the southern regions fire environment working team.

## Staffing Changes

District 5 Fire Management Officer, Glen Straton took the Regional Fuels position at the Regional Office in Atlanta. Mike Good accepted the Prescribed Fire/Fuels Tech position and Jessica Vincent was hired as a firefighter at Merritt Island NWR.

# District 6

*Year overview – Florida Panther, J.N. “Ding” Darling, National Key Deer, and Ten Thousand Island NWRs*

The District in 2010 had major changes to the management and organization of the fire program with a new Project Leader, Kevin Godsea, new District FMO Cass Palmer, new Prescribed Fire Specialist, Greg Suszek, and a new Fire Management Specialist at National Key Deer Refuge, Dana Cohen. During this transition the remaining fire staff stepped up to fill the void of the missing key fire management positions to keep the program running and productive.

With the arrival of new management in District 6 the fire staff at these refuges have made stronger relationships between the refuges and their cooperators. Working closely with the Florida Department of Forestry (DOF), the National Park Service (NPS), Golden Gate Fire Rescue, Ochopee-Everglades City Fire Rescue, Big Pine Key Fire Department and Sanibel Fire and Rescue has only made District 6 a stronger and more effective fire management organization.

## Wildfire

The District had nine fires on refuges for 20 acres. District personnel assisted on 15 other wildfires with our sister refuges and cooperators. National Key Deer Refuge: two responses, total four acres FY 2010

## Prescribed Fire

The district completed 189 fuels treatments for 6,475 acres. Florida Panther NWR had 12 prescribed burns for 5,000 acres and National Key Deer had five prescribed burns for 52 acres.

## District Staff Assignments

- Oil Spill Response - four personnel from two different refuges: 1200 man hours
- One Wage Grade Equipment Operator was sent to Felsenthal NWR for a severity assignment.



2011 Florida Panther NWR Fire Crew photo (L to R) Wes O'Connor, PJ Stevko, Ashlee Sams, Skip Palmer, Jay Mickey, Greg Suszek, Brian Bagozzi, Cass Palmer, Ryan Mong – Paul Stevko USFWS

- With missing key staff, the oil spill and the wildfires at Merritt Island NWR, along with the prescribed burns at National Key Deer Refuge that took up the whole summer, no staff went on western fire assignments in 2010

## Training

Implemented a Ready Reserve Program Large Fire Training and Preparedness Exercise for Dare County, training for firefighters in Currituck County and teaching wildfire risk home assessment courses for Ponzer VFD in Hyde County and Carova Beach VFD in Currituck County, and a S-215 Fire Operations in the Wildland Urban Interface.

## Staffing Changes

**Departures:** Kim Ernstrom (DFMO), Josh O' Connor (PFS), Marc Rogers (Dispatch), Fed Privett (Equipment Operator)

**New Arrivals:** Cass Palmer (DFMO), Greg Suszek (PFS), Dana Cohen (Fire Management Specialist National Key Deer)

We currently have the following positions vacant; Assistant Fire Management Officer, Equipment Operator, Fire Effects Monitor.

Employee	Training Taken	Instructor Experience	Taskbooks Initiated	Taskbooks Completed
Cass Palmer	RT 130, L480	RT 130		
Greg Suszek	RT 372, RT 130		DIVS	TFLD
Jay Mickey	RT 130, S-91, RT 372	RT130	DIVS, ICT3	
Paul Stevko		RT130	ICT4	
Brian Bagozzi	RT 130, S244, S372, L381		HMGB, FIRB	
Paul Ryan	RT 130, S244, RT271, S330, S336		RXB2	
Dana Cohen	RT 130, M 581, S 491	RT 130, RX 310, RX 341, RX301, L280		

# District 7

*Year overview – Mississippi Sandhill Crane, Bon Secour, SE Louisiana Complex, SW Louisiana Complex, Noxubee, South Arkansas – North Louisiana Complex, and Grand Bay NWR*

Response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill dominated the activities for the year for most of the refuges within the district. Fire Management staff at MS Sandhill Crane NWR participated in the response from the very beginning. Details of staff activities related to the oil spill include;

- Assisting in the construction of a berm to protect Bon Secour's Little Lagoon from Gulf water intrusion.
- Processing paperwork for Administratively Determined (A-D) responders.
- Refuge fire staff served as Resource Advisors for wildlife rescue and recovery operations, Helicopter Crewmember for aerial surveys, managed Expanded Dispatch at the Refuge, and served as Dispatch Recorders.
- MS Sandhill Crane NWR became one of three regional processing centers for A-D Emergency Responders. Fire Staff had logged over 600 days assigned to the incident and processed over 200 A-Ds.

The Refuge Fire crew constructed one pond, planted 20 acres of food plots, and bush-hogged 200 acres of crop units in support of Biological staff projects to improve crane habitat. There were a couple of landmark achievements in Wildland Fire Resource Contracting this year. MS Sandhill Crane became the first Refuge in the Southeast to hire a contract helicopter manager and a contract squad of firefighters for prescribed burn projects.

MS Sandhill Crane Fire Management continues to build interagency partnerships under the guidance of the FMO and AFMO.



Firefighter Kris Steiber uses a driptorch to burn out a fireline during a prescribed fire at Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR, February 2006. Mark Jamieson/USFWS

The MS Forestry Commission assisted in hosting the third annual Jackson County Fire Management Cooperators Meeting, and coordinated the Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training and the Work Capacity Test. Over one hundred employees of six agencies participated in these events, including The Nature Conservancy, the MS Forestry Commission, the MS Department of Marine Resources, the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the National Weather Service and the Jackson County Volunteer Firefighters.

Other activities include a visit by the Regional Ecologist and Regional Fire Effects Interns, and the Prescribed Fire Technician to collect annual data at the eight long-term vegetation cover plots that have been on-going since 1996. MS Sandhill Crane NWR completed annual maintenance on three permanent and three portable RAWS. The Visitor Services staff at MSandhill Crane NWR, with assistance from the fire crew, introduced the subject of wildfire, prescribed fire, and wildland fire management to 1223 students at seven schools and four special events in 2010. The vast majority of the students were fifth and sixth graders. The Zone Prescribed Fire Specialist, made site visits to all of the Prescribed Burn programs in FMO District 7: Felsenthal, Noxubee, Southwest Louisiana, and Southeast Louisiana NWRs and reviewed over thirty burn plans for these locations.

Refuge staff developed burn plans and implemented a pile burn at White River NWR and are also working on a long-term project to reintroduce fire into hardwood savannahs and open fields of warm season grasses at White River.

District FMO (DFMO) served as Burn Boss at Noxubee NWR in March and April, during the interim before the new Prescribed Fire Specialist (PFS) was hired for that refuge. The AFMO provided incident management expertise during a Severity Incident at Felsenthal NWR. The DFMO participated in a Fire Management Review of all Refuges in Eastern NC in October.

Safety, as always, was a priority for District 7 as there were no reportable accidents during the 34,320 work hours accomplished by the fire management crews.

## Wildfire

The District had 62 wildfires for 8,954 acres. There were 10 fires for 219 acres in bottomland hardwood refuges in Arkansas and Tennessee. DFMO served as ICT2 at the Stony Ridge and Bowling Green Fires in North Carolina, and at the North Mountain Fire in Oklahoma.

## Prescribed Fire

The prescribed fire season was squeezed on the front end by El Nino, the oil spill and by an autumn drought on the back end. MS Sandhill Crane NWR completed seven growing season prescribed burns for a total of 3200 acres in April.

A strong La Nina set in during the summer, and the associated drought caused the Refuge to end the year with less than 60 inches of rainfall, about 12 inches below average.

In addition, refuges staff continue to assist on prescribed burns at Noxubee NWR in Mississippi, Big Branch Marsh, Sabine NWRs in Louisiana, and at Felsenthal and White River NWRs in Arkansas.

# District 7 continued

The District completed 110 fuels treatments for 8,337 acres.

## District Staff Assignments

The DFMO is a continuing member of the Steering Committee of the MS Prescribed Fire Council, and attended three meetings this year. He also serves as co-chair of the Technical Committee with the MS Forestry Commission. The DFMO and Prescribed Fire Specialist participated in Prescribed Fire Field Days in Jackson County and Harrison/County, sponsored by the local Forestry and Wildlife Association, and the MS Prescribed Fire Council. DFMO also spoke on the topic of Complexity Analysis at the Southern Region Interagency Burn Boss Meeting in Destin, Florida.

The Prescribed Fire Specialist participated in implementation of the new Prescribed Fire Short Course for Mississippi, sponsored by MS State University. AFMO and PFS attended five meetings on air quality, sponsored by the MS Dept of Env Quality. AFMO and Fire Technician attended a Prescribed Fire pre-season meeting with the National Weather Service and other federal cooperators. Prescribed Fire Specialist represented the Refuge at the annual cooperators meeting at the MS Interagency Coordination Center, and participated in planning the curriculum for the annual MS Fire Academy.

Fire staff, Bert Rager, completed a six-month assignment with the Redmond, Oregon Interagency Hotshot Crew in September 2010 and fought fire in Alaska, Oregon, and Washington, completed his Faller B taskbook, made substantial progress on his Crew Boss, Firing Boss, and ICT4 taskbooks.

South Arkansas Complex sent a few staff members off complex to RX300 and RX 290 they also assisted with S-230 and 231. South Arkansas Complex had a few individuals who went on assignments: one individual to MS Sandhill Crane for 14 days; two assisted with one RX burn in Region 2 of FWS; six staff members went to Oil Spill for a total of 84 days. They also had three AD who went to Oil Spill

for 218 days. They had one individual who went on a long-term assignment for a total of 154 days.

## Training

District 7 had 19 employees' complete eight fireline skills courses, 33 management courses and 21 aviation courses. 13 employees completed the annual fireline safety refresher and the arduous level work capacity test.

Employee	Training Taken	Instructor Experience
Brian Henley	S230,S215,RX301,N901, IS700, 40-HR HAZWOPRT271	
Sami Gray	ICS300,M581, CPR BASIC REFRESHER, RT 300F	
Scott Saucier	B3,RT300F,40 Hr Hazwop	
Lauren Billodeaux	S131, A312,CPR, Basic FA, I200, IS700	
Emily Neidigh	S131,CPR & Basic First Aid, IS700	
Rebecca Goosman	CPR & Basic FA, RT130, HECM/PLDO Refresher, I200, 40-HR HAZWOP	
Mike Krebs	A312,B3 Refresher, RT130,RT271,I200,40-hr HAZWOP	
Bert Rager	L380, CPR & Basic FA, RT130	
Tony Wilder	N9033, WFDSS, B3, CPR, Basic FA, PLDO Refresher,RT130,RT300F	M-581 Course Cord, L580, S420

## Staffing Changes

At MS Sandhill Crane NWR, PFS, Scott Saucier, joined the Fire Management Staff in the spring of 2010. Firefighter, Brian Henley, joined the Fire Management Staff at MS Sandhill Crane NWR in the summer of 2010. Fire Staff, Bert Rager, was promoted to Wage-Grade Equipment Operator.

The SWLA Fire Crew had two vacancies for much of the year. The GS4 Forestry Technician position was vacated since June 2010. The GS5 Forestry Technician position was filled by Chris Adams from August to November, but has been vacant the rest of the year.

## Awards and Recognition

DFMO, Tony Wilder, was named Incident Commander of the Type 1 Southern Area 'Red' Team in November 2010, with an effective date of January 2011. Tony will be the only FWS Type 1 IC currently active on a national team.

MS Sandhill Crane Refuge Visitor Services Specialist Doug Hunt received an Outreach and Education

Award for 2010 at the annual Region 4 FMO Workshop, in recognition of his outstanding work introducing the role of fire in natural resource management to school groups, and for his work as Firewise Coordinator for the Refuge.

AFMO, Sami Gray, received an All-Risk Management Award for 2010 at the annual Region 4 FMO Workshop, in recognition of her accomplishments as manager of Expanded Dispatch at MS Sandhill Crane NWR during the FWS response to the oil spill.

# Regional Office

## Year overview

This Fiscal Year (FY) our Southeast Division of Fire Management folks were challenged by an ever changing program of work. While meeting your local refuge needs; you exceeded the regional fuels target, you managed wildfires safely, many of you took fire management required training or stepped up to instruct. You assisted in many other local or regional calls for assistance. Your Chief, Regional Fire Management Coordinator, Bob Eaton and Deputy Chief, Regional Fire Management Coordinator, Pete Kubiak are glad to be a part of this awesome team..

The Southern Area has three Incident Management Teams. The Southeast Region of FWS now provides Incident Commanders (and many other subordinate positions) to two of the three teams. Tony Wilder is IC for the Red Team (Type 1) and Michael Dueitt is IC for the Type 2 Team.

For the second time in five years, life changed forever along the north central Gulf Coast. In 2005 it was Hurricane Katrina and in April 2010, it was the Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill, the worst environmental disaster in the history of the United States. An immeasurable quantity of oil, estimated at 10 or 20 times the size of the Exxon Valdez, leaked into the Gulf following an explosion at the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. Within weeks, oil began washing up along the barrier islands and coastlines of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, including Bon Secour and Grand Bay NWRs. The federal government response began immediately and will continue for years to come.

Another accomplishment associated with the oil spill was the cooperative effort between the Fire Management Division and Ecological Services Division to develop and streamline the ordering and deployment of resources and the tracking of skills and qualifications for All Hazard incidents. The Southeast Region of FWS pioneered the inclusion of a multitude of incident positions, their mnemonics, and

qualification requirements into IQCS. Also hundreds of potential responders have and will be entered into IQCS for future deployment through the Resource Ordering and Status System. The system pioneered in our region is the model the Department of the Interior is poised to implement on a national level for all hazard incident response.

Volumes could be written, and eventually will be, regarding the response to the Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill. The Southeast Region of the US Fish and Wildlife Service has provided leadership and been intimately involved in management of this catastrophe at all levels since the outset and will continue to do so.

The 2010 hurricane season was one of the most active hurricane seasons on record in the Atlantic Basin. Fortunately, impacts on the U.S. were minimal. This hurricane season is tied with 1995 for the third-most tropical/subtropical storms (19) on record, behind only 1933 (21 storms) and 2005 (28 storms). The totals are even more remarkable given the relatively slow start to the season, with the fourth named storm not forming until late August, near the long-term average date for that occurrence.

Starting with Danielle on Aug. 27, the season's five major hurricanes formed within just three weeks, including four Category 4 hurricanes in a record 20 days. Interestingly enough, no hurricanes reached Category 5 intensity this year.

The center of Earl, when it was a Category 2 hurricane, passed within just 85 miles east of the Outer Banks of North Carolina on Sept. 3. That area experienced tropical storm conditions that included gusts of 70-80 mph, causing some downed trees and power outages. A storm surge of 2-6 feet from the Pamlico Sound side of the Outer Banks caused inundation of North Carolina's Highway 12 and damage to dozens of structures.

## Wildfire

The Southeast Region had 156 wildfires covering 17,832 acres in 2010. The largest fire occurred on the Sabine NWR and totaled 6,259 acres.

Some areas throughout the region experienced significant ongoing high fire danger events over the year. The North Louisiana / South Arkansas Refuge Complex was approved for severity funding. The Eastern North Carolina Refuges and Southwest Louisiana Refuge Complex prepared severity request packages which were on their way to approval, when significant rain events materialized and quelled the danger.

## Fuels Management

This was a typical year for the regional fuels program, with one exception. Glen Stratton joined the regional Division of Fire Management Staff, as the Regional Prescribed Fire Specialist. He brings a wealth of experience to the regional office. The region met or exceeded their fuels targets in all categories, safely.

There were 535 WUI mechanical fuel treatments for 6,097 acres, 71 non-WUI mechanical treatments for 1,808 acres, 212 WUI prescribed fire treatments for 93,801 acres, 106 non-WUI treatments for 34,958 acres, and 21 other treatments for 624 acres. Totaling 137,288 acres treated.

Glen started work immediately on the new fuels allocation system, Hazardous Fuels Prioritization and Allocation System (HFPAS) and coordinated the new Treatment Priority System, TPS with the field, project leaders, and area supervisors. He led the coordination of the four day Regional Fire Management Workshop, held in Macon, GA.

## Predictive Service

Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS)

With a total of 29 fixed GOES transmitting RAWS from Arkansas to Vieques, the region has excellent and representative coverage of our diverse refuge weather conditions.



2010 Fire Management Workshop; Macon, Georgia, November 2010 - USFWS

Key to the monitoring of year round fire weather, the region has, since 2002, deliberately and methodically upgraded stations to enhance reliability and sustainability now and into the future. For example, all Region 4 fixed RAWS have been upgraded to employ the latest Forest Technology Service's robust combination F6-G5 Axiom datalogger. To meet overarching Southern Area GACC requirements for representative monitoring within its 67 Predictive Service Areas, the region optimized (where possible) the number fixed, FWS owned RAWS through new installation, relocation, and when necessary, elimination of redundant stations. Annual maintenance of a subset of our fixed RAWS (a total of 20) meeting the Southern Area Predictive Service's definition of a "Key" RAWS is provided for through a branch funded dedicated maintenance agreement with FTS. This ensures that these particular stations always meet annual maintenance and recertification requirements to ensure data accuracy and precision. The remainder of our RAWS, both fixed and portable, are maintained locally through a BLM depot maintenance contract. Oversight of the region's RAWS program is accomplished by our agency provided

meteorologist assigned to the Predictive Services office of the Southern Area Coordination Center.

#### **Wildland Urban Interface**

The region acquired \$317,537 of DOI Rural Fire Assistance Program (RFA) funds which were distributed to the field and ultimately to our Volunteer and Rural Fire Department cooperators. RFA is intended to increase local firefighter safety and enhance the fire protection capabilities of Rural Fire Departments by helping them meet accepted standards of wildland fire qualifications, training, and performance for initial and extended attack at the local level. The region also acquired \$119,691 of DOI Ready Reserve funds which were distributed to the field. The purpose of the Ready Reserve Program is to increase rural fire department wildland fire operations safety, effectiveness, and capacity by sponsoring local level training opportunities.

This year the region invested another \$20,000.00 and provided a steering committee member for the further development of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment. This assessment is an interagency cooperative tool utilized at federal, state and local levels. A plethora

of Community Wildfire Protection Plans were initiated and/or completed this year by refuge staff working in cooperation with state and local partners.

Field units continue to work with cooperators, predominantly the state fire protection/forestry agencies, in development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. These are being developed on a wide array of spatial levels, from county wide, down to single small communities.

#### **Training and Qualifications**

This year was the final deadline for compliance with the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) and GS-0401 Standards requirements. The regional office and field staff monitored progress closely in cooperation with the Human Resources office to help folks keep on track. We did relatively well with all but two individuals (by no fault of their own) making the October 1, 2010 deadline. These individuals were temporarily placed in subordinate positions as they continued towards their targets.

Rick Struhar served as Chair of the Southern Area Training Working Team and Steering Committee Member of the Southern Area Advanced Fire and

## Regional Office continued

Aviation Academy. Twenty six USFWS representatives from throughout the region and a couple from the national office assisted in training course delivery at the academy. A total of 42 course sessions were conducted over the two week period in June. FWS had 60 attendees. This interagency geographic area scope effort is among the largest occurring in the country.

We coordinate with the states in the training arena on a variety of levels. Most notable is our involvement in the TN/KY Wildland Fire Academy. This year was the 9th annual session and our efforts were once again spearheaded by Mike Housh. Mike has served on the steering committee as the FWS representative since the academy inception nine years ago. Over the years Mike has coordinated and led a wide variety of 200 and 300 level courses. This year's courses were S-230 Crew Boss and S-231 Engine Boss. Thank you to Mike and his roving band of instructors for another successful year.

All Position Task Books (PTBs) completed throughout the region ultimately come through the regional office for regional agency certification and certification in the Incident Qualification and Certification System (IQCS). This is done after being initiated by the unit line officer and District Fire Management Officer. Once the PTB is completed the District FMO provides agency certification then the book is forwarded to the regional office. The purpose of the regional involvement is to provide a final quality check and ensure qualifications standards are applied consistently throughout the region. This process occurred more than twice this year.

This year and last year, an effort was implemented to "clean up" our qualifications records in IQCS. Individuals in the regional office and in the field put forth considerable effort to fill documentation holes and eliminate unnecessary administrative actions in the system. This will be an ongoing effort but we are seeing considerably cleaner and more complete qualifications documentation these days.

The region once again successfully navigated the rough waters of the ever-changing DOI Medical Standards Program. Kudos to the field for their patience, determination, and desire to "get it right".

Mike Dueitt, our FWS Director of the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center reports that FY10 was very successful in training future prescribed fire practitioners. The number of student applications for the field sessions was substantially higher than the previous year. All attendees were able to complete many tasks in their PTBs on a variety of landscape and WUI burns. The Agency Administrators course was one of the best ever with enrollment that was multi agency and that exceeded the participants expectations.

#### **Southern Area Coordination Center**

Pat Boucher, Assistant Area Coordinator located at SACC was instrumental in assisting Ecological Services (ES) with the Deepwater Horizon oil incident qualification and ROSS systems to order and dispatch resources and verify that catalog items were already there for ecological services to use. She identified for the Ecological Service office that Biologist, Ecologist, and few others were in the system for them to use. She worked with Roxanna Hinzman to show the procedure and that the process would work. Explanations regarding individuals not in ROSS or the qualification system were given to insure that this would not keep them from filling a request. Pat worked closely with the National Coordinator and Center Managers of the other Geographical Centers to pass on the needs of the FWS for the oil spill. The dispatch community worked hand-in-hand with her through the National Interagency Coordination Center to streamline all request by filling, entering, and working through the AD process established.

The oil spill incident was created in ROSS on April 23, 2010. From that initial time through March 8, 2011 there have been 3,264 overhead resources processed.

Out of the 3,264 request 2,846 have been filled, 227 cancelled. Resources were filled by FWS employees, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, some National Park Service and numerous ADs (Administratively Determined).

Pat continues to work with the Eastern Area and Jon Skeels ROSS Project Manager to place all the specialized equipment that Fish & Wildlife Service's use on coastal areas for fire or all-hazard into the catalog for selection. Pat also identified all ES and Fisheries offices and created unit identifiers that have been placed and approved by NWCG. These identifiers will also be placed into ROSS for future use. There is also an on-going process that is taking place in identifying other biological positions so that they may be added into ROSS and approved by the NWCG. The PDs for these positions was written by Roxanna Hinzman of ES and with the help of Chris Wilcox sent to the appropriate working group of NWCG for approval.

#### **Fire Ecology**

Sue Wilder our Regional Fire Ecologist, continues to serve as Chair of National FWS Fire Ecology Team. This Team worked closely with the National Fire Ecologist to develop a white paper on the Ecological burning in FWS including estimated historical and current acres burned. She participated on several biological reviews (Lower Suwanee, Cedar Keys, National Key Deer); all fire reviews (see planning below); refuge assistance visits (Holla Bend, Mountain Longleaf, St Marks, Southeast Louisiana, Mississippi Sandhill Crane)

- Sue is the Vice Chair for steering committee for M-580 course taught at NAFRI in Tucson and assisted in developing a Fire Effects Monitoring course for Advanced Fire Academy held in Jackson, Florida; also at Fire Academy, taught one lecture in RX341, one in m-581, judged final projects for Rx310; taught fire effects monitoring classes at two PFTC sessions.

- She also attended National Fire Ecology meeting in Savannah, Georgia.

# Regional Office continued

- Participated in “Open Pine Desired Forest Condition meetings” with the East Gulf Coastal Plain Joint Venture.
- Continued to develop 8 species profiles to help fire managers individual species fire effects.
- Attended several regional staff meetings in Atlanta and participated on the oil spill for two details in Mobile, Alabama.
- Continued to serve as Post-Burn Recovery Coordinator (BAER Coord) for the region (see post burn recovery section).
- Worked with Fire Planner to review fire ecology and post fire recovery sections of all newly submitted fire management plans (see below).

## Planning

Phil Weston, Regional Fire Planner was very busy working with the Regional Fire Management Plan Amendment #1, which was developed to provide consistency between the various versions of the Interagency Fire Management Plan templates that have been utilized over the past few years.

He completed 30 Fire Management Plans that cover 49 Refuges during FY 2010 to bring our total approved Fire Management Plans in the Interagency FMP Template to 52 and involving 88 Refuges and three Fish Hatcheries.

Phil posted all of the approved R4 Fire Management Plans to the FWS Sharepoint Site and maintained the R4 entries in the FWS Fire Management Plan Spreadsheet on the FWS Sharepoint Website.

He completed Fire Management Reviews for North Louisiana NWR Complex (D’Arbonne, Black Bayou Lake, Upper Ouachita, Handy Brake, and Red River NWRs), Southern Arkansas NWR Complex (Felsenthal, Overflow, and Pond Creek NWRs), and Savannah Coastal NWR Complex (Savannah, Tybee, Harris Neck, Wassaw Wolf Island, Blackbeard Island, and Pinckney Island NWRs).

He revised State Cooperative Fire Management Agreements with Interagency Cooperative Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements and Operating Plans for the States of Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee. He assisted in the preparation of Local Fire Management Agreements and Operating Plans between the Okefenokee NWR and the Georgia Forestry Commission, the US Marine Corps, Cherry Point, NC and the Mattamuskeet NWR Complex.

Phil provided Fire Management guidance to the Tennessee and Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Plans.

Josh O’Connor worked with the FPU leads around the region to submit the FY11 data for FPA, and was selected as a member of the FPA Support Working Team as the FWS representative. Josh has been assisting Jon Wallace with data requirements for the HFPAS process. Josh O’Connor assisted the Deep Horizon Oil Spill IMT with map products and resource request form development. He continues to provide thorough GIS technical advice to the national and regional fire programs. Josh is instrumental in all data support needs in FMIS, NFPORS, LANDFIRE, FPA, and other modeling requests for the regional division of fire management.

## Budget

Sherrie Matthews is the Fire Budget Analyst for the Southeast Region Division of Fire Management. The regions initial fire budget was \$14,064,060 down from \$14,757,947 in FY 09.

## Region Staff Assignments

Phil Weston, Regional Fire Planner, was selected as a Planning Section Chief on the Southern Area Incident Management Team. He served 30-day assignment as Planning Section Chief, Type 2 on the Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill, Atlanta, GA, and served as Planning Section Chief, Type 2 (PSC2) for five days on the North Mountain Fire, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Pat Boucher did a detail for the Eastern Area Coordination Center as Acting Center Manager for two weeks.

Glen Stratton participated in prescribed burns at Mountain Longleaf NWR in April and with Merritt Island in June. While at Merritt Island he assisted with several lightning fires that ignited. Glen is one of the primary Operations Chiefs on the Southern Area Type 2 Incident Management Team, which was deployed twice, one in April to North Carolina and the second in August to Lawton, Oklahoma.

Pete Kubiak is also one of the primary Operations Chiefs on the Southern Area Type 2 Incident Management Team and deployed twice, to the same locations as stated previously. He went to Merritt Island NWR.

## Training Staffing Changes

On January 31, 2010 Glen Stratton, FWS Fire District 5 Fire Management Officer, accepted the position of Regional Prescribed Fire Specialist in the Atlanta Regional Office.

Josh O’Connor, Prescribed Fire Specialist at Florida Panther NWR accepted the Regional Planner job in the Atlanta Regional Office. He reported the first week of February.

Michael Dueitt, National Forests in Mississippi Fire Management Officer, accepted the Director, National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center position in November 2009. He reported the first week of March 2010.

Jim Durrwachter retired from the service in December of 2009 as the Director of the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center.

Dave Brownlie departed the Regional Fire Ecologist position for a Refuge Manager job at Monomoy NWR in Massachusetts.

## FPU Fire Season for FWS Region 4 FPU's

FPU	Start Date	End Date
Mississippi	1/12	11/4
Puerto Rico	1/22	5/11
Southern Ozarks	7/19	4/19
Eastern Arkansas	7/24	4/22
North/Central Louisiana	8/4	5/28
Tennessee-Green Rivers	8/12	4/21
North Carolina Piedmont	9/3	5/30
South Carolina Midlands	9/9	6/9
Central Georgia	9/18	6/24
Alabama/Florida Panhandle	10/4	7/5
Louisiana Delta	10/6	6/30
SE Mississippi	10/16	7/3
Southern Appalachian	10/16	6/21
SE Georgia/NE Florida	10/30	8/14
Florida Big Bend	12/3	9/1
Central Florida	12/9	8/27
South Florida	12/19	8/24
SW Louisiana/NE Texas Coast	12/27	10/28
North Carolina Coast	12/31	8/14

\*Season start and end dates were created to capture 90 of historical wildfire ignitions within the season range. This represents the 90th percentile of fires and not the 90th percentile of fire days.

Employee	Training Taken	Instructor Experience	Taskbooks Initiated	Taskbooks Completed
Pat Boucher	IS700, IS800	NDROSS		
Phil Weston	RFSR, S-445		Training Specialist	
Rick Struhar	L480, S378			
Glen Stratton		RX301, RX341		
Pete Kubiak	L580	M581, LFML		
Josh O’Connor		Rx301		RXB1

## Awards and Recognition

Pat Boucher received the regional fire management All-Risk Management Award for 2010 at the annual Region 4 Fire Management Workshop.

Rick Struhar “Spot Award” for building interagency relationships via his efforts as the DOI Geographic Lead for the Ready Reserve Program.

Rick Struhar, Regional Forester Award (USFS Region 8) for business operations work in support of the Interagency Southern Area Advanced Fire and Aviation Academy.

## Regional Office

Chief Division of Fire Management  
Robert Eaton: 404/679 7190

Deputy Chief Division of Fire Management  
Peter Kubiak: 404/679 7244

Prescribed Fire Specialist  
Glen Stratton: 404/679 7191

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI Coordinator)

Richard Struhar: 404/679 7061

Fire Management Specialist  
Josh O’Connor: 404/679 4192

Budget Analyst  
Sherrie Matthews: 404/679 7102

Assistant Coordinator, Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC)  
Patricia Boucher: 678/320 3003

Meteorologist  
Kevin Scasny: 678/320 3009

Program Office Assistant  
Margaret Hale: 404/679 7192

Director, Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC)  
Mike Duiett: 850/523 8633

Regional Fire Planner  
Phillip Weston: 850/523 8521

Fire Ecologist  
Sue Wilder: 985/882 2008

Fire Ecologist  
Vince Carver: 404/216 9421

## District FMO Contact List

Fire District 1 – Alligator River NWR  
Tom Crews: 252/473 1131 x232

Fire District 2 – Savannah Coastal Refuges  
Rob Wood: 843/784 9911 x105

Fire District 3 – Okefenokee NWR  
Mike Housh: 912/496 7366 x238

Fire District 4 – St. Marks NWR  
Greg Titus: 850/925 6121

Fire District 5 – Merritt Island NWR  
Pat Pearson: 321/861 6695

Fire District 6 – Florida Panther NWR  
Cass Palmer: 239/657 5476

Fire District 7 – MS Sandhill Crane NWR  
Tony Wilder: 228/497 5780 x22

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**Division of Fire Management**  
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**April 2011**



## Keeping Fire on Our Side

For thousands of years, humans have had an active partnership with fire. When respected and managed with care, fire can be a beneficial ally rather than an awesome opponent. Thoughtful preparation and action by public managers and private property owners can help keep fire's effects positive. Together, we can keep fire on our side.

