



## United States Department of the Interior



### Santee National Wildlife Refuge UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### **For immediate release:**

December 7, 2010

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Santee National Wildlife Refuge will plan to conduct several controlled burns during the coming fall and winter months. The goal of control burning is to enhance wildlife habitat and reduce the risk of wildfires on the Refuge.

The 2010 Annual Control Burn Plan includes 1,060 acres targeted for burning on the Cuddo, Bluff, and Pine Island units. The units involved in the burn plan include fallow fields, upland pine forests, and waterfowl impoundments. Burns are timed so they minimize impacts on wildlife and people and units are burned in small blocks to reduce smoke impacts. The burn plan addresses a wide range of factors such as safety, weather, fuel conditions, smoke impacts and also resources needed to conduct the burns. These burn treatments restore grassland areas, control brush in bottomland hardwood forests, control invasive woody vegetation, and increase the diversity of native plants and wildlife. Other benefits include protection of communities and adjacent landowners by reducing fuels and thus the potential threats of wildfire.

Controlled burns are planned and carried out by trained firefighters operating under strict conditions, known as prescriptions. These plans spell out the number of qualified firefighters, and types and number of equipment that must be present to burn. The weather conditions, including wind speed and direction, humidity, fuel moisture, and other factors described in the plan must be within a prescribed range. If the weather conditions don't match the prescription, the fire is not started. Smoke from the fires is a concern, and plans call for specific winds to minimize public impact on roads and communities.

Controlled burns are considered a good tool by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for managing wildlife habitat and reducing the risk of serious wildfires. Due to difficulties in predicting weather, the refuge is not able to notify the public of the exact day burns will be conducted. Landowners adjacent to the burn areas and local fire departments are notified prior to igniting the fire. Questions about the controlled burns can be answered by calling the Refuge office at (803) 478-2217.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

***National Wildlife Refuges...Where Wildlife Comes Naturally!***