

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge
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News Release

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Habitat Improvement Burns Planned for Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge

The US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to implement prescribed burns on Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge in Carteret County during the first week of March 2012, weather permitting. Should weather or other environmental parameters not meet the required conditions, the planned burns will be postponed until conditions are met up through the end of March. Objectives for the controlled burns are to reduce the amount of hazardous fuels in the woods, improve wildlife habitat, and maintain fire-dependent and fire-adapted species.

Fire personnel from several North Carolina national wildlife refuges will mobilize to conduct the prescribed burns in multiple high priority units that include both marsh and forested areas. Planned burns include those units on either side of NC Highway 12 south of Thorofare Ditch and north of John Day Ditch around Atlantic Field and the communities of Atlantic and Cedar Island. Wind direction and other weather factors will determine exactly which units are burned.

Prescribed fire is a valuable wildlife and habitat management tool. The coastal ecosystems of North Carolina include fire-adapted species which need fire in their habitats to reduce competition from invading species and to add nutrients back into the soil. By reducing the amount of dry and dead plant materials ("fuels") in an area, prescribed fire is also highly effective at reducing the likelihood of large, devastating wildfire. Local homeowners may personally reduce the risk of destruction of property from wildfire by following "firewise" guidelines when landscaping and maintaining property, including removing dead plant material from areas surrounding structures.

For more information about prescribed fire, visit <http://www.fws.gov/southeastfire/index.html>. Information on protecting your home from wildfire may be found at <http://www.ncfirewise.org/>.

For additional information regarding the prescribed burns at Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge, contact District Fire Management Officer Tom Crews at (252) 473-1131 extension 232 or Thomas_Crews@fws.gov.



Smoke management is a careful consideration for every prescribed burn. Here smoke blows away from homes during this 2004 prescribed burn conducted on Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge. Photo Credit: USFWS.