

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge  
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Swan Quarter, North Carolina 27885

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## News Release

March 16, 2012

### Successful Fuel Reduction Burns Conducted Near Atlantic

An expeditionary taskforce converged on Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge this week to conduct a series of Type 1 prescribed burns on joint USMC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lands in the wildland-urban interface around the Community of Atlantic, NC. The taskforce consisted of refuge staff from Mattamuskeet, Mackay Island, Pocosin Lakes and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges and United States Marine Corps (USMC) Forestry personnel from two military bases. U.S. Forest Service Researcher Gary Curcio provided assistance with smoke modeling and smoke forecasting and National Weather Service forecasters at the Newport/Morehead City office provided assistance with weather forecasting. Both Atlantic Volunteer Fire Department and the North Carolina Forest Service provided valuable assistance by being available with additional resources should the burns have escaped their units.

Three prescribed burns were conducted over a three day period, March 13-15, to accomplish 2,281 acres of hazardous fuels reduction treatments in four burn units. The prescribed burns were conducted safely around five high value USMC electronic sites, and behind homes and businesses in the Atlantic Community. In spite of low to moderate fire weather conditions, the burning vegetation (fuels) exhibited extreme fire behavior which required everyone's "A Game" in ignition and holding. However, burn objectives seem to have been met and managers are pleased with the results of the prescribed burns.

The two units closest to NC-12 and Old Cedar Island Road were last burned in 2004, and the two eastern units were burned together in 2003 with the marsh unit being burned again in 2010. USFWS Type 1 Burn Boss Tom Crews stated, "The USFWS and USMC fire crews should be extremely proud of their accomplishments here, especially considering the conditions in which everything was carried out." The fuels (vegetation) burned hotter and with more volatility this time than the first time these units were burned. Crews explained, "Salt-killed foliage and overgrown shrubs have combined to make dangerous fuel loading conditions that can lead to extreme fire behavior. We have cancelled any additional burns this season at Cedar Island due to fuel conditions being out of prescription."

By reducing the amount of vegetation in an area, prescribed fire is an effective tool at reducing the likelihood of large, devastating wildfire. But burning alone cannot ensure community protection from fires. Local property owners may personally reduce the risk of property loss by following "firewise" guidelines for landscaping and construction. With current fuel conditions and forecasted weather conditions for the Spring, a little firewise Spring cleaning around a home or

business may pay big dividends this fire season. More information about 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](mailto:Thomas_Crews@fws.gov).



A prescribed burn for reducing hazardous fuels was successfully conducted on March 15 on Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge near Atlantic, NC. The intersection of Morris Marina Rd. and Old Cedar Island Rd. is visible in the top right hand corner of the photo. Photo Credit: USFWS.