

Results of the Telephone Survey of Rural/Suburban Floridians (N=675)

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from the University of Florida. We are conducting a study about people's opinions of fire in natural areas. According to the research method being used by the University, I have to ask some questions of the youngest male ADULT (age 18 or older) who currently resides there. [Once respondent is identified, survey is introduced again.] Your phone number was selected at random by computer, and only your first name will be used to insure confidentiality. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. May I have your first name? (N=662 unless otherwise noted)

Experience with wildlands

First I have a few questions about where you live. How far do you live from the nearest natural area or open land in miles? (N=592)

4.1 Mean (SD 7.2)
0-50 Minimum - Maximum

Would you describe it as:

37% Forest
11% Shrubland
16% Grassland
13% Swamp
17% Other
4% Don't know
3% Not Available

Does it have pine trees?

78% Yes
16% No
5% Don't know
1% Not Available

Since you've been living there, has that natural area ever burned?

30% Yes
68% No
2% Don't know

Attitudes about wildland fire

Now I'm going to read to you a few statements with which some people agree and others disagree. We would like your opinion. After each statement, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Fire is beneficial to Florida's native plants.

8% Strongly agree
52% Agree
6% Neither agree or disagree
23% Disagree
5% Strongly disagree
5% Don't know
1% Not available

(3.38 Mean on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

Protecting air quality is more important than burning in natural areas.

- 11% Strongly agree
- 42% Agree
- 10% Neither agree or disagree
- 28% Disagree
- 3% Strongly disagree
- 5% Don't know
- 1% Not available

(3.31 Mean on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

Stricter regulations should be placed on burning.

- 23% Strongly agree
- 53% Agree
- 5% Neither agree or disagree
- 16% Disagree
- 1% Strongly disagree
- 2% Don't know

(3.84 Mean on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

The natural areas in my county should be burned periodically.

- 11% Strongly agree
- 45% Agree
- 8% Neither agree or disagree
- 28% Disagree
- 3% Strongly disagree
- 4% Don't know
- 1% Not available

(3.34 Mean on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

People who live near natural areas may have to tolerate some smoke from fires.

- 10% Strongly agree
- 69% Agree
- 3% Neither agree or disagree
- 15% Disagree
- 2% Strongly disagree
- 1% Don't know

(3.71 Mean on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

Now I'm going to read you a few more statements. After each one, please tell me if you believe the statement is true or false.

Knowledge about wildland fire

Periodic fire is a natural process in Florida.

- 76% True
- 19% False
- 5% Don't know

Natural areas that are burned every few years are useless as wildlife habitat.

- 67% False
- 27% True
- 6% Don't know

Fire helps to renew forests.

79% True
16% False
5% Don't know

Florida's natural areas will remain the same without fire.

70% False
24% True
6% Don't know

Human carelessness causes more fires in Florida than lightning.

75% True
16% False
8% Don't know
1% Not Available

Knowledge about prescribed fire

Now let's talk about prescribed fire. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following defines prescribed fire?

15% When lightning naturally ignites a fire
63% When land managers purposefully set a fire
9% When someone's yard fire escapes into the forest
12% Don't know
1% Not Available

Media exposure

[If answered correctly] How have you heard about prescribed fires? (N=426)

19% Newspaper
1% Radio
23% TV
2% Friends
5% Wildlife officers/forest rangers
19% Personal experience
15% Other
9% Don't know
6% Not Available

Well, prescribed fire is when land managers set fire for specific management purposes. Prescribed fires are done under safe conditions and kept under control. Wildfires in Florida are started by lightning and human carelessness. Wildfires sometimes burn out of control, damaging forests and threatening homes.

Actions they can take to protect homes

We want to find out if Floridians are taking action to protect their homes against wildfire. When I read this list, tell me if you would be likely or unlikely to take action, or if you have already done so. How about removing shrubs or branches near your home?

31% Likely
20% Unlikely
44% Have already done this
1% Don't Know
4% Not Available

How about moving flammable materials such as wood piles away from the home?

40% Likely
10% Unlikely
42% Have already done this
7% Not Available

Using landscape plants that are less likely to burn?

48% Likely
21% Unlikely
19% Have already done this
6% Don't Know
6% Not Available

Replacing flammable building materials?

47% Likely
29% Unlikely
17% Have already done this
3% Don't Know
5% Not Available

Perceived risk of prescribed fire

Now let's talk about the risk and benefits of prescribed fire. First I am going to read you a list of potential risks of prescribed fire. Please tell me, in your opinion, whether each potential risk is a large, a medium, or a small risk of prescribed fire:

Health problems from smoke and ash

33% Large risk
29% Medium risk
35% Small risk
3% Don't know

Car accidents due to smoke.

19% Large risk
28% Medium risk
49% Small risk
2% Don't know
1% Not Available

Spread of fire to neighboring property.

44% Large risk
25% Medium risk
28% Small risk
3% Don't know

Harm to wild animals.

47% Large risk
24% Medium risk
27% Small risk
1% Don't know

An unattractive landscape right after a fire.

39% Large risk
26% Medium risk
32% Small risk
2% Don't know
1% Not Available

More regulations affecting landowners.

29% Large risk
32% Medium risk
26% Small risk
12% Don't know
1% Not Available

Perceived benefits of prescribed fire

Now I am going to read a list of potential benefits of prescribed fire. Please tell me in your opinion if each potential benefit is a large, a medium, or a small benefit of prescribed fire.

Maintenance of the natural landscape.

46% Large benefit
35% Medium benefit
15% Small benefit
2% Don't know
1% Not Available

Prevention of wildfires.

73% Large benefit
18% Medium benefit
5% Small benefit
3% Don't know

Better wildlife habitat.

48% Large benefit
32% Medium benefit
14% Small benefit
5% Don't know

Fewer insect pests.

- 49% Large benefit
- 26% Medium benefit
- 19% Small benefit
- 6% Don't know

Improved forestry and grazing land.

- 59% Large benefit
- 25% Medium benefit
- 13% Small benefit
- 3% Don't know

For the next few questions, I'd like you to compare prescribed fire to wildfire. In general, would you say prescribed fire is greater, wildfire is greater, or they are the same in...

Comparing wildfire to prescribed fire

Number of animals killed?

- 4% Prescribed fire is greater
- 71% Wildfire is greater
- 19% They are the same
- 6% Don't know

Amount of smoke generated?

- 3% Prescribed fire is greater
- 62% Wildfire is greater
- 28% They are the same
- 5% Don't know

Experience with fire

We want to find out about your experience with fire in Florida. Were you living in Florida in June of 1998?

- 90% Yes
- 10% No

[If yes] Did you live in the same home you live in now? (N=596)

- 80% Yes
- 10% No
- 10% Not Available

Has there been a wildfire near your home last year or this year? (N=429)

- 39% Yes
- 60% No
- 1% Don't Know

[If yes] How far from your home was it in miles? (N=160)

- 10.6 Mean (SD 16.1)
- 0-80 Minimum - Maximum

Have you personally smelled smoke from a wildfire last year or this year at your home? (N=429)

58% Yes

41% No

1% Not available

[If yes] For how many days? (N=233)

8.1 Mean (SD 12.4)

1-100 Minimum - Maximum

Were you evacuated from your home due to wildfire either last year or this year? (N=429)

3% Yes

97% No

In the past year, how concerned have you been about the possibility of a wildfire near you home?
(N=429)

28% Very concerned

27% Moderately concerned

45% Unconcerned

Now thinking about prescribed fire instead of wildfire....How do you think you would react to a prescribed fire near your home?

[COMMENT SUMMARY]

What more would you like to know about prescribed fires and wildfires?

[COMMENT SUMMARY]

Interest in fire programs

Would you be very interested, moderately interested, or not interested in attending a program about prescribed fire and wildfire to....

Learn more about fire-prone areas near your home?

13% Very interested

26% Moderately interest

58% Not interested

2% Don't know

1% Not Available

Learn how to protect your home from fire?

28% Very interested

26% Moderately interest

43% Not interested

1% Don't know

1% Not Available

Learn how fire affects air quality and health?

24% Very interested

30% Moderately interest

44% Not interested

1% Don't know

1% Not Available

To see land that has been managed with prescribed fire?

17% Very interested
32% Moderately interest
47% Not interested
2% Don't know
2% Not Available

To learn how to support more prescribed burning?

18% Very interested
30% Moderately interest
50% Not interested
2% Don't know
1% Not Available

Demographics

Finally, the next set of questions I have will help us analyze your answers along with the answers of others.

Do you consider yourself to be currently living in an urban, suburban, or rural area?

16% Urban
36% Suburban
45% Rural
2% Don't know

(Frequencies for all of Florida are FILL IN HERE.)

How much land do you own in Florida in acres? (N=596)

8.6 Mean (SD 41.3)
0-400 Minimum - Maximum

How many years total have you lived in Florida?

24.3 Mean (SD 16.6)
0-78 Minimum - Maximum

In what county do you live?

0.89%	Alachua			
0.59%	Baker			
0.30%	Bay	0.89%	Lee	
0.89%	Bradford	0.30%	Leon	
0.04%	Brevard	1.48%	Levy	
0.30%	Broward	0.30%	Liberty	
	Calhoun		1.48%	Madison
	Charlotte	0.30%	Manatee	
5.63%	Citrus		0.30%	Marion
5.63%	Clay	0.89%	Martin	
	Collier	0.30%	Monroe	
2.27%	Columbia	0.59%	Nassau	
	Dade	0.30%	Okaloosa	
1.18%	DeSoto	0.30%	Okeechobee	
0.89%	Dixie	4.50%	Orange	
1.78%	Duval	10.0%	Osceola	
	Escambia		Palm Beach	
2.19%	Flagler		Pasco	
0.30%	Franklin	2.67%	Pinellas	
1.48%	Gadsden	3.60%	Polk	
0.30%	Gilchrist		Putnam	
	Glades	4.15%	St.Johns	
0.59%	Gulf		St.Lucie	
0.59%	Hamilton	9.18%	Santa Rosa	
0.89%	Hardee	1.78%	Sarasota	
	Hendry	1.78%	Seminole	
3.26%	Hernando	0.64%	Sumter	
3.55%	Highlands	0.30%	Suwannee	
0.59%	Hillsborough	0.08%	Taylor	
0.59%	Holmes	0.50%	Union	
5.63%	Indian River	2.07%	Volusia	
2.96%	Jackson	1.48%	Wakulla	
0.89%	Jefferson	5%	Walton	
0.30%	Lafayette	1%	Washington	
8.00%	Lake		Don't Know	
			Not Available	

Record sex of respondent:

43% Male
57% Female

And what is your age?

48.4 Mean (SD 17.4)
18-90 Minimum - Maximum

What is the highest grade of school or year in college you yourself have completed?

2% Some grade or middle school (5-8)
6% Some high school (9-11)
31% High school (12)
10% One year of college (13)
19% Two years of college (14)
3% Three years of college (15)
16% Four years of college (16)
12% Professional or graduate training (17-18)

13.6 Mean (SD 2.3)
0-18 Minimum - Maximum

What race do you consider yourself ?

85.7%	White
6.0%	Black
0.4%	Asian or Pacific Islander
0.4%	American Indian
5.0%	Other
0.2%	Multi-racial or mixed race
2.0%	Not available

Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin ?

2.4%	Yes
88.7%	No
0.6%	Don't Know

Have you ever worked in an agriculture or natural resources profession?

24%	Yes
76%	No

Now consider your family's household income from members and all sources before taxes. As I read a list, please stop me when I get to the income level that best describes your household income in 1998.

4%	Less than \$10,000
12%	\$10,000 to \$19,999
14%	\$20,000 to \$29,999
13%	\$30,000 to \$39,999
9%	\$40,000 to \$49,999
9%	\$50,000 to \$59,999
6%	\$60,000 to \$79,999
6%	\$80,000 to \$99,999
3%	\$100,000 to \$150,000
2%	Over \$150,000
6%	Don't Know
18%	Not Available