

Resources for Prescribed Fires on Private Lands in Florida¹

Raelene M. Crandall, Brier Ryver, David R. Godwin, Shelly A. Johnson, Alicia Halbritter, and Ludie A. Bond²

Historically, fire has been an integral part of the Florida landscape. The maintenance of Florida ecosystems is highly dependent on recurrent fires. But what resources exist to support our private landowners who want to incorporate prescribed fires into their management plans? Without a team of skilled professionals on the payroll, safety and fire knowledge are of utmost importance to anyone wanting to conduct prescribed fires on their land (Figure 1). This publication aims to connect Florida landowners with the resources available for prescribed burning, from planning to ignition to mop up and declaring the fire out. We include resources for local, boots-on-the-ground help, as well as training and regional information. Some resources are free, and others charge a nominal fee.

Although this publication is not a comprehensive list of all available resources, it will guide private landowners who wish to manage their property with prescribed fire. Contact organizations or programs directly by visiting their websites or social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, X, etc.). Whether they manage one acre or thousands of acres, Florida landowners should find the list below useful to connect

with many essential resources they will need to help them accomplish land management goals.

Florida Resources Florida Forest Service

Florida Forest Service “For Landowners”

The Florida Forest Service has regulatory authority over all wildland fire in Florida. They oversee the state’s Certified Prescribed Burner program, which provides training and oversight for burners. This agency also provides assistance to landowners to meet resource management objectives, often in conjunction with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Natural Resources Conservation Service. They can help with forest management planning, silviculture best management practices, wildfire mitigation, fire line construction, mulching in high-fuel areas, and prescribed fire planning and implementation. Contact your local forest area supervisor about these services ([Florida Forest Service “Find a County Forester”](#)).

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2. Raelene Crandall, associate professor, fire ecology, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences and Southern Fire Exchange, Joint Fire Science Program; Brier Ryver, park ranger (visitor services specialist), Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and former master’s student, UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation; David R. Godwin, director, Southern Fire Exchange, Joint Fire Science Program; Shelly A. Johnson, state specialized Extension agent, natural resources, UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation; Alicia Halbritter, agriculture and natural resources Extension agent, UF/IFAS Extension Baker County; and Ludie A. Bond, former PhD student, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences and wildfire mitigation specialist/public information officer, Florida Forest Service, Waccasassa Forestry Center; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

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Figure 1. Planning and igniting prescribed fires, like this one in a longleaf pine savanna, requires knowledge, experience, and equipment.

Credits: R. M. Crandall

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Landowner Assistance Program

FWC “Working with Private Landowners”

This program helps landowners understand the role of fire on the landscape and connects them with other agencies and non-governmental organizations who may assist in implementing prescribed fires. Although the Landowner Assistance Program does not write burn prescriptions, it can help develop a roadmap of land management goals and how to achieve them, plan a burn, and map the property.

Florida Forest Service Vendor Database

<https://ffs.fdacs.gov/fsvd>

The Florida Forest Service provides a web-based list of vendors. This database was developed as a tool to help landowners find forest management-related service providers for the implementation of forestry practices on their land. Services are broken out into the following categories:

- Forest management consultants
- Florida forest tree seedling nurseries
- Site preparation vendors
- Tree planting vendors

- Forest products buyers

Florida Land Steward Partnership

UF/IFAS Extension “Florida Land Steward”

The Florida Land Steward Partnership is an Extension program of the UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences that aims to help and encourage private landowners to manage their lands for multiple long-term environmental, economic, and social benefits. This program will help you develop a land management plan and provides an interactive network, helpful resources, and opportunities to interface with agencies and other landowners to benefit and inform your management practices.

Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs)

Florida currently has two established prescribed burn associations: the North Florida PBA (<https://www.north-floridapba.org/>) and Northwest Florida PBA (Northwest Florida Prescribed Burn Association on Facebook).

Members of these associations work together to provide assistance, equipment, and training to increase fire use on member land. Be aware that these associations are cooperatives, requiring you to participate in fires, both on your land and other members’ lands, in addition to other organizational efforts, including furthering the positive message of prescribed fire use.

Prescribed Fire Councils

<https://www.prescribedfire.net/>

Florida has three prescribed fire councils: North Florida Prescribed Fire Council, Central Florida Prescribed Fire Council, and the South Florida Interagency Fire Management Council. Each of the prescribed fire councils conducts annual meetings in which attendees learn about fire science and the tools and techniques that can support their prescribed fire programs. Prescribed fire council meetings provide opportunities for networking and collaboration as well as opportunities to gain continuing education credits toward maintaining Florida Certified Prescribed Burn Manager credentials.

Tall Timbers Private Lands Prescribed Fire Project (Panhandle Region of Florida)

Tall Timbers eNews feature on “a novel approach to expanding private lands prescribed fire use”

This program promotes the use of prescribed fire on private lands in the Florida Panhandle through education and boots-on-the-ground burn assistance. The “Burn Team”

delivers science-based technical guidance on a number of topics, including prescribed fire planning and implementation, smoke management, and determining burn prioritization.

UF/IFAS Extension Offices

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/find-your-local-office/>

Your local UF/IFAS Extension office is a free to low-cost resource for information on nearly any topic. Extension agents can help direct you to the proper resource, provide you with information or publications, or offer training in a classroom-type setting. Some UF/IFAS Extension offices may conduct learn-and-burn type programs for you to explore prescribed burning topics and gain experience lighting safe and ecologically appropriate fires.

Regional (Southeastern United States) Information

eFIRE

[eFIRE home page](#)

eFIRE is an interactive website maintained by North Carolina State University that introduces and explains each step required for a successful prescribed fire, from planning and conducting the fire to evaluating the effects of burning.

Association of Consulting Foresters — Find a Forester

[ACF Find a Forester fillable search form](#)

Search for private foresters with burn qualifications in a given location or region. This is an excellent option for private landowners who want to hire a contractor to implement prescribed burns on their property.

Longleaf Alliance

<https://longleafalliance.org/>

The Longleaf Alliance is a regional non-profit dedicated to promoting and restoring the legendary longleaf pine ecosystems of the southeastern United States. The Longleaf Alliance provides on-the-ground assistance, facilitates partnerships, and offers numerous courses and training opportunities to inform private landowners about managing and restoring longleaf pine forests.

Society of American Foresters (SAF)

<https://www.eforester.org/>

The Society of American Foresters is a professional organization for landowners, professionals, and anyone interested in forests. It provides networking and educational opportunities to improve forest management and sustainability. SAF also maintains a list of certified forestry professionals who have met and adhered to standards of professional preparation, experience, and education (SAF “Find a Certified Professional” fillable search form).

Southeastern Regional National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

<https://southernwildfire.net/about>

This resource supports communication and collaborations between diverse stakeholders to provide educational resources for reducing wildfire risk and increasing the safety of prescribed fire. Use this site to identify sources of financial assistance, learn about air quality, and connect with local professionals.

Southern Fire Exchange (SFE)

<https://southernfireexchange.org/>

[SFE on YouTube](#)

The Southern Fire Exchange is a regional program that connects fire and natural resource managers with relevant, timely fire science information. Its workshops, webinars, fact sheets, and other resources are developed to move scientific knowledge and tools into the hands of practitioners and decision-makers (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Southern Fire Exchange products span a range of effort, investment, and engagement to increase connections with and between groups. On the low end of the engagement continuum is user-accessed information, such as fact sheets, newsletters, websites, and social media. Intermediate engagement options include direct information delivery via webinars, podcasts, and videos. Options for personal interactions in workshops, classes, and conferences require a higher level of investment and engagement by stakeholders.

Credits: D. R. Godwin

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS conservation basics for Florida

NRCS provides voluntary, cost-effective programs and technical assistance to landowners to conserve, protect, and improve soil, water, air, plants, and animals. In doing so, NRCS helps farmers and landowners to better steward and manage their property and remain economically viable. They provide a state-by-state technical guide and prescribed burning conservation practice standards (NRCS's [page for the conservation practice standard for prescribed burning \(Ac.\) \(338\)](#)). NRCS serves the entire United States and local service centers throughout Florida. The contact page includes links to fillable search forms to help you find service centers, employees, state offices, and national information and centers (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/contact>).

Opportunities for Training

The Florida Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Training Course provided by the Florida Forest Service

Training course information and registration links

This is a 40-hour course designed to educate fire practitioners and make them more effective burners, thereby reducing risk. There are two options: (1) an in-person course for newer burners with little to no prescribed fire knowledge or experience, and (2) a correspondence course for experienced burners. While you do not have to be a certified prescribed burner to conduct prescribed burns on your property in Florida, it does increase burn opportunities. It also provides some liability protections and is a good step in your prescribed fire education.

CESRx (Cooperative Extension Services Prescribed Fire)

[CESRxFire prescribed fire training course page, including link to enroll](#)

CESRx is a free online asynchronous course for an introduction to southeastern United States wildland fire. It culminates in a certificate of completion from the University of Florida. This 4- to 6-hour course provides individuals with knowledge and resources to better accomplish their land management goals and cultivate fire-educated communities. There are eight modules:

(1) basic fire knowledge,

- (2) implementing prescribed fire,
- (3) air quality and smoke,
- (4) liability and risk reduction,
- (5) wildlife management,
- (6) forest management,
- (7) prescribed burn associations, and
- (8) connecting with your fire community

Natural Areas Teaching Academy (NATA)

UF/IFAS Natural Areas Teaching Academy

NATA offers training in natural areas management, including several wildland fire certifications. The Firefighter Type 2 course teaches entry-level wildland firefighting skills, and certification is required to participate in prescribed burning activities with state and federal agencies. Approximately 30 hours of online training and a one-day in-person field day are necessary for participants to receive the federally recognized National Wildfire Coordinating Group certificates (S190/S130/L180).

Firewise Landscaping

Numerous resources are available to help landowners learn how landscaping around structures and communities can help protect them from fires and create defensible space. Review recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA "[Preparing Homes for Wildfire](#)"), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS's [Firewise USA/Protecting Your Home from Wildfire](#)), and UF/IFAS Extension ([UF/IFAS Extension Firewise Landscaping](#)). In addition, a series of Ask IFAS publications provides some information and tips for firewise landscaping:

- [Fire in the Wildland-Urban Interface: Selecting and Maintaining Firewise Plants for Landscaping](#)
- [Fire in the Wildland-Urban Interface: Selecting Firewise Shrubs to Reduce Wildfire Risk](#)
- [Forest Management in the Interface: Reducing Fire Risk](#)
- [Landscaping in Florida with Fire in Mind](#)
- [Developing Land in Florida with Fire in Mind: Recommendations for Designers, Developers, and Decision-Makers](#)