Private Landowner Perspectives on Prescribed Fire for Wildfire Risk Reduction in the Southern US

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Prescribed fire has long been utilized by private landowners in southern forests to meet a variety of objectives such as fuels reduction, competition control, pest or disease control, improvement of wildlife habitat, and wildfire risk reduction. The purpose of this work was to bridge the knowledge gap between assumptions and opinions of private landowners as to the effects of prescribed fire on wildfire in the Southeastern US. Survey results focus on both commercial and non-commercial private landowners engaged in prescribed fire use.

Respondents were surveyed in the Fall of 2011 using email lists from the Southern Fire Exchange, with an overall response rate of 19% of which 83 respondents were private landowners. The majority of respondents were from Florida (14), North Carolina (22), South Carolina (12) and Georgia (10).

Roughly equal numbers reported increases, decreases, or no change in prescribed fire use in the last five years, while the last decade saw slightly more respondents with increased fire use. Private contractors burned the highest percentage of the lands they managed, over 20%, whereas private commercial landowners reported burning only a small fraction of their lands.

Most respondents believed prescribed burning reduced wildfire ignitions in loblolly/shortleaf pine systems for 2-4 years, while the longevity in longleaf/slash pine uplands and flatwoods was slightly higher (Fig. 1). There was a clear consensus that maintaining a regular fire return interval of less than five years reduced the amount of time, money, and resources required for wildfire suppression.

Under different forest types when a wildfire occurs in a recently burned area (1-3 years) there is a consensus that overstory tree mortality will experience a “major decrease” as a result while fire rate of spread, flame length, and duration of smoldering combustion would experience “some” or “major” decreases. A majority of respondents believed that regular prescribed fire use affords fire managers greater flexibility in suppression tactics by allowing them to consider and potentially incorporate direct attack into suppression efforts if necessary.

In general, the survey results suggest that frequent prescribed burning has overall beneficial impacts on decreasing the severity of wildfires, and allows fire managers greater flexibility during wildfire suppression on private lands.

For more information about this study contact Leda Kobziar at lkobziar@ufl.edu.
Converting Even-Aged Plantations to Uneven-Aged Stand Conditions: A Simulation Analysis of Silvicultural Regimes with Slash Pine (*Pinus elliottii Engelm.*)

Sharma, Ajay; Bohn, Kimberly; Jose, Shibu; Cropper, Wendell P. Forest Science (2014) Available online at dx.doi.org/10.5849/forsci.13-097

There has been increasing interest in managing forest stands as uneven-aged structures to promote sustainable harvests as well as maintain ecosystem services. This study provides a framework for simulating conversion of mature even-aged stands to uneven-aged slash pine (*Pinus elliottii Engelm.*) stands using the USDA Forest Vegetation Simulator (FVS) model. A total of 73 scenarios, representing combinations of two harvest methods (based on either "BDq" and/or "low thinning"), two harvesting cycles (10 or 20 years), three harvest intensities (4.6 or 8.0 or 11.5 m² ha⁻¹ residual basal areas), and six levels of regeneration (0–2,224 seedlings ha⁻¹) were evaluated for structural diversity, timber production, and carbon (C) stocks over a 100-year period. The BDq harvest approach, which applied selection cutting based on diameter regulation from the first cutting cycle onwards, resulted in higher structural diversity. Scenarios based on low thinning in the first cutting cycle and BDq method from the third cutting cycle onwards tended to result in higher total merchantable timber and C stocks over the entire simulation period, particularly at higher residual basal areas and longer cutting cycles. None of the scenarios maximized all of the three variables simultaneously. Based on the desired objectives, land managers can choose among scenarios presented. The study revealed that regeneration and establishment of as low as 247 seedlings ha⁻¹ can lead to successful conversion and multiple benefits from uneven-aged slash pine stands.

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Upcoming Events

- **Ag Module 2014: Innovation in the Water Space presented by SWFWMD on April 24-25, 2014** at Crystal Springs Preserve near Brandon, FL. For more information and to register go to http://floridaearth.crm.tallyfox.com/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=62


- **Spring Restoration and Protection in Northwest Florida: A CFEOR Field Tour (by Canoe) on May 16, 2014** in Youngstown, FL. Take a canoe ride down the Ecofina Creek and learn about springs restoration and protection activities. Registration is now open for CFEOR participants at sfrc.ufl.edu/cfeor/UpcomingEvents.html


- **Florida Native Plant Society’s 34th Annual Conference, may 15-18, 2014.** Florida Gulf Coast University, Ft. Myers, FL. Details at http://fnps.org/conference
Upcoming Events

- **Ignition Planning & Prescribed Fire Techniques for Wildlife**  
  **May 5-8, 2014** at the Cecil Commerce Center, 13561 Lake Newman Street, Jacksonville, Florida. This training combines classroom lectures, panel discussions, and field exercises on the use of Prescribed Fire as a management tool for a variety of wildlife and habitats. A full agenda and registration info is available on the chapter website: [http://fltws.org/](http://fltws.org/)

- **Mark your calendars-ACES: A Community on Ecosystem Services Conference** will be held December 8-11, 2014 in Washington DC. For more information go to [http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/aces/](http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/aces/)

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