



Open Understory

Autumn Brings Prescribed Burns to South Florida, Great Smoky Mountains



31,000 acres
River of Grass Northeast
Prescribed Burn, Everglades National Park,
Nov. 29, 2011. NPS photo / Gary Carnall

Parks Use Fire to Manage Exotics, Preserve Cultural Landscapes

*Homestead, FL, Naples, FL, and Gatlinburg, TN--*In South Florida, firefighters at Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve both took advantage of favorable winds and high water levels to burn in late November and early December. Like most prescribed burns, the 31,000-acre River of Grass Northeast Prescribed Burn at Everglades had multiple objectives. First, the burn reduced flammable vegetation that had built up along Highway 41 and Canal L67 in the 30 years since this area last burned. Second, the burn completed a three-phase melaleuca control program that began with chopping down the trees, then spraying the stumps with herbicide before burning the area. The burn was highly visible from the popular Shark Valley Visitor Center. For coverage of the burn on CBS Miami, see <http://cbsloc.al/vmDM6P>.

At neighboring Big Cypress, 2,000 acres of the planned 7,000-acre Wetfoot burn were ignited November 30, east of Concho

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UPCOMING MEETINGS AND TRAINING

Jan. 3-6: S130/190, Basic Wildland Fire Training (KIMO, SC)

Jan. 9-14: Tennessee-Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy (Bell Buckle, TN): <http://1.usa.gov/s11D65>

Jan.-Feb: Refreshers and Pack Tests Dates and locations vary. Please check Sharepoint site below.

Saws, Pumps, Helicopters, Single Resource, and More! Check the Regional Fire Training Calendar at <http://bit.ly/bYeP1L>

(continued from page 1) Billie Trail and north of Mud Lake Bypass Trails. For the Inciweb page about the burn, including detailed maps, see <http://bit.ly/tHXjwV>.

Great Smoky Mountains also completed a fall burn at one of its most popular visitor destinations, Cades Cove. Prescribed burns here, especially in the fall, help kill non-native fescue grass and provide opportunities for native plant species to germinate. Burning also kills hardwood saplings and brush that would otherwise invade the fields and turn them into forests. By keeping the fields as open as they were during their agricultural use, prescribed burning helps the park maintain this cultural landscape.



This year, firefighters from CUGA, CAHA, and several neighboring volunteer fire departments helped Great Smokies staff burn over 500 acres. For local newspaper coverage of the burn, see <http://bit.ly/t6PhDt>.

Cades Cove
(Primitive Baptist Church Unit)
NPS photo / Eric Cope

HELP WANTED

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is looking to fill the following fire vacancies:

- 1. Fire Management Specialist, WFM Leader, GS-0401-09.** Click here for the full USA Jobs announcement: <http://1.usa.gov/vHBNVO>. **Closes December 22, 2011.**
- 2. Forestry Technician, WFM Crewmember, GS-0562-05, career seasonal.** Not yet advertised.

South Florida Parks Host Fire Planner Meeting

Naples and Homestead, FL--During the week of November 29, Everglades and Big Cypress hosted a national meeting of fire planners from the various NPS regional fire programs around the country. At Everglades, the group visited areas involved in the park's new fire management plan. At Big Cypress, the group



visited a back-country camp to learn about the complexities of protecting in-holdings during wildfires and landscape-scale burns. (left.)

GUIS Hosts Regional Fire Interpretation Workshop

Pensacola, FL--During the week of October 18, Gulf Islands National Seashore hosted the Fourth Annual Southeast Regional Fire Interpretation Workshop. Thirty firefighters and interpreters from eleven NPS units in seven states joined state, federal, and nonprofit cooperators to exchange success stories and ideas for educating visitors and stakeholders about fire management. Activities included a field trip and classroom fire planning simulations (right.)

