

# Fire in Florida Ecosystems



Welcome to another year that brings wonderful weather that makes Florida the envy of most of the rest of the country. In subtropical Florida this means we enjoy a year-round growing season while much of the country suffers freezing temperatures. Those sea breezes mean a lot of lightning too! With the lightning comes fire. The ecosystems of Florida have adapted to periodic recurrent fire. The first settlers here understood the value of fire and used it to clear land and establish farms. In the last 50yrs some of those farms have given way to housing developments but the Florida ecosystem is still dependent on fire. So, in our corner of paradise, it's not a question of "if" but "when".

Everyone wants to maintain some natural areas and properties that are adjacent to undeveloped lands are often sought after. Many people love to look out their lanai while enjoying their morning coffee and

see a bobcat casually walking by or a family of sandhill cranes with colts strolling through the neighborhood. These moments often get captured in pictures that are shared with family and friends. Fire helps to ensure the habitat and the animals that depend on it continue to be successful. I'm often asked why we clear vegetation away from fence lines or why I cut down a tree that is on County property that neighbors enjoy. We take this action in anticipation of conducting a prescribed burn or in some cases to mitigate the potential danger of

wildfire on County property damaging our neighbors homes. This past summer our part of the state received lower than normal rainfall and already we are experiencing very dry conditions.

The fire mitigation work is continuing and we are doing our best to be good neighbors.

Keep an eye on the County website, news and local papers, when we conduct prescribed burns we issue a Public Service Announcement. When possible we reach out directly to adjacent homeowners we have met over the years and let them know we are planning to conduct a burn. If you see an area closed sign please be patient and we will reopen the area as soon as it is safe to do so. Last, please be careful while in our parks and preserves when conditions are this dry wildfires can be started very easily but can be difficult to stop.

