



Communicating Fire Science to Private Landowners and the Public: Extension's Role in the Southeastern US

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MAIN QUESTIONS OR ISSUES THAT YOU ADDRESSED

The southeastern US is a fire-prone and also fire-adapted region. It is also the fastest growing U.S. region, containing states with the highest Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area and number of homes in the WUI. As well, approximately 90% of southeastern land is privately-owned. These factors coupled with a high percentage of human-caused wildfires and regional interest in prescribed fire use can lead to conflicts of interest. Public and landowner education can be critical to address potential conflicts. The Cooperative Extension is well-poised to reach communities and landowners with wildland fire education and outreach resources.

LOCATION AND ECOSYSTEM INVESTIGATED

Southeastern region

HOW MIGHT/WILL IT INFLUENCE FIRE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS OR PRACTICES?

Cooperative Extension Agents/ educators are a trusted educational and informational resource in U.S. counties and states. Developing relationships or partnerships with Extension to serve as an education or outreach arm to a project may facilitate buy in from local communities or regions and, thus, smooth the way for projects the public or private landowners may otherwise object to. This could be critical, for example, in carrying out more prescribed burns that are part of forest/ range management plans, even near more populated areas.

WHO IS THE MAIN END-USER OF YOUR RESEARCH?

Researchers and practitioners alike could greatly benefit through a partnership with Cooperative Extension who can help the public and landowners apply fire research or, at the least, help the public better understand fire research.

CONGRESS SESSION

Exploring Past & Future Roles of the Cooperative Extension Service in U.S. Fire Education