

## Did You Know?

- Many of Florida's native plants and animals are dependent on fire.
- Due to development and population growth, natural wildfires cannot be allowed to burn unchecked, making prescribed fire an important tool in land management.
- The District acquires lands to protect and enhance the water resources. Many of these lands have ecosystems that depend on fire to maintain habitat quality.
- The District's Land Management Section conducts prescribed burns on about 30,000 acres a year.



For more information, contact:  
**Land Management Section**  
**Land Resources Department**  
 2379 Broad Street  
 Brooksville, FL 34604  
 (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only)

*Member of the Central Florida Prescribed  
 Fire Council and a cooperating  
 agency with the Florida Forest Service*

**Southwest Florida**  
 Water Management District

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The District does not discriminate upon the basis of any individual's disability status. This nondiscrimination policy involves every aspect of the District's functions including one's access to, participation or treatment in its programs or activities. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation as provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should contact the Land Resources Department at (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only), ext. 4470; TDD only: 1-800-231-6103 (FL only); fax: (352) 754-6877.

# Prescribed Fire

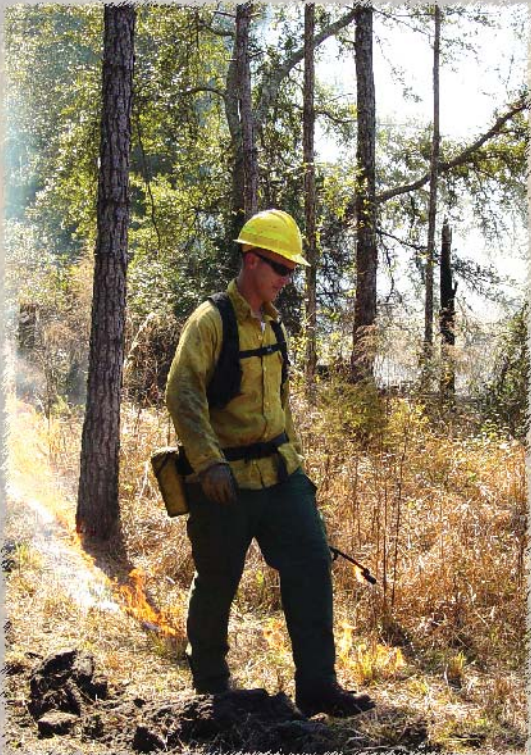
## *A Tool of Nature*



*The Story of  
 Prescribed  
 Burning  
 at the  
 Southwest  
 Florida Water  
 Management  
 District*

# Resource Management

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) acquires land to protect, enhance and manage the region's water resources. To date, the District has acquired more than 343,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands. The District is charged with maintaining this land, along with the plants and animals on the land, in a manner that enhances and promotes the native Florida ecosystems. One tool the District uses to maintain a healthy ecosystem is intermittent prescribed, or controlled, burns of the property.



## The Role of Fire

Just like medication is prescribed to maintain physical health, occasionally fire must be “prescribed” to maintain a healthy ecosystem. The majority of Florida’s native plants and animals are dependent on fire to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. This dependency stems from the historic occurrence of fire. Prior to human intervention, lightning-caused fires burned out of control until they were rained out or reached a natural barrier, such as a river. Fire frequency depended on hydrologic conditions and the type of vegetation fueling the fire. As a result of population growth and development, wildfires can no longer be left unchecked. The goal of the District’s land managers is to use fire in a controlled manner to mimic fires that occur naturally.

# Smoke Management

A major concern in prescribed burning is minimizing the impact of smoke on nearby roads and communities. Every prescribed burn performed by the District is carefully planned, with special consideration given to the wind direction needed for minimum smoke impact. Advanced public notice is given through news releases and direct contact with homeowners associations when necessary. Burns are conducted by highly trained, certified personnel. However, since weather can be quite variable, some smoke may be experienced by local residents. Please keep in mind that without prescribed burns many of Florida’s unique communities could not exist and the danger to residents from uncontrolled wildfires would be much greater.

