



The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is a national collaborative effort to bring a broad cross-section of stakeholders together to address wildland fire management challenges. The Strategy directs wildland fire planning activities and has three primary goals: restore and maintain landscapes, develop Fire-Adapted Communities, and improve wildfire response.

Brevard County, Florida Uses Prescribed Fire to Manage Environmentally Endangered Lands

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program, located in Brevard County, Florida was established in 1990 to protect natural habitats while also providing recreational and educational opportunities to residents and visitors. Approved through referendum by Brevard County voters in 1990, the EEL program provides funding and guidance to form a network of sanctuary lands to be purchased and indefinitely managed by the Program. As outlined in the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program: Sanctuary Management Manual, land acquisition for the program achieves multiple objectives:

- protect and conserve natural areas for future generations
- protect essential natural resources that support ecosystem functions
- support conservation-centered development while also addressing economic and community needs
- establish a nature sanctuary network that provides recreational and environmental education opportunities.

For millennia, natural cycles (fire, water, and climate) shaped the Brevard County landscape. In fact, many plant and animal species endemic to the

County are reliant on fire to rejuvenate the landscape. Through the process of urbanization, the landscape has become fragmented and natural cycles have been altered. To achieve conservation goals, EEL's long-term land management plan includes replicating disrupted natural processes, such as prescribed fire. Goals of prescribed fire use on EEL lands include: fuels reduction, enhancement of biodiversity and forest health, and habitat improvement for threatened, rare, and endangered species.

Following the 1990s passing of the Florida Prescribed Fire Act, that supports prescribed fire use across the state with specific training and certification requirements, Brevard County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in 1999 that recognizes the importance of prescribed fire use to achieve land management objectives in the County. This Resolution was likely influenced by the large wildfires that burned the prior year across the county. In 1998 alone, 34,000 acres burned in wildfires and this was mostly due in part to fire suppression. Prescribed fire use on EEL properties was possible through the passing of this Resolution and gained

Success stories highlight regional wildland fire accomplishments that support implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in the Southeast. The stories demonstrate how the Southeast is improving its "fire resiliency" through technology, education and outreach, forest management, collaboration, and more. Success stories also serve as a model for other communities to follow.

public support from the wildfire prevention aspects prescribed fire imparts in addition to its other conservation benefits.

The EEL Program regularly utilizes prescribed fire to achieve specific land management objectives. A four yearlong habitat restoration and burning operation improved scrub habitat at the Helen and Allan Cruickshank Sanctuary. This restoration project completely restored the Scrub Jay population on this property from 0 to over 30 individuals and 6 family groups in a four year period. The burning at Coconut Point Sanctuary has created habitat for the threatened Florida scrub jay and the burning at Micco Scrub Sanctuary has supported gopher tortoise habitat while also improving saw palmetto and wiregrass health. Prescribed fire maintains the xeric oak forest at the Enchanted Forest and also supported invasive species removal and enhanced habitat to the threatened indigo snake. The EEL Fire Management Manual, provided by The Nature Conservancy, provides an overview of how prescribed fire impacts the environment, supports specific ecological communities and endangered or threatened species, and outlines the steps to restoring certain ecological communities with prescribed fire and what to expect through the process-an educational aspect important for public support.

Additional Information:

EEL: <http://www.brevardcounty.us/EELProgram/LandManagement>

EEL Fire Management Manual: <http://www.brevardcounty.us/docs/eel-documents/eel-fire-manual.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Prescribed Fire Use at EEL: <http://www.brevardcounty.us/EELProgram/EELProgramEducation/PrescribedFire#>

EEL Prescribed Fire Brochure: <http://www.brevardcounty.us/docs/eel-documents/prescribed-fire-brochure.pdf?sfvrsn=3>

Contact: eel@brevardparks.com

Partners: Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, Brevard County Board of County Commissioners, and other federal, state, and local agencies



Southern Regional
Extension Forestry

