



News Release

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ARRA GRANTS FUND FORESTRY JOBS AND LAND MANAGEMENT

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) has hired 27 new, temporary employees to conduct forestry work generated by a \$2.24 million grant that is part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Georgia Stewardship Revisit Prescribed Burn grant is one of five ARRA forestry grant projects beginning in Georgia. It will help Georgia forest landowners better manage their property through the use of prescribed fire.

"This workforce of foresters and forestry technicians will be making site evaluations for landowners who have received Forest Stewardship plans," said Ken Wilt, Program Manager. "In November, these temporary employees received special Prescribed Fire Certification training in burning techniques, fire weather, safety, and regulations. They are well equipped to assist Georgia landowners with site evaluations and prescribed burning of some 50,000 acres."

The Georgia Stewardship Revisit Prescribed Burn grant enables GFC foresters to revisit more than 5,000 landowners enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) in Georgia. Certified Forest Stewards manage their forest land according to specific plans mapped by GFC's FSP Professionals. The purpose of the revisit is to ascertain each landowner's progress implementing prescribed fire and other forest management recommendations. Prescribed fire is a forest management tool used to prepare land for planting, attract wildlife, improve aesthetics, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, such as the devastating south Georgia fires of 2007.

Funding for Georgia's five forestry grant projects was provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working to implement provisions of the Recovery Act to put Americans back to work and rejuvenate the nation's economy. The Recovery Act provided USDA with nearly \$28 billion in funding; of that, \$1.15 billion has been allocated to the Forest Service for project work in forest restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, construction and maintenance of facilities, trails and roads, green energy projects, and grants to states, tribes, and private landowners.

For more information about GFC-administered ARRA grants, visit GaTrees.org or call 1-800-GA-TREES.

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