



News Release

For more information, contact:

Sharon Dolliver

P: 478-751-3535

dolliver@gfc.state.ga.us

gatrees.org

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LOCAL WHEAT FARMERS CONFRONT FIRE THREAT

Drought conditions in southwest Georgia are prompting wheat farmers to take extra precautions against fire during an already busy time of year.

"This is the time of year when farmers are harvesting their wheat crops and replanting," said Alan Dozier, Chief of Protection at the Georgia Forestry Commission. "That means hot machinery bearings on dry straw and the burning of seed or fertilizer bags have the potential for causing runaway fires. Extra caution should be taken to prevent the loss of equipment, crops, property and lives from escaped fires."

The GFC has responded to a rash of farm-related wildfires in recent weeks, according to Dozier. Farmers who keep tractors and harrows on site have reported success in containing unexpected blazes and machinery operators should be capable of calling for quick assistance if fire breaks out.

"We know farmers need every daylight hour to get the crops in," said Dozier, "and burning wheat stubble is a fast and effective practice. Planning for the possibility of fire and knowing your limitations are important reminders during this dry and busy time of year."

Dozier recommends removing all harvesting machinery from fields before any planned burning is conducted and for emergency water supplies to be close at hand. Georgia Forestry Commission Rangers regularly fight wildfires and should be utilized for fires that get out of hand. For more information about safe burning practices contact your local GFC office or visit gatrees.org

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