



**SOUTHERN
Fire Exchange**
Uniting Fire Science and Natural Resource Management



SFE Fact Sheet 2012-1

Getting the Most from Online Fire Resources: Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science

Angela M. Reid

WHAT IS THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN FIRE SCIENCE?

The Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science (ESFS) is a web-based resource containing approximately 600 webpages of peer-reviewed fire science knowledge about the southern United States. Much of the information is equally applicable to other regions. Information is conveniently organized into seven categories: Fuels, Weather, and Fire Behavior; Fire Effects; Fire Ecology; Fire and People; Prescribed Fire; Smoke Management; and Wildfire. It was started in 2002, with the objectives that each page represent a synthesis of the most up-to-date scientific information on each topic, and that it be in a platform that could be regularly updated. The ESFS presents information through photos, graphics, and viewer-navigated text—where specific words or phrases are linked to other webpages that provide more information on the selected topic.

The ESFS is part of a larger information system called the Forest Encyclopedia Network (FEN), which provides peer-reviewed information on management, ecology, and social science of forest ecosystems. In addition to the ESFS, the FEN includes the Encyclopedia of Southern Appalachian Forest Ecosystems, Encyclopedia of Southern Forest Science, Encyclopedia of Southern Bioenergy Resources, and Encyclopedia of Forest Environmental Threats. The FEN project has been developed by the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station and Southern Regional Extension Forestry.

USING THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN FIRE SCIENCE

From the homepage of the Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science (Figure 1; www.forestencyclopedia.net/p/p4), you can navigate to each of the seven fire information categories. Each fire information category webpage (e.g., Fire Effects, Fire Ecology) has an overview of the topic as well as subsections. The best way to view these divisions is by using the navigation menu in the left-hand panel (Figure 1), in which topics can be expanded, collapsed, or selected.



Figure 1. The homepage of the Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science, with the navigation menu shown in the left-hand panel.

Exploring the webpages is easy with the use of viewer-navigated text (Figure 2). The user can left click on any underlined word to be taken to a new page with more information on that topic. If you are not ready to leave the current page, you can open a new tab or window by right-clicking on the underlined word. All literature citations are also included as viewer-navigated text, and clicking on them will open a new window providing the full citation.

TIPS AND TOOLS FOR USING THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN FIRE SCIENCE

The ESFS provides a large amount of information on many different pages, which can sometimes be overwhelming. If you are looking at the ESFS for the first time, clicking on the Help button (www.forestencyclopedia.net/h/h4) at the top of the blue left navigation bar or the top center of the page will provide general guides for using this resource. If you are looking for information on a specific topic, there are tools to help locate that information within the ESFS. Typing words into the box in the upper right-hand corner initi-



Figure 2. Right-clicking on any of the underlined words or phrases within the Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science will prompt the user to open a new tab or window to display the new information. Additionally, topics can be searched by typing words into the search box in the upper right-hand corner of the page or clicking on the word “Search” in the menu along the top of the page.

ates a simple search for those words across all the Encyclopedias, and returns a list of each page or image containing the words. Clicking the word “Search” in the menu along the very top of the page (Figure 2) provides more advanced search options. An advanced search is supposed to allow specific parameters to be set, including title, keywords, description, item type, author, and when the item was added. At this time, only some advanced search features work. You will get the best results by entering terms into the Search Text or Title boxes, keeping the other boxes blank, and unchecking all boxes under Item Type and Review Status. Additionally, the Indexes page allows the user to see the Table of Contents, as well as all figures and images, tables, and citations for the section they are currently in. The Indexes page can be reached by clicking on the word “Indexes” next to “Search” in the menu along the top of the page.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The FEN project, including the ESFS, will continue to be updated using a peer-reviewed system, similar to an electronic journal. Much of the initial information was entered in the ESFS by 2006, with some significant reviews and updating in 2008. Following these updates and the leaving of key leaders, the project has remained operational in its 2008 state with no new records or information being added. In 2011-12, the Encyclopedia was moved to a new USFS server and software platform.

Author

Angela M. Reid - Fire Ecology Specialist, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, Tallahassee, Florida
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visit www.southernfireexchange.org or email contactus@southernfireexchange.org.

