# 428 Years of Change in Forested Wetlands: an Accelerating Rollover

## Objectives -- Create fine-scale maps of: • Presettlement Vegetation

Pre-European Fire Regimes

Cecil Frost Landscape Fire Ecologist



1996 - 2005 Flash Density Map 10 kilometer grid

Jan 1, 1996 00:00:00 UTC To Dec 31, 2005 23:59:59 UTC





Mercator-Hondius map of 1606

PLATE I ISOPACH MAP OF PAMLIMARLE PEAT

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+'s mark corners of orthophotographic maps. Names of maps are in script letters. **Indian Fadeout** 

#### 1585 Indians devastated by introduced European diseases (Harriott 1590)

1700 (map of settlements) most Indians long gone, 115 yrs

1733 Moseley map – Indians displaced by planters. Only one remaining Indian town, on south side of Mattamuskeet

1791 Pettigrew mentions place called "Indian Town"

1808 Price-Strother map shows Lake Mattamuskeet ringed with plantations



Mercator-Hondius map of 1606







## Moseley 1733



1808



75 yrs later, 223 since 1585





**Stumpy Point** 





## Long Shoal River

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## Presettlement Fire Frequencies, Mainland Dare

Fire Frequency Class	Mean Fire Interval (years)	Estimated Historic Range of Variation (90% of Fires) (years)	ACRES	PERCENT
А	2	1-4	1,192	0.6
В	3	1-6	28,727	14.7
С	4	2-10	63,468	32.5
D	6	3-20	12,484	6.4
E	9	4-50 depending upon vegetation type and location in the landscape	21,993	11.3
F	25	10-100 depending upon vegetation type and location in the landscape	35,116	18.0
G	90	35-300+ depending on landscape26,position along the fire frequencygradient		13.5
Н	None	Nonflammable, tidal cypress- tupelo swamp	4,712	2.4
Water			1,239	0.6
		TOTAL	195,288	100

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1 06% 0 homas Sain 640 acres -By a Scale 100 pº to The seal of the se Bach Bay North Carolina Surveyed for Thomas Pain 640 Anes Land



## US 264 at drain to Pain's Bay

## Hyde soils, Pain's Bay



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**Piney Island** 

USMC



The last 11 pines on Piney Island



The Frying Pan 1982





## The Frying Pan

Sea level white cedar

1984





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## **PRESETTLEMENT FIRE FREQUENCIES – POCOSIN LAKES REGION**

Fire Frequency Class	Mean Fire Interval (years)	Historic Range of Variation (years)	Acres – Whole Region	% of Whole Region	Acres Burned Annually	Refuge Acres	Refuge Acres Burned annually
А	2	1-4	276	0.1%	138	0	0
В	3	2-7	13,879	2.7%	4,626	0	0
С	5	2-10	73,702	14.4%	14,740	5,553	1,111
D	8	5-20	88,794	17.4%	11.099	26,042	3,255
E	25+	10-90+ depending on location in the landscape	154,294	30.2%	6,171	56,017	2,241
F	70	35-300+	95,262	18.6%	1,361	17,391	248
G	Variable	Fire-free to light surface fires on margins	61,116	12.0%	~5,000	991	~81
Н	None	Wet cypress- gum swamp	21,245	4.2%	~0	1,602	~0
Ud	n.a.	Dredge spoil	1,840	0.4%	n.a.	350	n.a.
		TOTALS	510.408	100.0%	43,135	107,946	6,855







First Colony Farms peat mining office





Allen Road Fire April 1985

Western Road, looking west



# Synthesis of multiple kinds of evidence for mapping original fire regimes

### **BIOTIC** EVIDENCE

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- Fire frequency indicator species (proxies for fire frequency)
- Fire frequency indicator communities (proxies for fire frequency)
- Reduction in fire frequency by native grazers

#### LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

- Original fire compartment size
- Presence of fire barriers, fire pathways and fire filters

#### Presence of Landscape-scale Fire Frequency Gradients

- Topographic position of fire frequency indicator trees
- Effects of soil productivity on fire behavior (mediated by vegetation)
- Lightning generators, strike density and ignition records

#### **HISTORICAL** EVIDENCE

- Witness trees from early surveys
- Fire scar chronologies
- Vegetation types mentioned by early travelers or surveyors
- Herbarium records of fire frequency indicator species or communities
- Historical photos or paintings done in the presettlement landscape
- Historical references to use of fire by Native Americans
- Original Native American population centers
- Vegetation types on old aerial photos or topo maps.



## Atamasco lily response to fire –Hyde Co.



5 W Z K R LLE S 5 I N N Par 0\_ 0 WHITE CYPRESS TRIBUTARY /Dogwood Ridge C Y K Ei U TRIBUTAR 0 WASHINGTON CO 0 Run 2 Brights Ridge 4 TRIBUTAR SECOND Ridge K Plum Ridge Beech Ridge Н YD E PARK Chinqua Ridge 7 LEON LANDING () FIRST TRIBUTARY 0 5 PAVIS LANDING 7 Dak Ridge A2 ØR D F E L Lower Pungo School 1 0 0 P Pungo PO. MHITEDAK LANDING Grass Rida 4 E NDIAN LANDING LANDING PAK ABAQ P Arnolds Ridge AWYERSLANDING POPULAR CO PINET GROVE SP W A AV RRIFICK C Shallop Creek

Belhaven 1941





"We have for some time past seen fire-lights toward the New land, also the Little Lake, & to the southward. It had, night before last, got round to the Eastward, as far as the burnt grounds, & looked dreadful. It was met yesterday by a fire, which some body at the instigation of the Devil, had set out from Indian Town. I shall not attempt a full Description of the fire, & the Thunder & smoke that issued from it"

#### \_\_Charles Pettigrew letter to Nathaniel Allen, March 2, 1791







## Old lake rims – Phelps Lake











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#### TREES ALONG THE ALBEMARLE AND SCUPPERNONG UPLANDS



# Little Alligator south to Second Creek

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#### FIRE SHELTERED PENINSULAS ALONG THE ALLIGATOR RIVER





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#### INTERIOR PEATLANDS AND INCLUDED HARDWOOD FLATS



Newland, Washington County

NYBI





Coming into Belhaven mill



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+ soil pH & texture



#### PRESETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION OF PEATLAND VEGETATION OF THE SOUTHEASTERN U.S. ALONG MASTER GRADIENTS OF FIRE FREQUENCY AND DEPTH OF ORGANIC SOIL CELLS 1-32: MODERATELY FERTILE SITES

#### **FIRE FREQUENCY**

		1-3 YEARS	4-6 YRS	7-12 YRS	13-25 YRS	26-50 YRS	51-100 YRS	100-300 YRS	NEVER BURNED
O R G A N	Seasonally wet mineral soils ROW 1	Species-rich wet prairie with graminoids and grass-leaved forbs CELL 1	Species-rich wet prairie, with dwarf shrubs CELL 2	ANGL, ARGI, CLJA, ILGL, CYRA, CLMO, tree saplings CELL 3	Small ACRU, NYBI, LIST, PISE, PITA, PIEL, TAAS CELL 4	Dense ACRU, NYBI, TAAS, LIST, PISE, PITA, PIEL/ ARGI, Shrubs CELL 5	PITA, PIEL, TAAS, QUMI, PISE, ACRU, LIST/ sparse ARGI, ferns CELL 6	TADI, FRPE, LIST, ACRU, NYBI, QUMI other bottomland oaks/mesophytic herbs CELL 7	TADI, NYBI, FRPE, LIST, ACRU, bottom- land oaks CELL 8
I C M A T T E R D	Soils with thin organic layers, 10- 30 cm thick ROW 2	Wet prairie and bog graminoids and forbs, patches of ARGI, ANGL CELL 9	Dense canebrake CELL 10	Alternating canebrake and pocosin CELL 11	PISE, ACRU, PITA, PIEL, TAAS, LIST/ ARGI CELL 12	PISE, PITA, PIEL, TAAS, LIST, NYBI/ PEPA, MAVI CELL 13	PISE forest, PITA, PIEL, TAAS, bottomland hardwoods, bay forest CELL 14	TADI, NYBI, FRPE, LIST, PITA/ ACRU, FRCA/ Carex, swamp herbs CELL 15	TADI, NYAQ, NYBI/ ACRU, FRCA, ULAM/ swamp shrubs, herbs CELL 16
	Shallow histosols, 30-100 cm thick ROW 3	Open bog with dwarf shrubs, graminoids, pitcher plants, short cane, mosses CELL 17	Dense canebrake CELL 18	Alternating canebrake and pocosin CELL 19	PISE/ canebrake, alternating with PISE-ACRU tall pocosin CELL 20	Patch mosaic: PISE forest, ACRU forest, CHTH forest, bay forest with PEPA, MAVI CELL 21	Patch mosaic: CHTH forest, TADI/ACRU forest, PISE forest, NYBI forest, bay for. CELL 22	Extensive CHTH forest and patch mosaic as in Cell 22 CELL 23	TADI in wet swamps, cycling ACRU forest in peatlands (hypothetical) CELL 24
E P T H	Deep histosols, peat deeper than 1 m ROW 4	Open bog with low shrubs, pitcher plants, grasses and sedges CELL 25	Canebrake or Low pocosin with ANGL, and bog herbs CELL 26	Alternating canebrake and pocosin, or medium to tall pocosin CELL 27	Tall pocosin with PISE, GOLA, ACRU; PISE forest, bay forest, CHTH patch mosaic CELL 28	Patch mosaic of types seen in Cell 22 CELL 29	Extensive CHTH forests and patch mosaic of types seen in cell 22 CELL 30	Extensive old growth CHTH forests and patch mosaic of types in cell 22 CELL 31	TADI in wet swamps, cycling ACRU forest in peatlands (hypothetical) CELL 32

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANKS!

Wendy Stanton, FWS
Matt Howle, FWS
Bob Mickler
Stan Riggs

**Painting Phillip Juras**