



# SOUTHERN Fire Exchange Annual Report



JOINT  
FIRE SCIENCE  
PROGRAM

# 2015



David Godwin



# Program Accomplishments

The Southern Fire Exchange (SFE) celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015 and spent the year developing new partnerships, planning and conducting events, and successfully completing a three year refunding proposal. As our audiences and partners expanded, so have our opportunities to reach fire and natural resource managers in the Southeast. In addition, we welcomed new members to our Advisory Board and Leadership Team, with the goal of improving programming and leveraging local connections across the region.

## Southern Fire Exchange Website A Growing Resource for Fire Science

In 2015, the SFE website ([www.southernfireexchange.org](http://www.southernfireexchange.org)) received almost 7,000 visitors—an increase from 6,396 visitors in 2014—who spent an average of 2:49 minutes on the website and viewed an average of 3 webpages. About 44% of the 2015 visitors have been to the SFE website more than once. In addition to accessing SFE content, about 1 in 4 website visitors then accessed external links to partner organization websites, event pages, news articles, or other fire-related items.

## Fire Lines Electronic Newsletter Keeping the Fire Community Informed

In addition to providing fire news and upcoming events, the bimonthly SFE *Fire Lines* newsletter is unique in that each issue provides articles that summarize fire research results relevant to the Southeast. The newsletter distribution list now includes over 1,500 fire managers, scientists, landowners, community members, and students—an increase of 40% from 2014. The newsletter is also forwarded by several SFE partners to their contact lists and hard copies are distributed at events.

*"You guys do such a great job with the newsletter. I always look forward to receiving it and always read it word-for-word." —SFE Email List Member*

## Fire Ecology Database Helping the Fire Community Find Information

The Tall Timbers Research Station E.V. Komarek Fire Ecology Database contains over 31,600 citations for fire science and research literature. The online search tool is hosted on the FRAMES website and is searchable by several criteria including region, topic, and year. In 2015, more than 1,000 new citations were added to the database, and 20,331 unique visitors accessed database record pages on the FRAMES website. An online survey is currently underway to determine use of and potential improvements to the database.



## Webinars and Videos

### Reaching a Broad Audience

In 2015, the SFE hosted seven webinars on topics including birds and fire, LANDFIRE, fire weather, and invasive species. Over 400 participants joined the webinars, and for those who completed the post-webinars evaluations, 90% were satisfied with the webinar and almost 60% reported that the webinar “very much” increased their understanding of the topic. The archived webinar presentations on YouTube are also a popular resource, receiving more than 600 views by the end of the year. In addition, the SFE played a key role in establishing a distance option to broaden participation in a summit on prescribed fire communications and later published YouTube videos of each summit presentation in an effort to share this information with even more managers, landowners, and researchers.

## Field Tours and Workshops

### Uniting Fire Science and Natural Resource Management

Working with existing and new partners, the SFE organized or presented at six field tours and workshops reaching at least 330 managers, researchers, students, and private landowners. These events continue to receive positive reviews by participants, with most survey respondents indicating they were satisfied or would recommend future SFE workshops or field tours to their colleagues. An average of 94% of respondents reported an increase in their understanding of the topic, and many respondents provided ideas about how they will use the information they learned.

## Partner Presentations

### Sharing Research and Resources

From the beginning, the SFE recognized that collaborating with Prescribed Fire Councils (PFC) and other partner organizations is key to our goal of reaching fire managers in the Southeast. In 2015, SFE provided updates and research highlights at 20 organizational meetings in 8 states, reaching over 1,600 people. Surveys conducted at four PFC meetings show that respondents increased their understanding of the topic presented (88%) and of how research findings can be used in fire management activities (88%). In addition, respondents thought the presentation provided useful information (87%) and covered topics that addressed their fire information needs (84%). Respondents recommend having SFE presentations at future events (average rating of 8.6 on scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is definitely recommend).

*“This is exactly the type of information that should be at a PFC meeting.”*  
—PFC Meeting Participant

## Researcher and Manager Collaborations

### Making Research Relevant

The SFE continues to cultivate relationships between researchers and managers at events throughout the year. These events provide an opportunity for researchers to share their findings with new audiences, and for managers to provide feedback, ask questions, and discuss the application of results. We also continue to solicit and summarize suggestions from the southern fire community for future research needs. In 2015, SFE discussions with state fire and air quality managers, as well as EPA representatives, ultimately led to a regional funding opportunity from the Joint Fire Science Program designed to improve prescribed fire tracking.

*“It is very important to promote this link between science and land management professions.”* —SFE Program Participant

*“It’s good to hear of specific fire-related research that is out there. We’re too busy to go out and seek it out all the time. Good to bring it to us!”*  
—SFE Program Participant

# The Source for Fire Science Information in the South

[www.southernfireexchange.org](http://www.southernfireexchange.org)

[contactus@southernfireexchange.org](mailto:contactus@southernfireexchange.org)



**SOUTHERN  
Fire Exchange**

## Who We Are

The Southern Fire Exchange (SFE) is a regional wildland fire science communication program funded by the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) and administered by a collaborative team from the University of Florida, North Carolina State University, Tall Timbers Research Station, and the Southern Research Station of the US Forest Service.

## Our Mission

To increase the availability and application of fire science information for natural resource management, and to serve as a conduit for fire managers to share new research needs with the research community.

## How We're Unique

In a region with many fire-related organizations, partnerships, and advocacy groups, the SFE maintains the position of an unbiased broker of fire science information and does not advocate or lobby for specific management outcomes. Instead, we are committed to ensuring that the most relevant fire science is available to natural resource managers.

## Fire Science Exchange Network

As a member of the JFSP Fire Science Exchange Network, the SFE supports natural resource managers and researchers in the “yellow pine” regions of the southern U.S. We work closely with the Oak Woodlands and Forests Fire Consortium and the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists (CAFMS) to share information and resources across state and ecosystem boundaries in the region.



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