

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Benefits of Prescribed Fire

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature

The ridge we hiked along in Pisgah National Forest was open, dry, and on this day, hot. The area had recently experienced a fire and one of the benefits was the explosion of mountain golden heather, a threatened plant adapted to periodic fire.

As this summer's headlines from the west testify, wildfires get plenty of attention and can be incredibly destructive, but prescribed burning is an important tool to both manage our natural landscapes, and prevent catastrophic wildfires. The Forest Service has defined prescribed burning as fire applied in a skillful manner, under exacting weather conditions, in a definite place, to achieve specific results.

For those looking to learn more about prescribed fire including its role in land management and how it's applied, the Forest Service has just updated their book *Introduction to Prescribed Fire in Southern Ecosystems*, first published in 1966.

The publication includes an overview of the history and ecology of fire and reasons for using prescribed fire to manage forests and grasslands in the South, as well as information on firing techniques, planning a prescribed burn, and coordinating a burn effort.

For more information about the book, contact the Forest Service's Southern Research Station in Asheville at 828/257-4832.

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