



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:  
January 26, 2015

Contact:  
Lisa Parker, 251-690-2505  
Lisa.A.Parker@usace.army.mil

## Prescribed Burning of Timberlands Underway at West Point Project

MOBILE, Ala.-- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mobile District at West Point Project announced today that prescribed burning of selected timber stands around the reservoir is underway. Each winter, USACE works with Forestry Commissions in both Alabama and Georgia using controlled burning to improve wildlife habitat on the public property surrounding the reservoir.

A total of 2,500 plus acres of public land are included in USACEs' burning plan for 2015 between the months of January and April. Areas in the burn plan for 2015 include the Project Management Office, R. Shaefer Heard Day Use Park and Campground, Maple Creek, Jackson Creek, Yellowjacket Creek, Cater Creek, Whitetail Ridge and Holiday Campground, Stateline, Oakland, Amity Campground, West Lake and Hardley Creek.

"Prescribed fire is an important forest management tool. Many species and ecosystems require fire periodically to ensure their survival. The overall purpose of the prescribed burns is to maintain the land's ecological integrity. For many of these ecosystems, it's not a matter of "if" the land will burn, but rather "when." We like to choose "when", said Lisa Parker, Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Mobile District.

USACE conducts prescribed burning for a number of reasons. Fire removes accumulated fuels, such as pine straw, leaves and dead, dry vegetation, thus reducing the risk of an intense wildfire. Prescribed fires improve natural forest conditions by promoting seed germination, flowering, or sprouting of native plants. Burning of the forest and under story plants improves the forage quality and quantity for wildlife, such as deer, turkeys, and quail and other bird species. New shrub, herb, and grass sprouts capture the quick flush of nutrients into the soil after a fire and are often more nutritious and palatable than older plants. Furthermore, prescribed burning helps to control various pests such as ticks and pine beetles.

"We are very careful to avoid impacting adjacent neighborhoods with smoke from our fires. It's understandable that people sometimes get upset when there is smoke in the air, especially if they don't know the reason for the fire. That's why we're trying to get the word out about our prescribed burning program. Dealing with a little bit of smoke now is definitely better than trying to control a raging wildfire later," said Parker.

For more specific information on this topic or any other issue related to the management of West Point Project, please contact the Project Management Office at 706-645-2937, or visit the West Point Lake website at <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/Recreation/WestPointLake.aspx>

--30--