Red Flag Fire Alert
from the SC Forestry Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Red Flag Fire Alert issued statewide, effective immediately

SCFC urges vigilance when burning, making notification, taking proper precautions

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission is issuing a statewide Red Flag Fire Alert, effective immediately.

The alert is being issued to discourage people from burning outdoors when weather conditions present an elevated risk of wildfire. The weather forecast this weekend, including today, calls for stronger-than-normal winds and low relative humidity across much of the state, creating the potential for outdoor fires to escape easily and spread rapidly.

"With the dry weather we have experienced lately, and predicted relative humidity values in some areas lower than 25% and winds gusting above 15 miles per hour, we strongly encourage everyone to postpone their outdoor burning until conditions improve early next week," said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. "We have not gotten much significant rainfall in the last few weeks, and fuels are very dry, so any outdoor fire could escape easily."

Did you know…?

A Forestry Commission Red Flag Fire Alert is sometimes confused with a National Weather Service Red Flag Warning. The NWS Warning is issued when its forecast includes any two of the following conditions: sustained wind speeds in excess of 20 mph; significant wind shifts; relative humidity of 25% or lower; and high lightning potential.

An astounding 98 percent of all wildland fires are caused by human activities, and escaped debris burns are responsible for nearly 50 percent of them. South Carolina Forestry Commission firefighters respond to an average of 2,500 wildland fires every year, burning about 18,000 acres annually.

A Red Flag Fire Alert does not prohibit outdoor burning, provided that all other state and local regulations are followed, but the Forestry Commission strongly encourages citizens to voluntarily postpone any such burning until the alert is lifted. However, a Red Flag Fire Alert does trigger certain county or local ordinances that restrict outdoor fires, so residents should contact their local fire departments to check whether such restrictions apply in their areas.

The alert will remain in effect until lifted by the Commission, whose fire managers will continuously monitor the situation.

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As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 13.6 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.