

Sunset Public Hearing Questions for  
**Southeast Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact**  
Created by Section 11-4-501, *Tennessee Code Annotated*  
(Sunset termination June 2017)

**1. Provide a brief introduction to the Southeast Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact, including information about its purpose, statutory duties, staff, and administrative attachment.**

*The purpose of this compact is to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires in the Southeastern region of the United States by the development of integrated forest fire plans, by the maintenance of adequate forest fire fighting services by the member states, by providing for mutual aid in fighting forest fires among the compacting states of the region and with states which are party to other Regional Forest Fire Protection compacts or agreements, and for more adequate forest protection. The State Forester is charged with the execution of the provisions of the compact. Each State Forester of member states rotate duties as chair. There is no staff. The Southeast Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact (SIFFFPC) was created on July 27, 1954 to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires in the Southeast region of the United States. It was developed following resource shortages during WWII and devastating forest fires in the early 1950's. There was a general acceptance that states could not muster sufficient resources to meet their own need in times of high fire activity. The Compact allows member states to develop and use fire plans that are coordinated with other member states, that each state will maintain adequate fire resources and will make those resources available to member states as well as to members of other Compacts.*

**2. What other states have entered into the compact with Tennessee? Have any of the ten states enumerated in Article II of the compact as eligible states not entered into the compact? If so, which ones and what is known of their reasons for not entering into the compact?**

*The compact includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. All states enumerated in Article II are current members; however West Virginia does not actively participate in the SIFFFPC as they are also members of the Mid-Atlantic Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact with which it has fire issues more in common. Virginia also has dual membership however it is an active participant in the SIFFFPC.*

**3. Have any party states withdrawn from the compact or filed notice of their intentions to withdraw under the provisions of Article IX? If so, which states and what were their stated reasons for withdrawing?**

*No states have withdrawn from the compact or filed notice of their intentions to withdraw.*

**4. How is the compact funded? What were the compact’s revenues (by source) and expenditures (by object code) for fiscal years 2015 and 2016? What is the cost to Tennessee for the state to participate in the compact? What types of expenses are involved?**

*There are no operational costs resulting from membership in the Compact. The only costs involved are incurred when a state receiving firefighting resources from another state must reimburse the states that sent the resources.*

*During the activation of the compact, the U.S. Forest Service will temporarily hire a Compact Coordinator at the USFS Southern Area Coordination Center. When fire activity decreases and the receiving state releases resources obtained through the Compact, the Coordinator is released from duty also. The Compact Coordinator position may only be filled for 1 to 2 months per year depending upon fire activity.*

*There are no revenues or expenditures resulting from the formation of the compact. Costs involved in compact participation are solely for reimbursement to a ‘sending state’ for fire suppression resources used by a ‘receiving state’.*

**5. Describe the extent of assistance given by Tennessee to other member states and/or other regional compacts during the last five fiscal years. How much has Tennessee received in compensation for this assistance?**

*Since 2011 The Division of Forestry has assigned 136 firefighters to compact fire duty in order to assist other states. Tennessee has received \$398,384.07 in compensation for the assistance it provided.*

*\*See chart on next page*

<b>Year</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Income/ Reimbursement</b>
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2012	North Carolina	46 personnel 20 engines 4 bulldozers	June 25 – August 9, 2011	\$22,796.46
	Georgia	69 personnel 13 engines 12 bulldozers	June 25 – August 9, 2011	\$248,564.61
2013	None			
2014	None			
2015	None			
2016	Oklahoma	8 personnel 4 engines	February 22 –March 8, 2016	\$127,023.00
	Oklahoma	13 personnel 4 engines 4 bulldozers	April 7 - April 22, 2016	
Total:				\$398,384.07

**6. Describe the extent of assistance received by Tennessee from other member states and/or other regional compacts during the last five fiscal years. How much has Tennessee paid in compensation for this assistance?**

*Tennessee has been fortunate to not have to call on compact member states for assistance in the last 5 fiscal years and as a result have not had to reimburse any sending states for their assistance.*

**7. How many times have member states' compact administrators met during fiscal year 2015 and 2016? What states were represented at those meetings? Are minutes of these meetings kept? Who keeps the official minutes? How much per diem or travel reimbursement was associated with this activity?**

*The administrators met twice during fiscal year 2015 and 2016. All states were represented at the meetings. The minutes for these meetings are recorded and*

*distributed by the Chair of the Compact Group. No travel was reimbursed for this activity.*

**8. Has Tennessee formulated and put into effect a forest fire plan for the state as required by Article III of the compact? How is that plan integrated into the regional fire plan?**

*Yes. Integration occurs in the Southern Interagency Mobilization Guide. The Guide includes contact names and phone numbers as well as resources available for Compact assignments. It is revised annually and submitted for inclusion in the regional plan.*

**9. Have the compact administrators formulated and maintained a regional forest fire plan for the member states as required by Article III of the compact? When and under what circumstances the plan was last revised?**

*Yes. It is revised annually, and any work on the plan must be finalized by December 1<sup>st</sup>. It is distributed January 1<sup>st</sup>.*

**10. Has an advisory committee been established as required by Article III of the compact and by Section 11-4-503, Tennessee Code Annotated? No If so, please provide a list of current advisory committee members and describe how membership complies with Section 11-4-503, Tennessee Code Annotated. Please list the members of the advisory committee and indicate who appointed each member.**

*The advisory committee has been inactive since 1990.*

**11. On what dates has the advisory committee met during fiscal years 2015 and 2016? How many members were present at each meeting? What were the travel expenses associated with this activity? If the advisory committee has not met during the last two fiscal years, when did this committee last meet?**

*N/A*

**12. Have any rules and regulations been promulgated to carry out the purposes of the compact? If rules have been promulgated, please cite the reference.**

*No rules and regulations have promulgated to carry out the purposes of the compact.*

**13. What reports are prepared in conjunction with the operations and activities of the compact? Who receives the reports? Attach copies of any reports issued during fiscal year 2015 and 2016.**

*A Southern States Compact Report; a combined group of Southeastern and Southern Compacts, is prepared annually. The member states' State Foresters receive the reports and they are also posted on the Southern Group of State Foresters website.*

**14. Are there any performance measures, indicators or standards by which the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan can be measured? If performance indicators have been established, how well has the plan performed?**

*The compact itself does not have any performance measures as it is an agreement between states.*

**15. Describe any items related to the compact that require legislative attention as well as your proposed legislative changes.**

*There are no items being considered at this time.*

**16. Should Tennessee's participation in the compact be continued? To what extent and in what ways would the absence of the compact affect the public health, safety or welfare?**

*Yes, Tennessee should continue to participate in this compact. If however, Tennessee were to remove our membership from this compact we would in turn have a greater risk to our public and private property, the lives of our citizenry, and the safety of all firefighters in this state. The purpose of the compact being an agreement for out-of-state resources to help fight wildfires when we otherwise could not appropriately address such large threats with existing resources. As such, we are assured of help if we needed it at no recurring cost to Tennessee, unless we used out-of-state resources to combat forest or other wildfires.*

**17. Please list all compact programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance and, therefore are required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Include the amount of federal funding received by program/activity.**

*Not applicable*

If the compact does receive federal assistance, please answer questions 18 through 25. If the compact does not receive federal assistance, proceed directly to question 24.

18. Does your compact prepare a Title VI plan? If yes, please provide a copy of the most recent plan.

19. Does your compact have a Title VI coordinator? If yes, please provide the Title VI coordinator's name and phone number and a brief description of his/her duties. If not, provide the name and phone number of the person responsible for dealing with Title VI issues.

20. To which state or federal agency (if any) does your compact report concerning Title VI? Please describe the information your compact submits to the state or federal government and/or provide a copy of the most recent report submitted.

21. Describe your compact's actions to ensure that compact staff and clients/program participants understand the requirements of Title VI.

22. Describe your compact's actions to ensure it is meeting Title VI requirements. Specifically, describe any compact monitoring or tracking activities related to Title VI, and how frequently these activities occur.

23. Please describe the compact's procedures for handling Title VI complaints. Has your compact received any Title VI-related complaints during the past two years? If yes, please describe each complaint, how each complaint was investigated, and how each complaint was resolved (or, if not yet resolved, the complaint's current status).

24. Please provide a breakdown of current compact staff by title, ethnicity, and gender.

*There is no compact staff.*

25. Please list all compact contracts, detailing each contractor, the services provided, the amount of the contract, and the ethnicity of the contractor/business owner.

*None*



**2016 South Central and Southeastern Joint Compacts'  
Meeting  
Mobile, Alabama  
June 15, 2016**

**Southern States Compact Report  
June 2015 – May 2016**

## Overview

Overall during 2015 and the first part of 2016 most of the region has seen well timed precipitation events that have reduced wildfire occurrence and especially fire size, the main exception being Oklahoma and Texas.

For calendar year 2015, the Southern Area had 86% of the ten year average in fire numbers, but only 38% of the ten year average of acres was burned.

For CY 2015:

- Nationally NICC reported 68,151 wildfires which is between the five and ten year average.
- Nationally 10.13 million acres burned in wildfires in 2015 which is the highest annual total ever recorded. The ten year average is 6.99 million acres.
- The Southern Area's wildfire totals were 46% of the nation's total and accounted for 6% of the total acres.
- The Southern Area accounted for 26 percent of the significant (209 reported) fires in the nation.
- State and private jurisdiction fires accounted for 80 percent of the total fires in the nation and 27 percent of the acres burned in 2015.
- 51% of the human caused fire in the nation occurred in the Southern Area.

## Compact Dispatches

On February 19, State Forester George Geissler requested that the South Central Forest Fire Compact be activated due to the fire situation in Oklahoma and forecasted weather. It was opened on that date and Resource Orders were received the next day for the Oklahoma Winter Fires 2016 Incident.

- Deployed resources to East Central Oklahoma for prepositioning were:
  - Arkansas- 1 Taskforce Leader and 2 dozers
  - Tennessee- 2 engines
- Deployed resources to Northeast Oklahoma for prepositioning were:
  - Arkansas- 1 Taskforce Leader and 2 dozers
  - Tennessee- 2 engines
- All these resources stayed for a complete 14-day assignment.

On March 23rd, the Anderson Creek Fire started with relative humidity readings in the single digits and winds sustained at 35-40 mph with gusts near 50. The fire quickly burned into the State of Kansas. A 35 person Type 2 IMT from the Texas A&M Forest Service was dispatched to the Oklahoma side of the fire for 1 week. Final fire size was 367,740 acres with over 88,000 acres being in Oklahoma.

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, the 350 Complex Fire began with extreme weather conditions present. A 34 person Type 2 IMT from the Texas A&M Forest Service was dispatched to the fire along with the other following compact resources:

- Louisiana- 1 Division Supervisor, 3 dozers
- Tennessee- 1 Task Force Leader, 4 engines, 2 dozers
- Kentucky- 2 engines
- Alabama- 1 Division Supervisor, 1 Task Force Leader, 2 engines
- Arkansas- 3 dozers, 1 Strike Team Leader

Final fire size was 57,167 acres. The resources were deployed for seven to twelve days.

An Air Operations Branch Director from the Florida Forest Service was also dispatched to the Oklahoma Winter Fires 2016 Incident during early April to assist in aircraft coordination

The extreme fire conditions lessened toward the end of April and the South Central Forest Fire Compact closed on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Total Deployed Personnel</b>
Alabama	6
Arkansas	10
Florida	1
Kentucky	4
Louisiana	7
Tennessee	21
Texas	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>

### **Non Compact Resource Dispatches**

Although Compact resources were not used this past year in Texas, the Southern States did provide resources to the Texas A&M Forest Service through the national system. Fifteen overhead positions from various southern states were deployed during the middle of August to assist with the Texas Summer Initial Attack Incident. In mid-October twelve Georgia Forestry Commission tractor plow units with overhead were dispatched to the same incident. Total southern state personnel assigned was 68.

In addition, 22 southern state personnel were dispatched to the Hidden Pines Fire.

<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Total Deployed Personnel</b>
Arkansas	3
Florida	42
Georgia	30
Mississippi	2

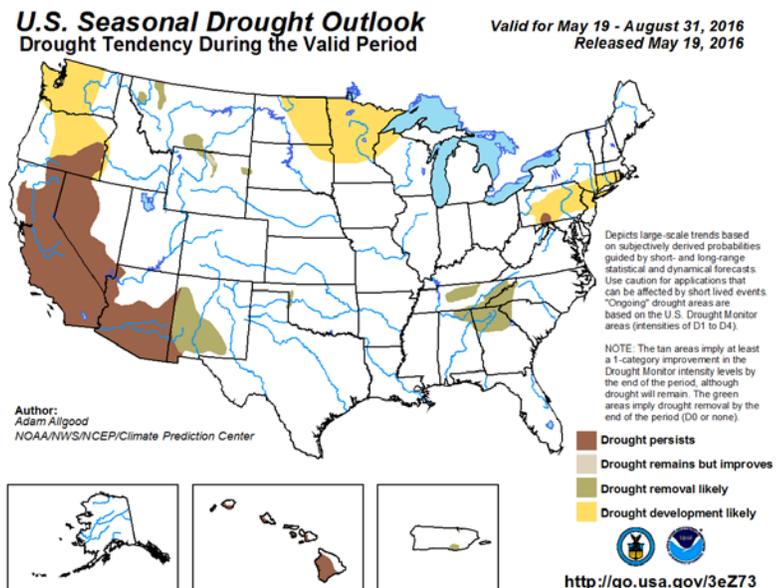
North Carolina	2
Oklahoma	1
South Carolina	8
Virginia	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>

## Alliance of Forest Fire Compacts (AFFC)

- The 2016 annual meeting will be at the Southern Area Coordination Center in Atlanta, October 4th & 5<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome to attend.
- An AFFC website has been created that gives information about all the compacts. It is located at: <http://affcompacts.org/>
  - It has the capability for the Compact Coordinators to query one another to locate needed resources.
- There has been proposed legislation submitted for mutual-aid clarification for inter-compact resource exchange.
  - Would allow exchange of resources between all compacts.
  - Addresses tort liability issues for those compacts that don't have the appropriate language in their legislation.
- New Mexico joined the Great Plains Forest Fire Compact this past year.

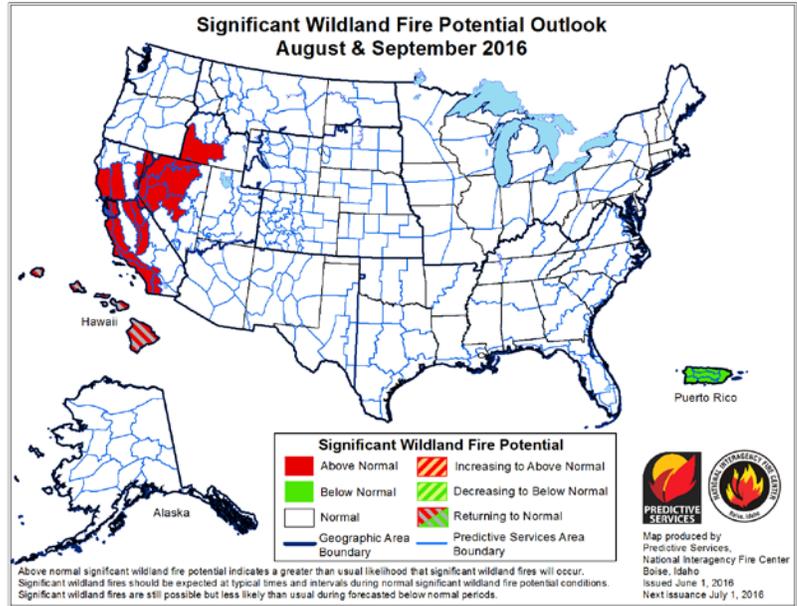
## Fire Potential Forecast

- Below normal significant wildland fire potential will be widespread across the western portions of the Area, and Puerto Rico through June before returning to normal for the remainder of the Outlook period.
- A short term drought area has emerged from the Tennessee Valley south into northern Alabama and Georgia. This is a likely indicator of the drier trend that will eventually become more apparent within the Southern Area into summer and then into fall.
- While the summer months are expected to produce a mosaic of typical wetter areas across the South, there will be areas that will trend drier. Any prolonged or



especially intense drying from tropical subsidence during the tropical storm season could produce a small regional area of enhanced fire potential.

- Expect a mosaic of wetter and drier-than-normal rain anomalies that should keep wildfire risks at least predominantly average over the summer. From late summer into the fall is when the below average rain trend is expected to emerge, and with it periods of higher fire potential.
- Pending tropical activity, expectations are for increasing fire potential and building drought as the year progresses.



## Atlantic Hurricane Forecast for 2016

NOAA's 2016 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook indicates that a near-normal hurricane season is most likely. The Atlantic hurricane region includes the North Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico.

Two sources of uncertainty for this outlook are the rate at which the current El Niño impacts dissipate, and the rate at which La Niña subsequently develops and intensifies. La Niña favors a more active hurricane season, and the Climate Prediction Center currently predicts about a 70% chance of La Niña during the peak months (August-October) of the hurricane season.

This is a more challenging hurricane season outlook than most because it is difficult to determine whether there will be reinforcing or competing climate influences on tropical storm development. The outlook calls for a 70% probability for each of the following ranges of activity during the 2016 hurricane season:

- 10-16 Named Storms, which includes Alex in January
- 4-8 Hurricanes, which includes Alex in January
- 1-4 Major Hurricanes

These expected ranges are centered near the 1981-2010 seasonal averages of 12 named storms, 6 hurricanes, and 3 major hurricanes.

Probabilities for at least one major (Category 3-4-5) hurricane landfall on each of the following coastal areas:

- 1) Entire U.S. coastline - 50% (average for last century is 52%)
- 2) U.S. East Coast Including Peninsula of Florida - 30% (average for last century is 31%)
- 3) Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle westward to Brownsville - 29% (average for last century is 30%)