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## Prescribed Burn Completed at Petit Jean State Park to Improve Wildfire Safety

**LITTLE ROCK, ARK.** – On Friday, March 9, officials with Arkansas State Parks and the Agriculture Department’s Forestry Commission completed a 170-acre prescribed burn at Petit Jean Mountain State Park. The burn improved wildfire safety along Red Bluff Drive on the west side of the mountain. Prescribed fire is used by private, state, and federal agencies to accomplish various management goals including added wildfire safety, wildlife habitat improvement, renewed seedling growth, and more.

The dry forest floor fuels removed today through the application of prescribed fire makes the Red Bluff Drive area and the this area of Petit Jean State Park safer from wildfire,” says Joe Buckley, Park Superintendent. “Our residents and visitors, historic and cultural sites, campgrounds, cabins, Mather Lodge and trails, and other public spaces are at risk when wildfires threaten the mountain and surrounding areas. Prescribed burning is one of the most effective and economical way to protect these sites.”

Petit Jean State Park has been threatened by two large wildfires in the last two decades, first in 2000 and again in 2012. In both situations, the prescribed burn site on Red Bluff Drive was exposed to flames beneath the bluff. Because fuels were reduced today, flames would burn with less intensity through the area in the event of another wildfire. Today’s prescribed fire also improved wildlife habitat for the park, especially for species including quail, turkey, and white-tailed deer. Learn more about the benefits of prescribed fire, [here](#).

“Arkansas has some of the best partnerships across the south when it comes to expert knowledge and experience in the application of prescribed fire as a land management tool,” said State Forester Joe Fox. “Through our private, state, and federal partners we improve the safety and health of our forests and grasslands with prescribed fire. Prescribed burn plans and voluntary smoke management guidelines are used by trained professionals each year to ensure we have defensible areas from wildfires, thriving wildlife habitat, new seedling growth, and other benefits.”

Last year, landowners and agencies applied prescribed fire to 222,375 acres across Arkansas. Residents can find prescribed burns reported to the AAD Dispatch Center for private, state, and federal land, [here](#). Find prescribed burns planned for the Ouachita National Forest, [here](#). Find prescribed burns planned for the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest, [here](#). Agencies that frequently use prescribed fire as a management tool include AAD’s Arkansas Forestry Commission, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, the Arkansas National Guard at Camp Robinson and Fort Chaffee, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, and others.

The AFC is an agency of the Arkansas Agriculture Department. The mission of the AFC is to protect Arkansas’s forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans. Visit [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.aad.arkansas.gov).

