



## WHY WE BURN

**Knight-Ridder Washington Bureau-July 6, 1996 Headline:** “It seems Smokey Bear was wrong! Sub-head: “As it turns out, America’s forests need to burn to remain healthy and to be free of destructive wildfires.”

1. Fire is a natural process in many plant and forest communities. Removing fire from these has the same results as taking rain out of a rain forest. Plants and animals that depend on fire are lost.
2. Frequent fires remove the build-up of excess dead, flammable plant material that can result in destructive wildfires when the woods ignite from a lightning strike or a careless match.
3. Prescribed burning recycles nutrients back into the soil that supports new growth.
4. Fire dependent species, like longleaf pine, are choked as seedlings by competing species that are naturally neutralized by fire.
5. Frequent fires maintain the open, park-like condition in pine forests that early explorers and settlers traveled through with ease.
6. Prescribed fires maintain the scenic beauty of the landscape, because many plant species depend upon fire to trigger the setting of blooms and seeds for the continuation of the species.
7. Frequent fire maintains plant and animal diversity in the landscape, enhancing habitats so that the land is able to support healthy plant and animal populations. There is no real management substitute for frequent fire.
8. Seeing smoke from a prescribed burn means there is good land management and stewardship going on.
9. Prescribed burning helps prepare sites for planting new forests, and helps manage pasture and range lands.
10. Prescribed fire helps prevent the loss of property and protects Florida’s timberland values, especially in the urban/wildland interface.

**PRESCRIBED BURNING ... KEEPING FLORIDA’S FORESTS HEALTHY  
AND WILDFIRE FREE**