Print Form

COUNTY DEPARTMENT AGENDA REQUEST

Department/Division: Fire & Emergency Services

Department Head: M. Allen McCullough

Presenter, if needed: McCullough/Bartlett

Preferred Meeting Date: Thursday, May 22, 2008

Wording for the Agenda:

Resolution from the BOC to support the Georgia Wildlife Federation and the use of prescribed fire for multiple ecological and economic benefits to the public.

Background/History/Details:

There are currently 132 counties in the state that have resolutions supporting the use of prescribed fires to keep forested land healthy and productive, resulting in clean water, clean air, jobs, improved wildlife habitat, and recreational activities. In addition, prescribed fire can reduce the build up of unnatural fuel loads reducing the threat of wildfire. If left to build up over time these fuels increase the probability of wildfires which consume local financial resources through fire fighting and public safety responses.

Fayette County currently works with the Georgia Forestry Commission to permit and monitor burning that meets the needs specified in the request for this resolution.

What action are you seeking from the Board of Commissioners?

To support the efforts of the Georgia Wildlife Federation through a resolution to support prescribed fire.

If this item requires funding, please describe:

Has this issue come before the Commissioners in the past? No

If so, when?

Do you need audio-visual for the presentation? No

Back-up Material Submitted? Yes

STAFF USE ONLY

Approved by Finance? Yes

Reviewed by Legal?

Approved by Purchasing? Yes

Approved by Administrative Staff? Yes

Staff Notes

Administrator's Approval Yes

Confirmed Meeting Date May 22, 2008

- ○ Recognition/ Presentation
- ○ Public Hearing
- ○ Old Business
- ○ New Business
- ◉ Consent
- ○ Report
- ○ Other

Georgia Wildlife Federation

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March 25, 2008

The Honorable Jack Smith, Chairman
Fayette County
140 Stonewall Avenue West
Fayetteville, GA 30214

Dear Chairman Smith:

On behalf of the Georgia Wildlife Federation, its membership and board of directors, I want to thank you for your commitment to public service. Having previously worked for ACCG, in service to you, as the Natural Resources and Environment Associate Legislative Director, I gained a deep appreciation and respect for the dedication and responsibility of county commissioners statewide. There is no higher calling in public service today than providing for public health, safety and welfare of all Georgians, and specifically the citizens of your county.

In an effort to enhance public health and safety, prescribed fire is recognized as one of the most useful tools on Georgia's landscape. Prescribed fire keeps forested lands healthy and productive, resulting in clean water, clean air, jobs, improved wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, etc.

Another important benefit is public safety. When prescribed fire is used to properly manage healthy ecosystems, it reduces the buildup of unnatural fuel loads, reducing the threat of wildfire. If left to build up over time, these fuels increase the probability of wildfire which consume local financial resources through fire fighting and public safety responses. Prescribed fire is "an ounce of prevention which is worth a pound of cure." It is our hope you will support its continued and appropriate use.

To date, 132 counties in Georgia have passed a resolution recognizing the beneficial qualities of prescribed fire. Along with a draft resolution for your consideration, we have enclosed a map of counties that have already passed such a resolution. On October 3, 2007, ACCG adopted a prescribed fire policy in its 2008 Policy Platform; a copy is included for your review.

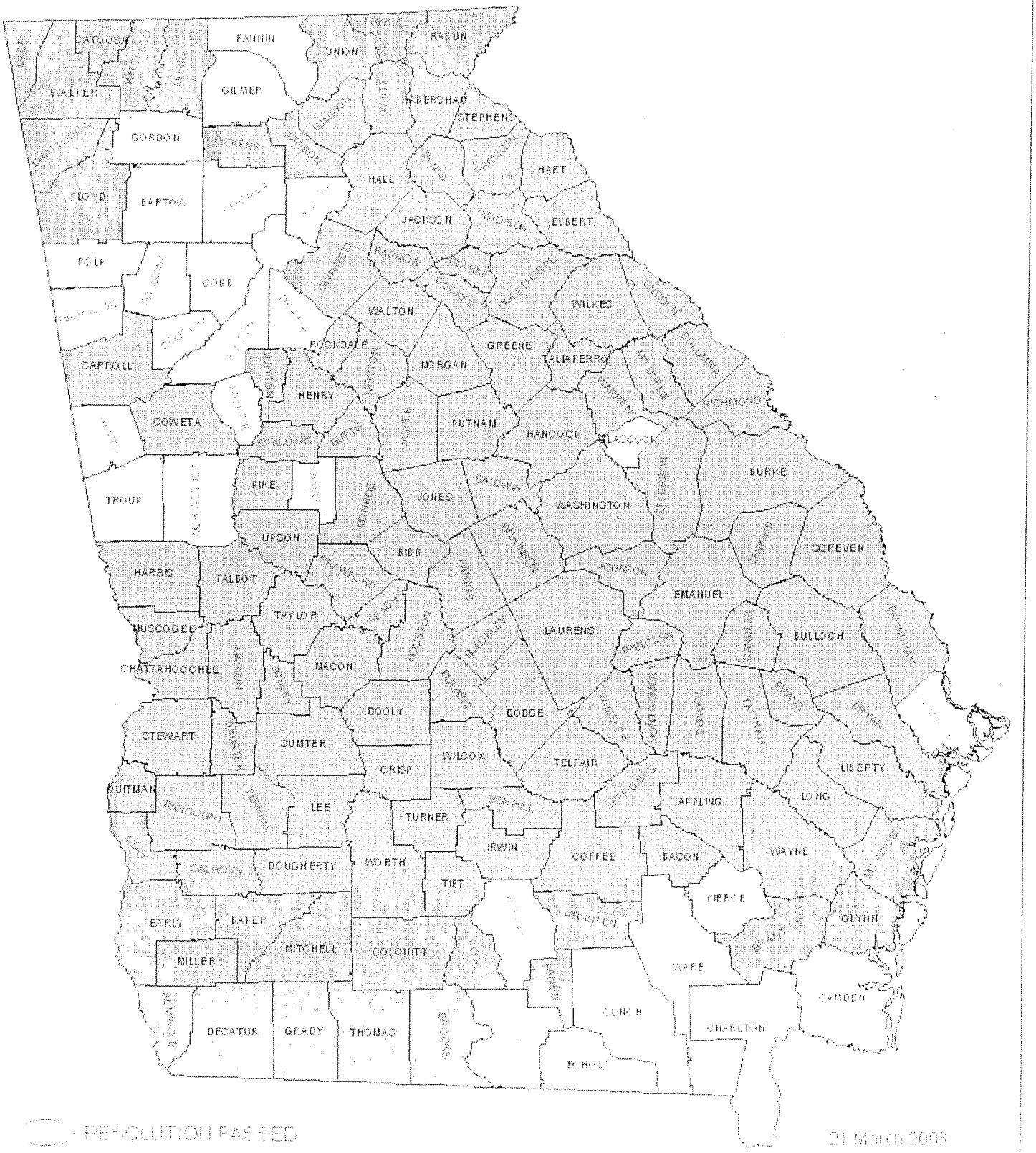
Please call on me with any questions or if I can be a resource of information concerning this or other natural resource issues. Thank you for considering and adopting a resolution in support of the continued and appropriate use of prescribed fire.

Sincerely,

Glenn Dowling
Executive Vice President, Georgia Wildlife Federation
and Chairman, Georgia Prescribed Fire Council

Cc: Jerry Griffin, Executive Director, ACCG
Mark Melvin, Vice Chairman, Georgia Prescribed Fire Council
County Commission Members & County Clerk

State of Georgia
Counties with Resolutions
Supporting the Use of Prescribed Fire



RESOLUTION PASSED

21 March 2008

ACCG 2008 Policy Platform
Natural Resources and Environment excerpt
Adopted October 3, 2007

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Conserving and enhancing our environment and the responsible development of our natural resources are issues of utmost concern both to county commissioners and to the communities they serve. As our environment and natural resources are not limited by governmental boundaries, comprehensive planning, resource conservation measures and adequate funding are essential and integral ingredients for accomplishing environmental management goals.

NEW POLICIES

Prescribed Fire – ACCG strongly supports the continued use of prescribed fire throughout Georgia where its many benefits support public safety, public health, our vital forestry and recreational economies and promotes healthy forests through providing clean air, clean water and sustaining dependent wildlife. Recognizing future growth in Georgia will demand healthy forests for ~~its~~ their economic benefits and ecological services, conflict in public perception of prescribed fire management on forested land may occur. Toward ensuring that public health and safety benefits are recognized by all Georgians through the continued use of prescribed fire, ACCG:

- Urges the Governor and the General Assembly to support the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) in upgrading its prescribed fire and fire fighting capabilities to levels appropriate in addressing increased population demands for education, information, technical assistance, BMP implementation, training, air quality management, fire prevention, and wildfire response;
- Encourages the GFC to secure the appropriate support tools to better predict weather conditions, achieve real-time permitting and gather additional accurate data of prescribed fire activity in Georgia;
- Strongly urges prescribed fire practitioners to attend the GFC Certified Burner Manager Program in order to better understand safety, risk management, smoke management~~,~~; acquaint themselves with regulations~~,~~; and enhance personal skills of prescribed fire tools and techniques;
- Encourages DNR to continue educating the public in promoting prescribed fire as a priority wildlife management tool to sustain biodiversity and support game and non-game species through the implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP); and
- Urges local governments, state and federal agencies to use prescribed fire as a land management/public safety tool in the prevention of wildfires; reducing private property loss, saving lives and preventing unnecessary expenditures of tax dollars.