

Administration

1769 E. Moody Blvd Bldg 2
Bunnell, FL 32110



www.flaglercounty.org

Phone: (386)313-4001

Fax: (386)313-4101

Julie Murphy
Flagler County
Public Information Officer
(386) 313-4039
Email jmurphy@flaglercounty.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler Land Management conducts first prescribed fire of 2019

January 11, 2019 – Flagler County Land Management on Thursday conducted its first prescribed fire of 2019 on an 11-acre section of Princess Place Preserve.

Land Management assembled a team that also includes Flagler County Fire Rescue, Florida Park Service, and Florida Forest Service.

“This is our first prescribed fire of the year and all of us working together, so we wanted to start small,” said Land Management Technician Mike Orlando, who was “burn boss” for this fire.

Flagler County hired Orlando in April 2018 for his expertise as a Certified Burner Manager. He has worked about 500 prescribed fires in Florida.

Fire is a natural and necessary component of wildfire mitigation and ecosystem maintenance within nearly all of Florida’s ecosystems, and vital to local Land Management duties as it maintains about 10,000 acres within Flagler.

A successful prescribed fire, also referred to as a “controlled” fire, removes the hazardous level of fuel in a given area. Unplanned wildfires have a greater risk of being destructive, because the accumulation of vegetation serves as the fuel for these hotter, faster moving fires.

Flagler County’s goal with prescribed fire in Princess Place Preserve is longleaf pine restoration. Longleaf pine already exists in the area of Thursday’s burn – which mimics the natural fires that have historically occurred every two to three years within longleaf pine ecosystems. A thriving ecosystem reduces the invasive species populations while enhancing other native plants and animals.

“It’s all about the trees,” Orlando said. “Periodic fire supports a healthy forest, which has a diversity of plant and animal species.”

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