

Post-Hurricane Hazard Fuels Reduction Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction

Gulf Islands National Seashore used a combination of mechanical treatments and prescribed burning to reduce hazard fuel loads from dead and down trees that had accumulated in the Naval Live Oaks area of the park during Hurricanes Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Dennis in 2005.

RFCC, Inc., a local Gryo-Trac contractor from Molino, Fla., cleared a 50-60 foot fuel break along the boundary in December 2005. In a separate contract, large jackpots of dead and down sand pine on 10 miles of interior fire breaks/roads were treated by an Oregon based Northwest Arbor-Culture Inc. Posi-Track contractor for access and holding concerns.

A prescribed burn was completed on March 8, 2006. The NPS Cumberland Gap and Great Smoky Mountains Fire Use Modules participated, along with an engine and firefighters staff from Kings Mountain National Military Park. Gulf Island National Seashore firefighters were also on hand. Gulf Islands recently entered into the Gulf Coast Plain Ecosystem Partnership and was rewarded with cooperation from members including Eglin Air Force Base and the Florida Division of Forestry, both of which provided contingency tractor plow units, and The Nature Conservancy, which provided several firefighters.

Approximately 28 acres were treated with prescribed fire in the Naval Live Oaks burn unit along the wildland urban interface with Reservation Road. Moderate fire behavior was observed as ignition progressed from a backing fire off of the boundary to interior striping, and the ignition specialist, burn boss and park's Fire Management Officer decided to scale back the size of the burn from what was originally planned for the day. The area that was treated along the northern flank of the burn unit will be an asset to firefighters who plan to treat another 165 acres with prescribed fire in a few weeks.

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The west side of the Naval Live Oaks in a sand pine stand that was killed by salt stress from hurricanes – Pre Mechanical Fuels Treatment. NPS Photo.



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