

September 20, 2022

## FORESTWATCH JOURNAL

Volume 1, Issue 15



### The Return of Prescribed Fire?

[United States Forest Service Chief Randy Moore](#) has released the results of a [department-wide evaluation](#) of prescribed burning. This review came after an escaped burn in New Mexico earlier this year that became the largest in the state's recorded history. The USFS's [10-year strategy to confront the wildfire crisis](#) is focused mainly on our western states but includes increased prescribed fire by up to four times the current treatment levels.

On May 20, 2022, Chief Moore announced that the service would pause all prescribed burns in the country for 90 days to allow for a review of the agency's practices. The review comes as the Forest Service plans to greatly increase its thinning and burning regime ostensibly to protect forests from high-intensity and devastating fires.

[The now available report](#) reflects the growing recognition that extreme conditions because of climate change directly influence fire behavior in ways never seen. GAFW plans to hold the USFS accountable to the newly stated policy that "prescribed fires will not occur on National Forest System lands until all recommendations have been implemented at each location and only when local conditions have been certified as appropriate for a prescribed fire" and that "prescribed fire plans are up to date with the most recent science."

[GAFW's current position](#) supports the use of prescribed fire that mimics natural (lightning) fire regimes or can effectively protect life and property. We also support allowing lightning-ignited fires to burn where they do not threaten life or property but do not support allowing other

wildfires to burn. However, GAFW also feels the increased support for prescribed burning is reducing much-needed financial support for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest's most pressing concerns of clean water and watershed resiliency.

The USFS should focus on road and trail maintenance over the current resources directed towards prescribed fire. **Only when the USFS can proactively manage (including law enforcement) or permanently close all roads that aggressively contribute to waterway sedimentation upstream, downstream, and within the CONF should the USFS look at funding a rotation of prescribed fires.**

## The Joro Spider



Photo by Dorothy Kozlowski/UG

The jury is still out regarding how dangerous the exotic Joro Spider (*Trichonephila clavata*) is to our ecosystem. Introduced from East Asia, most likely to have arrived in shipping containers, the Joro Spider was first observed in North America in 2013 when a UGA scientist first noticed the distinctive spider near Colbert, GA.

In less than a decade, the spiders have spread throughout the southeast with no signs of slowing down. While not dangerous to humans or pets, they can be prolific and annoying based on their large size and abundant webs.

- One female Joro spider can lay between 400-1,500 eggs a year.
- The eggs incubate over winter, hatch in the summer, and by the time fall rolls around, Joro spiders are nearing the end of their year-long lifespans.
- The Joro spider is known to travel via 'ballooning,' in which young spiders or spiderlings release a small strand of silk, allowing it to move by catching onto an air current.
- Joro Spiders are native to China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.
- Female Joro Spiders are larger than males and can have a leg span of up to 3 or 4 inches.
- Male Joros are much smaller than females and have a leg span of about 1.5 inches and a body length of .3 of an inch.
- Joro Spiders can bite, and their fangs have venom...HOWEVER... their fangs are tiny, and they can have difficulty piercing the skin to inject venom. If a Joro Spider successfully bites, its venom is weak and non-life threatening. All symptoms should quickly

disappear without medical attention.

- Joro Spiders build large webs that are very strong. These webs are not only a nuisance, but they pose a danger to local insects and wildlife. Typically, however, smaller flying insects are caught in these webs. However, there are reports of bats and small hummingbirds getting caught in the webs, so it is too soon to tell if Joro Spiders are a harmless introduction to our ecosystem (exotic) or if they negatively impact the environment (invasive).
- The word “Joro” stems from “Jorogumo,” a mythical spider creature in Japanese folklore that lures young men into her web and devours them.

#### How to deal with Joros

- Make sure you have the correct spider and after correctly identifying the specimen in question as a Joro, then kill them. HOWEVER,
- **Do not do what this guy did**
- Do not use pesticides. Poisons and other chemicals used in pesticides can devastate to the many other native insects we need to pollinate our crops and otherwise benefit our ecosystem. That leaves,
- Trap them. **Spider traps** can be effective but can still trap many other beneficial insects.
- Smoosh them--the most ecological and efficient method. You can simply walk up to the web and clap it between your hands if you are fearless. Or tear down their webs and smoosh them with a broom. Or you can **use this**.
- Finally, there are reports of the following working – Essential oils, vinegar, garlic, diatomaceous earth, eucalyptus, cedar, chestnuts, and catnip. The benefit of using these options is that they are eco-friendly and work on other invasives like vampires.

Joro Spiders are here to stay; unfortunately, there is really **nothing we can** do to stop them.

## Volunteer Opportunities



Photo by RODNAE Productions

Are you Interested in supporting Georgia ForestWatch and the **Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests** with your time? Please see our newly updated **volunteer opportunities page** on our website.

# Not to be missed events



**Public Lands Day Wilderness Monitoring and Hike to Preacher's Rock** – A few spots remain for our outing this Saturday, September 24, 2022, (**National Public Lands Day**) to hike from Woody Gap to Preacher's Rock while being trained on how to monitor public use of our wilderness areas. [Register here](#), and as always, GAFW outings are **free for members**.

**Foothills Landscape Project Meeting** – The U.S. Forest Service is hosting the first annual **stakeholder meeting** to implement the Foothills Landscape Project (FLP) on October 13 at **Cohutta Springs** in Crandall, Ga., from 1pm – 4pm. A virtual option will also be available soon. Few details are available at this time, but GAFW is concerned the implementation is being rushed and commercial timber projects will be revealed at this meeting. Please join us as we will need as much community input as possible. We will provide additional details as the USFS provides them. Visit the **Foothills Landscape Project** website for more information.

**Waitlist for Retreat** – Due to the dynamic nature of events, we have newly opened spots on our waitlist for our annual member retreat at Lake Winfield Scott on Saturday, October 15, 2022. If you are interested in attending but could not register before registration closed, you can [add your name to the waitlist here](#).

**Wurst Festival** – Tickets are available now for the Wurst Festival at **Fannin Brewing Company** on Saturday, October 22, 2022. [Order your tickets to attend now](#). Also, get your **Wurst Festival Ever t-shirt**. All proceeds from the ticket and T-shirt sales support GAFW, and we thank Fannin Brewing Company for hosting and supporting this fundraiser.

**Save the Date** – How about a hike before the Wurst Festival? Afterward, the entire group will join the rest of us at the festival for lunch, beer, and music. We are finalizing the details, but look out for registration featuring a morning hike on a local trail close to the brewery on Saturday, October 22. The hike will be **free for GAFW members**, but you must purchase a [ticket to attend the Wurst Festival](#).

**Hemlock Fest** – Stop by our table on November 4-6 at Cherokee Farms in supporting the **Lumpkin Coalition's** fundraiser to address the parasitic Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) that is killing Georgia's beautiful Hemlocks. [Tickets and more info here](#).



# Meetup?



GAFW is considering moving our Outing and Event registrations to the [Meetup](#) platform. Benefits include a smoother, more streamlined online registration for our Outings and ticketed events such as our annual retreat and the Wurst Festival.

In addition to making the registration process easier for you and us, it will also allow others already on Meetup to find out about us. We are interested in hearing what you think about this platform, especially those of you “regulars” who consistently join us at outings and events.

If you have an opinion or insight into the Meetup platform for GAFW, please let us know at [communications@gafw.org](mailto:communications@gafw.org).

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If this email was forwarded to you, [please register here](#) to receive GAFW updates.

## Thank You

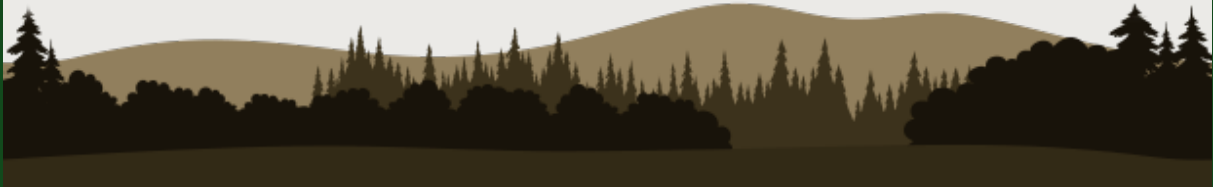
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

Please support our mission by ensuring your [membership is up to date](#) and providing [additional support](#) as you are able.

On behalf of our entire national forests in our beautiful state, we thank you for your support.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the health of over 867,000 acres of Georgia's national forest by protecting our forests and streams, advocating for natural processes, and identifying opportunities to improve forest management. Visit [Georgia ForestWatch](#) (GAFW) to learn more.



Connect with us



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