

Georgia Prescribed Fire Council

2017 Annual Meeting Speakers

Rick Anderson ~ Keynote Speaker

Mr. Rick Anderson is an American Fire Ecologist. A descendent of Florida's earliest pioneers, he learned the craft of fire from his ancestors. For over thirty years, Rick served as a fire manager and fire ecologist for the National Park Service. He also worked as The Nature Conservancy's Fire Manager for the Southeast. Rick retired from the National Park Service in 2015 after 10 years as the Fire Management Officer for Everglades National Park. Now he works as an international fire consultant with projects in Belize, Mexico, Costa Rica, Trinidad, and Brazil. Rick resides at Palmetto Island Ranch in Venus, Florida.



Joe O'Brien, PhD.

Dr. O'Brien is a research ecologist and the Fire Team Leader with the Center for Forest Disturbance Science of the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station. He received his Bachelors degree in Biology from the State University of New York at Geneseo in 1986 and his Master's and Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Florida International University in 1997 and 2001. His current research centers on fire ecology, focusing on the spatial interactions among wildland fuels, fire behavior and fire effects, innovative fire measurements, and the interaction of fire with multiple disturbances. He also has extensive experience in tropical ecology and has ongoing research in the Caribbean, Central America, and Africa. He has studied southeastern US and Neotropical fire dependent ecosystems for more than 25 years. He is an adjunct faculty member of the University of Georgia's Odum School of Ecology and the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources.

Jim Prevette

Mr. Jim Prevette graduated from North Carolina State University in 1980 with a BS in Forestry. In 2014, he retired from the NC Forest Service after a 34 year career, serving the last 10 years as Fire Chief. Currently, he is the Fire Director for the Southern Group of State Foresters.

Chip Bates

Mr. Chip Bates is a graduate of Auburn University (1985) with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management. His career in forestry began in 1986 with a consultant firm in South Georgia, and in 1990 he transferred to the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). He has twenty-seven years of experience working with the Forest Management Departments. Chip is currently the state Forest Health Coordinator for GFC. His group is responsible for providing leadership in Forest Health Management issues, forming partnerships to work with Federal, State, and private cooperators, and providing technical assistance to the landowners of Georgia.

James W. Boylan, PhD.

Dr. Boylan has been involved with regulatory air quality management for the past 25 years. He has worked at GA EPD since 2002 and is currently the manager of the Planning & Support Program in the Air Protection Branch. He is responsible for State Implementation Plan development, updates to Georgia's Rules for Air Quality Control, emission inventories, emission control strategies development, and air quality modeling. Over the past several years he has held numerous leadership positions within many regional and national workgroups. Currently, he is the chair of the Southeastern States Air Resource Managers (SESARM) Technical Analysis Workgroup, leader of the SESARM Emissions and Air Quality Modeling Workgroup, co-chair of the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA) Modeling Committee, and a member of the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council Steering Committee. He has authored 18 peer-reviewed journal articles on ozone and PM2.5 formation, has presented research findings at over 200 national, regional, and local conferences/meetings, and was inducted into the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society in 2001. He has a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Notre Dame, a M.S. in Chemical Engineering from Auburn University, and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Georgia Tech.

Kevin Hiers

Mr. Kevin Hiers is a Wildland Fire Scientist at Tall Timbers Research Station where he leads research projects in fire behavior, fire management, fuel moisture, and the fluid dynamics of fire effects. He has worked at the interface of science and management for 24 years. He has served as fire ecologist, prescribed fire program manager, and fire management officer at Eglin AFB, which burned on average 100,000 acres per year, and was The Nature Conservancy's Prescribed Fire Manager for Georgia. His research career began at the Jones Research Center studying fire ecology, and he has co-authored more than 50 peer-reviewed research publications.

John Norman

Mr. John Norman was born and raised in South Georgia. He attended Norman Park High school (graduating class, 39) then attended ABAC and received a B.S. in Zoology from the University of Georgia in 1973. He worked as a fire fighter for the US Forest Service in 1976-77 in Arizona. Since he has worked full time for Quailridge Plantation, a family run commercial quail hunting operation in Norman Park on land owned by his family. Part of his responsibility is burning more than 3000 acres each year. He has been a part of the Prescribed Fire Council since its inception. He served previously as chairman when the organization was the SW Georgia Prescribed Fire Council.