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Fire Monitoring: Effects of Scorch in Louisiana's Pine Forests



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Description

Frequent growing-season burning is essential for restoring longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris* Mill.) plant communities to open parklike landscapes. However, fire can be a destructive force, reducing productivity and causing mortality among overstory longleaf pine trees. On two central Louisiana sites, severe crown scorch

reduced longleaf pine diameter growth by 22 percent during five growing seasons after prescribed burning. Crown scorch also reduced root sucrose and starch concentrations, total and live fine-root-mass density, and the initiation of secondary root development. Despite these results, restoring and maintaining historic plant communities as habitat for endangered species is worth a moderate reduction in growth and some root injury among overstory longleaf pine trees.

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