

July Team of the Month

Controlled Burn Opportunity Team

Team members are:

Vegetation Management Division

Tony Griffin
Ellen Donlan
Dave Johnson
Steve Smith

Clewiston FS

Jimmy Hines

Okeechobee FS

Jesse Conrad
Mack Rogers
Gerry Mixon
Jeb Stokes
Ivan Clements
Robert Harris

Land Stewardship Division

Dennis Driggers
Steve Bruner
James Elmore
Bert Trammell

On February 25, 2007, Division of Forestry officials contacted District land managers and requested assistance with a wildfire that was likely set by arsonists the day before in the large Lake Okeechobee marsh near Moore Haven. With strong west winds blowing the smoke over the lake, the Division of Forestry and District burn managers quickly seized upon the opportunity to make it as environmentally beneficial as possible. The area had been previously treated to kill melaleuca and other exotics. Extremely dry conditions made it an ideal time to burn off the heavy accumulation of marsh vegetation. The decision was made to use aerial ignition and helicopters to burn as much of the marsh as possible. If winds had shifted before the marsh was burned, it would have become a major public safety concern and would have carried smoke over the populated areas of Moore Haven, Clewiston, and LaBelle, as well as SR 80 and US 27.

This was a multi-agency effort. Personnel from Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Invasive Plants and Savannas State Preserve; Division of Forestry; Helicopter Applicators, Inc. and District employees from four areas of the agency assisted in the burn.