



Alachua County Fire Rescue

Harold Theus, Chief

May 15, 2026

ALACHUA COUNTY- After reviewing Alachua County's current wildland fire conditions and in consultation with the Florida Forest Service a mandatory countywide burn ban has been issued. The burn ban will remain in effect until May 23, 2026.

Several factors including the area weather conditions are utilized to determine the activation and deactivation of county wide burn bans. Two of those factors are the KBDI and FDI scores.

- Keetch Byram Drought Index (KBDI) - estimates the dryness of the soil and duff layers
- Fire Danger Indices (FDI) – potential for a fire to start and require suppression activities

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Alachua County's Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is 581 with 41% of the County having a KBDI between 601-700. These conditions continue to place the County at an elevated risk for wildland fire spread. Additionally, the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Suwannee River Water Management District have both declared a Phase II Water Shortage, further indicating the severity of current drought conditions.

The countywide burn ban prohibits all types of unpermitted and/or non-exempted open incineration where the burning of any matter results in the products of combustion being emitted directly into the outdoor atmosphere without passing through a stack or chimney. This includes, but is not limited to: campfires, bonfires, unpermitted controlled burns, burning of yard and household trash, burning of construction debris, burning of organic debris, and igniting of fireworks.

Exemptions-

- Use of barbeque grills or barbeque pits where the total fuel area does not exceed three (3) feet in diameter and two (2) feet in height.
- Any other activity for which a valid state open burn authorization has been issued by the Florida Forest Service, Department of Environmental Protection, or the City of Gainesville.

Any unauthorized burning within the County during the imposed ban will be in violation of Alachua County ordinance number 362.50 as codified under Article III of the Alachua County Code of Ordinances and Chapter 252 of Florida Statutes. Any person violating any of the provisions of this article shall be liable for all damages caused by such violation, which damages shall be recoverable in any court of competent jurisdiction, as well as the costs associated with suppressing and extinguishing the fire. The liability for the costs of suppression may extend to the person, firm, or corporation causing, directing or permitting the activity, as well as the actual violator.

Harold Theus, Fire Chief

