



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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State Forestry Leader To Retire To Take Job as National Fire Director

RALEIGH – Dan Smith, the acting director with the N.C. Division of Forest Resources, is leaving state government to take a position as the National Fire Director with the National Association of State Foresters. His retirement is effective Feb. 1.

Smith started in the Division of Forest Resources in 1978 as a field forester in the division's Fairfield district and has spent his entire professional life in the division. In addition to his work in the Fairfield district, Smith has directed the agency's engineering services as well as administrative services and forest protection section. From 2003 until May, Smith served as the deputy director for the division; since May 1, Smith has served as the division's acting director.

"The citizens of North Carolina will sorely miss his strong leadership, experience and institutional knowledge about forestry, proper forest management and wildfire suppression," said Secretary Bill Ross of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Smith said his decision to leave the Division of Forest Resources was a difficult one. Ultimately, he knew that taking on his new role would benefit greatly the nation's efforts at wildfire suppression.

As an expert on fire behavior and the incident management system, Smith is well-suited to his new role. His new role will include working with the fire directors of the federal wildland fire agencies and helping mobilize state fire resources during times when high preparedness is needed. Smith also will be responsible for recommending state actions and responses to emerging operational issues.

"We face many challenges today across the nation in our response to wildland fire," Smith said. "We are seeing more forest fires and acres burned each year. That fact coupled with the addition of more and more people living in wooded areas where fires occur is placing more residents, emergency responders and firefighters in harm's way. These are just a few of the priorities that we must find solutions to in the coming years. I am honored to have the opportunity to bring my experience and expertise to work for NASF and look forward to working with our federal and local partners."

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