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Life from the Ashes: Exploring the Impact of Prescribed & Natural Fire on Insects and Other Invertebrates

The Impact of Prescribed Burning on Native Bee Communities (Hymenoptera: Apoidea: Anthophila) in Longleaf Pine Savannas in the North Carolina Sandhills

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Presentation Description:

Prescribed fire is an essential component of forest restoration in the southeastern United States, particularly in the endangered longleaf pine ecosystem. Despite a growing body of evidence linking wildfires to enhanced bee abundance and diversity, the effects of low-intensity, prescribed fire on bees are less well known. We investigated the response of the native bee community to dormant-season burns on a 3-yr rotation in the Sandhills of North Carolina. Bee abundance and diversity at our study sites increased in more recently burned sites, and recent fire appeared to particularly favor ground-nesting bees. Ongoing work investigates effects of growing-season burns in the same ecosystem. This presentation will summarize our past and ongoing research in the NC Sandhills to inform forest management and highlight open questions in the application of prescribed fire.