

# LIVING ON THE EDGE - MITIGATION

Because fire is a natural part of our ecosystems, wildfires in Florida will continue. And when they occur near developed areas, homes will be threatened. We must do our best to manage our Florida ecosystems so that when wildfires occur, they are not disastrous wildfires. This means taking action to reduce the vegetation, or wildland fuel, that accumulates in our forests and wildlands each year. We can reduce this fuel source through prescribed burning.

We use prescribed fire to mimic the natural role of fire in our ecosystem. It also helps us maintain the variety of plant communities and wildlife. Most importantly, prescribed fire helps reduce the chances of a disastrous wildland fire.

Periodic prescribed fires in nearby forested and wildland areas protect neighboring developed property, but not without some inconvenience. Smoke and ash travel with the wind and find their way to people's yards and smoke can cause visibility problems on our roadways. However, residents must understand that prescribed fire is the most important land management tool we have for wildfire protection in the wildland urban interface.