



# OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION  
660 North Street, Suite 300  
Jackson, MS 39202

[www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Scott Miles  
Chief Fire Investigator  
(601) 928-5261  
smiles@mfc.state.ms.us

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## **Lamar County Man Charged with Woods Arson**

Jackson, MS – On April 11, 2013, Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) Fire Investigators concluded an investigation with the arrest of William E. Weathersby, age 27, of Sumrall, MS. Weathersby has been charged with five (5) counts of Woods Arson under Ms Code 97-17-13. This was a joint operation between the MFC, Lamar County Emergency Management and Lamar County Sheriff's Office.

“This is a good example of agencies cooperating and working together to ensure the safety, and protect the property, of the citizens of Mississippi,” said Scott Miles, Chief Investigator with the MFC. During the MFC’s fiscal year 2012 which runs from July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012 Lamar County had 42 wildfires which burned 266 acres. This fiscal year 2013, which started July 1, 2012 and will run through June 30, 2013, Lamar County has had 85 wildfires which have burned 987 acres so far with two months left in the fiscal year. There are other investigations ongoing in Lamar Co. and other counties statewide.

In Mississippi, the penalty for felony woods arson per count is, upon conviction, sentenced to the state penitentiary for not more than two years, nor less than one year, or be fined not less than \$200, nor more than \$1,000, or both at the discretion of the court.

Please report any suspicious behavior in regard to a woods fire by calling the Mississippi Forestry Commission’s Woods Arson Hotline at 1-800-240-5161. Information leading to the arrest and conviction of a woods arsonist can be rewarded up to \$2,500.00.

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The Mississippi Forestry Commission asks that you ***THINK TWICE Before You Do Any Outdoor Burning! Don't Burn on Windy Days*** because ***Carelessness Causes Wildfires. Check for local burn bans at [www.mfc.state.ms.us](http://www.mfc.state.ms.us)***