1. Little St. Simons Island

Little St. Simons is that rare piece of the southeastern coast that has never been deforested. Intact barrier Island community types, including maritime forest, freshwater wetlands, extensive salt marshes, dunes and beaches will be seen. Scott Coleman, the island's ecological manager, will provide an overview of this holocene island's cultural and ecological history, barrier island geology, LSS's current fire management objectives and site visits to areas where natural fire has occurred and sites that being considered for managed fires. Participants should note that this trip will involve a short ferry ride to the island, and transport in ATV trailers. While heat and insects are not usually a concern during this time of year, visitors should be prepared with sunscreen and hats, and raingear to ensure their comfort in the event of inclement weather.

2. Okeefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Okefenokee, which means "land of the trembling earth," is one of the oldest and best-preserved freshwater systems in America. The National Wildlife Refuge, consisting of over 400,000 acres of varied ecosystems, experienced vast wildfires during 2007. This field trip will tour some areas affected by the wildfires, while also exploring areas that have received prescribed fire treatments. Refuge staff as well as research scientists will conduct the tours and compare the effects of these different fire types on the ecosystems in which they occurred.

3. Wassaw Island National Wildlife Refuge

Wassaw Island, one of Georgia's coastal barrier islands, was designated a National Wildlife Refuge in 1969. Unlike many of Georgia's Golden Isles, little development and few management practices have modified Wassaw's primitive character. The 10,053-acre refuge includes beaches with rolling dunes, maritime forest, and vast salt marshes. The refuge is bordered by the Wilmington River and Wassaw Sound on the north, the Vernon River and Ossabaw Sound on the South, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. Salt marsh and tidal creeks separate the refuge from the mainland and Skidaway Island to the west. This trip will showcase Wassaw's natural beauty and wildlife, while highlighting recent and historic natural fire activity that continues to modify or maintain the island's natural communities. Participants should note that this trip will involve a short ferry ride to the island, and transport in ATV trailers. While heat and insects are not usually a concern during this time of year, visitors should be prepared with sunscreen and hats, and raingear to ensure their comfort in the event of inclement weather.

4. Moody Forest Natural Area

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) works collaboratively with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as joint owners to restore the habitats and provide public recreation opportunities at the 4,426 acre Moody Forest Natural Area (the Moody Forest). The Moody Forest is located along the tranquil Altamaha River in the southern Georgia county of Appling. Left virtually untouched for hundreds of years, this southern jewel contains virgin longleaf pine and swamp forests. The Moody Forest contains old-growth longleaf pine forest (at least 200 yrs old). Less than 0.1% of the original virgin longleaf pine forest remains today. Cypress-tupelo sloughs in the Altamaha River floodplain contain trees over 600 years old.

The Moody Forest hosts a number of federally and state protected species like the red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, indigo snake and bald eagle. Longleaf pine forests require frequent prescribed fires to maintain the diversity and open structure characteristic of the ecosystem. Fire management is the most crucial tool in restoring upland natural communities and in improving the habitat for the Moody Forest's rare species. Prior to ownership by TNC and DNR, Moody Forest underwent over 30 years of fire suppression, resulting in a thick accumulation of duff at the base of the old-growth longleaf pines and a midstory of hardwoods. Restoration activities, including the careful, skilled application of prescribed fire, are being implemented to restore the structure and function to the longleaf pine forest.

5. Francis Marion National Forest

The Francis Marion National Forest is located on the Atlantic outer coastal plain. Much of the forest is dominated by southern pines, which are adapted to and require frequent low intensity surface fires. The field trip will feature the two oldest long-term prescribed burn studies in the South. The overstory pine on the Santee Fire plots were salvaged following extensive damage from hurricane Hugo. Plots were replanted and are now part of an active study to determine how the past fire regime can affect subsequent site productivity. The other long-term burn study shows the significant effect of different burn frequencies on stand structure and composition. There will also be a stop to look at use of mulching equipment to facilitate burning in the wildland urban interface zone, including a discussion of trade-offs and smoke issues. Managers from the National Forest will show participants recently burned sites and will discuss their extensive prescribed burning program, use of fire for restoration and endangered species management, and smoke management problems in an increasingly populated landscape.

6. Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway: (overnight trip)

The Fire and Environmental Research Applications team (FERA) of the Pacific Wildland Fire Sciences Laboratory has developed a suite of four fuel management products that will be demonstrated at this workshop. This suite includes the Fuel Characteristics Classification System (FCCS 2.0), Natural Fuels Photo Series, Digital photo Series, and Consume 3.0. These four tools work together and allow users to characterize fuelbeds, assess potential fire hazard and surface fire behavior, and estimate the amount of fuel consumed and emissions produced if burned during a wildland fire.