



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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George County Man Charged with Woods Arson

Lucedale, MS—On March 18, 2010, Michael P. Cooley age 29 from George County was arrested and charged with multiple counts of felony woods arson. This individual was setting a series of mostly day fires south of Lucedale, Mississippi. As of this time, he has been charged with four separate fires set on different dates during the month of March.

“Information provided by a number of sources led to the arrest of this individual,” said Scott Miles, chief investigator with the Forestry Commission. “This is a good example of different departments and agencies coming together with information to help protect and serve the public.” Others assisting with the investigation includes Mitchell Mixon State Fire Marshall’s Office, and Joe Sullivan George County Sheriff’s Department.

In Mississippi, the penalty for felony woods arson 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.

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Don’t Burn on Windy Days because Carelessness Causes Wildfires. Check for local burn bans at www.mfc.state.ms.us