



PHOTOS PROVIDED

A burning tradition

Students from the University of Wisconsin's Steven's Point Campus came to South Carolina in mid-March on their third annual Spring PyroBreak to burn the woods with forester and Heritage Preserve Manager Johnny Stowe of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. This year, for the first time, Clemson University's student wildland fire team--the "Fire Tigers"--joined the "Pointers." Stowe credits the International Association for Wildland Fire for making this "pyro" partnership possible. Stowe, who serves on the IAWF's Board of Directors, met UWSP students while teaching yoga at the Association's conference in Portland in 2016 and invited them to come to Lee County to help him burn. The students took him up on it the next spring, driving 30 hours to experience Southern burning, barbeque and beaches. The trip is now becoming a spring ritual. Kneeling, left to right: "Pointers" Fire Crew Leader McKenna Hammons, Austin Tatter, Hayden Pocquette, Ryan Simmons; standing: Johnny Stowe, Mike Sweeney, Drew Atkinson, Kevin Winston, Mickey Cardenas, Veronica Weaver, Lauren Rusch, and Clemson Fire Tiger Caroline Sharpe.



Passing the torch

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources forester and prescribed fire manager Johnny Stowe “passes the torch” to University of Wisconsin fire crew leader McKenna Hammons at the third annual Spring PyroBreak in Lee County. Besides restoring rare ecosystems and reducing fuel loads to help prevent dangerous wildfires, one of the goals of the partnership is to educate and train the next generation of fire lighters, and to give them valuable experience. The student fire lighters learned much about Southern culture as they burned the longleaf pineywoods to restore and maintain habitat for bobwhite quail, fox squirrels, rare plants and other grassland species on SCDNR heritage preserves. As for Stowe, he was delighted to have the students back again – to accomplish some burning and be able to share what his elders taught him, to learn new things from the students, and to be energized by their work ethic and youthful enthusiasm.



Caroline Sharpe is a senior in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology at Clemson University, and a member of the "Fire Tigers," the forestry school's prescribed fire team. She was thrilled to represent Clemson and to burn with the students from Wisconsin on local SCDNR heritage preserves.

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