

§ 106-899. Powers of forest rangers and deputy rangers to prevent and extinguish fires; authority to issue citations and warning tickets.

(a) Forest rangers or deputy rangers shall prevent and extinguish forest fires and shall have control and direction of all persons and equipment while engaged in the extinguishing of forest fires. During a season of drought, the Commissioner or his designate may establish a fire patrol in any district. In case of fire in or threatening any forest or woodland, the forest ranger or deputy ranger shall attend forthwith and use all necessary means to confine and extinguish such fire. The forest ranger may summon any resident between the ages of 18 and 45 years, inclusive, to assist in extinguishing fires and may require the use of crawler tractors and other property needed for such purposes; any person so summoned and who is physically able who refuses or neglects to assist or to allow the use of equipment and such other property required shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and upon conviction shall only be subject to a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00). No action for trespass shall lie against any forest ranger, deputy ranger, or person summoned by a forest ranger for crossing lands, backfiring, burning out or performing his duties as a forest ranger or deputy ranger.

(b) Forest rangers are authorized to issue and serve citations under the terms of G.S. 15A-302 and warning tickets under the terms of G.S. 106-901 for offenses under the forest laws. This subsection may not be interpreted to confer the power of arrest on forest rangers, and does not make them criminal justice officers within the meaning of G.S. 17C-2. (1915, c. 243, s. 6; C.S., s. 6137; 1925, c. 106, ss. 1, 2; c. 240; 1927, c. 150, s. 4; 1951, c. 575; 1963, c. 312, s. 2; 1973, c. 108, s. 65; c. 1262, s. 86; 1975, c. 620, s. 2; 1977, c. 771, s. 4; 1983, c. 327, s. 3; 1989, c. 727, s. 63; 1993, c. 539, s. 832; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2011-145, s. 13.25(p), (q); 2017-108, s. 12(b); 2023-63, s. 12.1.)