



Eastern Red Cedar: Burning Issue

Rein in Eastern Red Cedar Spread with Prescribed Burns



Best Advice: Burn Before They Get Big

Eastern Red Cedars have invaded as much as 30 percent of the grassland along the Missouri River in southern South Dakota, and are slowly invading grasslands to the north. When the cedars grow thick and tall, developing a canopy, grasses won't grow, and grazing land is lost. Fire is an ecological process and recognized control method, but many ranchers are hesitant to use it because of the fear of a runaway fire. Good planning with professional help can substantially reduce risks of runaway fires.

Key Points Before You Burn

1. Respect--but don't fear--fire
2. Burn when trees are small (1'-2' high)
3. Begin planning a year out
4. 3,000 to 5,000 lbs./ac. forage for fuel
5. Get professional help
6. Develop a burn plan
7. Expect to repeat burns in 8-10 years

Safety First: Get Help

A burn plan that carefully details what will be done, when, and under what conditions, is essential to a safe burn. The landowner-driven Mid-Missouri River Prescribed Burn Association, started in 2015, has experience and qualified volunteers who will assist landowners with safe burns in Brule, Charles Mix, Gregory and Lyman Counties, handling paperwork as well as the burn. Contact your local NRCS office or the MMRPBA online at www.midmissouririverpba.com



Dramatic Difference: Prescribed fire was used to restore grazing in the area in the lower left, but the thick canopied red cedars in the background will have to be clipped and pushed into other standing cedars to get enough ladder fuel for a fire hot enough to burn 20 to 30-foot tall cedars. Burning cedars is much safer and cost effective when used on smaller trees.

Cedar Creep along the Missouri near Chamberlain



Begin planning your burn a year or more ahead

A significant amount of planning is required to accomplishing a safe and successful prescribed burn, considering everything from ensuring fuels are sufficient to kill the trees to mapping out water sources, gates, escape routes, potential hazards, wind and weather, and ignition plans with the use of GPS. It may require burn professionals to make three to four visits to sufficiently prepare a burn plan.



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