



## CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

### E338C

# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

## Sequential patch burning

### Conservation Practice 338: Prescribed Burning

**APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest**

**RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals**

**ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year**

#### Enhancement Description

Conduct prescribed burning beneath a forest canopy (ground fire), burning a portion of the area each year to create a mosaic of vegetation in several stages of development to provide a more diverse understory and contribute to wildlife habitat. The health of conifer and oak-conifer forests, particularly longleaf pine with a characteristic herbaceous understory, is dependent on fire or another means of controlling encroaching woody vegetation. A healthy longleaf or shortleaf pine, or pine-oak forest, can support a wide array of wildlife including pollinators and several endangered or threatened species.

#### Criteria

- States will apply the general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Burning (Code 338) as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.
- Apply to conifer forests of species that are adapted to frequent low-intensity ground fires, where undesirable understory vegetation has encroached.
- Selected areas of the enrolled land use acres will be underburned annually for a minimum of three consecutive years to create a mosaic of vegetation in different stages of development.
- Re-burning of already-burned areas during the cumulative year period is prohibited.
- Over the cumulative year period (three or more years) all acres will be underburned.



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- Prior to the burn, assess the existing fuel load. Determine the need for pre-treatment of vegetation and fuels, and for application of complementary NRCS Conservation Practice Standards such as Fuel Break (Code 383), Firebreak (Code 394), and Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384).
- If invasive plants are present, utilize methods and timing that will prevent or control their spread.
- A written burn plan must be developed, and all necessary approvals secured prior to conducting a prescribed burn. The plan will include the following components at a minimum:
  - Objectives of the burn and expected post-burn conditions.
  - Maps, images and/or descriptions of the proposed burn area and any associated or adjacent smoke sensitive areas.
  - Inventory of available fuels.
  - Required weather and fuel conditions under which the burn will be conducted.
  - Firing sequence and methods.
  - List of equipment and personnel needed and job assignments.
  - Any pre-burn preparation needed to safely and effectively conduct the burn
  - List of appropriate authorities, agencies, departments, individuals, and facilities to be contacted and necessary signatures of approval.
  - Checklist for a post-burn evaluation.
- Burning criteria:
  - Follow all components of the burn plan.
  - A current fire weather forecast is required prior to conducting a prescribed burn. Collect weather parameters and other data that affect fire behavior for the day of the burn and monitor the appropriate weather parameters during the burn. Weather conditions outside those prescribed in the written plan will result in postponement or cessation of the burn.
- **MT: Grazing Criteria**
  - **Defer livestock grazing post burning for two growing seasons (until the fall of the second year).**



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## Documentation and Implementation Requirements:

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, identify and document sites dominated by conifer forests adapted to low-intensity ground fires that when properly applied will improve understory diversity for wildlife habitat and control undesirable encroaching vegetation. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
- Prior to implementation, differentiate the enrolled acres into no fewer than 3 units, one to be burned each year, to create a mosaic of vegetation in different stages of development.
- Prior to implementation, assess the existing fuel load and determine the need for pre-treatment of the vegetation and fuels to facilitate a low-intensity ground fire. As needed, apply complimentary conservation practices such as NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Fuel Break (Code 383), Firebreak (Code 394) and Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384) to achieve appropriate conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
- Prior to implementation, acquire a written burn plan for the enrolled land use acres that meets the enhancement criteria and any additional state NRCS requirements. Provide to NRCS for review and written approval.
- Prior to implementation of a prescribed burn, acquire all necessary approvals and permits (i.e. local, state, federal as applicable).
- During implementation, and prior to ignition of each prescribed burn, acquire a current fire weather forecast and ensure all weather conditions are within those prescribed in the written burn plan. If conditions are not within the prescription, postpone burn.
- During implementation, and prior to ignition of any prescribed burn, notify NRCS to confirm NRCS verification for any planned changes will meet NRCS or State required enhancement criteria.
- During implementation, install and maintain erosion control measures as needed for the site. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- After implementation of each prescribed burn, conduct a post-burn evaluation as required within the burn plan and provide evaluation documentation to NRCS.

NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation and as needed, provide technical assistance in determining sites for enhancement implementation that meet specified criteria.

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- Prior to implementation and as needed, provide explanation and technical assistance to the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards as they relate to implementing this enhancement:
  - Prescribed Burning (Code 338)
  - Fuel Break (Code 383)
  - Firebreak (Code 394)
  - Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384)
  - Additional Conservation Practice Standards for erosion control, as needed for the site.
- Prior to implementation, review and certify the prescribed burn plan meets the enhancement criteria and any additional state NRCS requirements.
- During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.
- After implementation of each prescribed burn, review the post burn evaluation provided by the participant. Discuss any encountered issues, and as needed, provide assistance for changes in planning and procedure for the remaining prescribed burns.

### NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contract Number \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Applied \_\_\_\_\_ Fiscal Year Completed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature      Date