



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY
E338140Z

CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM

Short-interval burns to promote a
healthy herbaceous plant community

Conservation Practice 338: Prescribed Burning

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description:

The controlled use of fire is applied in a forest to restore fire-adapted plants and forage while improving wildlife habitat and reducing the risk of damage from intense, severe wildfires. The ideal interval between prescribed burns is not often achieved. In order to improve the effectiveness of prescribed burning, the frequency of prescribed burning is increased appropriately, for a specified time period, to help restore ecological conditions in forests and woodlands. Short return interval prescribed burning is used to regenerate desirable tree species, improve the condition of fire-adapted plants and native herbaceous vegetation, improve forage quantity and quality, create wildlife habitat (snags and den/cavity trees), limit encroachment of competing vegetation including non-native species, and reduce the future risk of damage from intense, severe wildfires.

Criteria:

States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 338 as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.

- Update the Prescribed Burning Plan (CAP-112) in consultation with NRCS personnel to address restoration needs for fire-adapted vegetative communities and forages on the property.
- Assess the need for pre-treatment of vegetation and fuels, and for application of complementary NRCS Conservation Practice Standards (CPSs) such as Fuel Break (Code 383), Firebreak (Code 394), and Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384).



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- Apply to sites where prescribed burning has previously been implemented at longer intervals than recommended to maintain the desired plant community), and where burn frequency must be increased to achieve the objectives listed in the enhancement description.
- The prescribed burning frequency will be reduced from the previous regimen to an interval appropriate for the target plant community.
- Assess the existing fuel load using appropriate tools and methods for the geographic area.
- If invasive plants are present, utilize methods and timing that will prevent or control their spread.
- A written 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:
 - a) The objectives of the burn and the expected post-burn conditions.
 - b) Maps, images and/or descriptions of the proposed burn area and any associated or adjacent smoke sensitive areas.
 - c) Inventory of available fuels.
 - d) Required weather and fuel conditions under which the burn will be conducted.
 - e) Firing sequence and methods.
 - f) List of equipment and personnel needed and job assignments.
 - g) Any pre-burn preparation needed to safely and effectively conduct the prescribed burn.
 - h) List of appropriate authorities, agencies, departments, individuals, and facilities to be contacted and necessary signatures of approval.
 - i) Checklist for a post-burn evaluation.

Burning criteria

- a) Follow all components of the burn plan.
- b) 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.

Grazing criteria

- a) If grazing is used in combination with prescribed burning to manage understory vegetation, a grazing plan must be in place and be used to guide the frequency and duration of grazing periods.

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Documentation Requirements:

- Specifications will be prepared by certified individuals and prepared for each site.
- All necessary permits must be obtained if any and a burning plan must be developed that complies with state and local regulations, and NRCS policy, before implementation of the practice.
- Completed post-burn evaluation as required within burn plan.
- A copy of the grazing plan if livestock are used as part of a system of vegetation management.
- Additional documentation as required by NRCS State Office.