CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E338136Z

Short-interval burns to promote a healthy herbaceous plant community for wildlife food

Conservation Practice 338: Prescribed Burning

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: FISH AND WILDLIFE – INADEQUATE HABITAT - FOOD

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description:

The controlled use of fire is applied in a forest to restore fire-adapted plants while improving wildlife habitat, wildlife food supply, and reducing the risk of damage from intense, severe wildfires. The ideal interval between prescribed burns is not often achieved. 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 wildlife food supply, 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 Prescribed Burning (Code 338) as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.

- Update the Prescribed Burning Plan (Conservation Activity Plan 112), or other Prescribed Burn prescription, in consultation with NRCS to address restoration needs for fire-adapted vegetative communities on the property.

- Assess the need for pre-treatment of vegetation and fuels, and for application of complementary NRCS Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) such as Fuel Break (Code 383), Firebreak (Code 394), and Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384).
• 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:
  - The objectives of the burn and the 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 prescribed 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.
Documentation and Implementation Requirements:

Participant will:

☐ Prior to implementation, determine and document the sites with at least 1 application of prescribed burning where between burn intervals were implemented greater than those recommended for the target plant community by an existing prescribed burn plan or other habitat management plan.

☐ Prior to implementation, determine and document those sites in need of restoration of fire-adapted vegetative communities where increased burn frequency will achieve the objectives listed in the enhancement description. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)

☐ Prior to implementation, assess the existing fuel load using appropriate tools and methods for the geographic area. Determine the need for pre-treatment of the vegetation and fuels to facilitate a desired fire intensity to achieve the enhancement objectives. Apply as needed, complimentary conservation practices such as NRCS CPS Fuelbreak (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. Make plan available to NRCS for review and approval.

☐ Prior to implementation of a prescribed burn, acquire all necessary approvals and permits (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 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 to NRCS.
NRCS will:

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

☐ Prior to implementation and as needed, provide explanation and technical assistance for the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards as they relate to implementing this enhancement:
  - Prescribed Burning (Code 338).
  - Fuelbreak (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
**INDIANA SUPPLEMENT TO**

**CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**E338136Z**

**Additional Criteria for Indiana**

In addition to the criteria specified in the National job sheet E338136Z the following additional criteria apply in Indiana:

- Applies to site where prescribed burning has previously been implemented at longer than 10 year intervals.

- The prescribed burning frequency will be reduced from the previous regimen to an interval of no more than 5 years. (Every 3 to 5 years for oak regeneration is preferable. Some herbaceous species may require a burn every 2 to 3 years)

- Livestock must be excluded from all forested acres enrolled for this enhancement. Where applicable, follow IN FOTG Standard (472) Access Control and IN FOTG Standard (382) Fencing for guidance on excluding livestock.

- Temporary fire breaks shall be created/maintained around any known Indiana bat primary maternal roost trees that fall within a proposed burn area prior to the burn.

- Woody Residue Treatment Standard (Code 384) is not adopted by Indiana NRCS and is not a requirement for treating slash and debris for this enhancement. However, assure that slash and debris does not pose an unacceptable fire, safety, environmental, or pest hazard.

- Fuel Break (Code 383) is not adopted by Indiana NRCS. Use Firebreak (Code 394) as a complementary practice, as needed.

- Prescribed burns shall not be conducted from 15 April through 15 September in burn areas containing potential bat roost trees/snags >5” dbh.

- Management activities that disturb cover or ground surface (such as Prescribed Burning) will not be performed from April 1 through August 1 to protect the primary nesting period for ground-nesting bird species.

- Additional restrictions to establishment and management activities may apply, pending the presence of species of concern or critical habitat. Contact the local field office for more information.
Notes and comments on this National Enhancement:

- Not compatible with: E338137Z1, E338137Z2, E338140Z, E666130Z, E666137Z, any 612 associated enhancements, any 327 associated enhancements (first year) EXCEPT E327136Z2