



What Precautions are Taken to Ensure Public Safety?

Safety is the number one priority of every prescribed fire. Well before a match is struck, managers consider the safety of people, property and the resource they are managing. Safety considerations include:

- **Burn Plan:** A detailed plan is created for each burn that describes the management objectives for the burn. It includes plans for fire and smoke control, allowable weather, and personnel needs. It also includes plans on what to look ahead for and what to do if conditions change.
- **Firebreak Construction:** Wide corridors of cleared vegetation are created around the burn area. The best firebreaks expose bare soil and are free of burnable material, ensuring that the fire doesn't leave the burn site.
- **Smoke Management:** Professional prescribed burners only conduct controlled burns when conditions will minimize the amount of smoke produced and its effect on people.
- **Certified Prescribed Burners:** Most of the prescribed burning in North Carolina is conducted by trained professionals certified by state or federal agencies.
- **Notify the NC Division of Forest Resources and Obtain a Burning Permit.**
- **Conduct Mop-Up Operations and Monitor the Burn Site Until All Fire is Out:** Large or wet fuels may continue to burn for a while, so crews will mop-up by putting out these smoldering fuels, especially those near the burn unit boundaries.

For More Information:

A Guide for Prescribed Fire in Southern Forests,
www.bugwood.org/pfire/

Why Do Good Forest Managers Burn the Woods?
www.state.sc.us/forest/mpb.htm

Using Fire to Improve Wildlife Habitat,
www.ces.ncsu.edu/forestry/pdf/ag/ag630.pdf

Prescribed Fires and Controlled Burns
forestry.about.com/cs/forestfire/a/prescribe_burn.htm

NC Division of Forest Resources
www.dfr.state.nc.us

The Nature Conservancy's "Fire, People, and Ecosystems",
www.nature.org/initiatives/fire/about

Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Site
www.talltimbers.org/research/fireeco.htm

Membership:

Membership in the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council is open to any individual, organization, or agency interested in promoting the safe use of prescribed fire. A membership form can be downloaded from our website at www.ncprescribedfirecouncil.org.



Prescribed Fire

What North Carolina Citizens Need to Know



Produced by the
North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council

What is Prescribed Fire and Why Do We Use It?

A prescribed fire is a planned fire conducted to achieve specific objectives. Many North Carolina ecosystems require periodic fire for maintenance, increased productivity, and good health. Land managers conduct prescribed burns for:

- **Hazardous Fuel Reduction:** Prescribed burning reduces the buildup of vegetation (fuel) which decreases the chance for wildfire that could damage your community.
- **Benefits to Fire-Dependent Ecosystems:** Many plants and animals need fire to thrive. Prescribed burns can reduce competition, release seeds, and add nutrients that benefit these species.
- **Wildlife Management:** Prescribed burning promotes beneficial plant species that attract wildlife.
- **Forest Management:** Prescribed fire is used for site preparation, hardwood and understory control, disease control, and management for fire resistant species.



What Happens Without Fire?

- **Destructive Wildfire:** Vegetation (fuel) buildup can lead to large, uncontrolled wildfires but prescribed burns reduce fuels and the risk posed to people and property from wildfires. Smoke from wildfires is difficult to control and it carries more pollutants than smoke from prescribed fires.
- **Loss of Native Species:** Prescribed fire promotes species diversity, ecosystem health, and helps control invasive species that may out compete native plants in the absence of fire.
- **Loss of Habitat for Wildlife:** Without fire, forests can develop dense undergrowth of vines and shrubs while marshes and other grasslands can be invaded by bushes and trees. These changes can make areas unsuitable for some species of wildlife.
- **Reduction in Recreational Use of Forests:** Without controlled burns, dense undergrowth builds up making it hard to walk through.
- **Use of Alternative Management Tools:** Other tools that are used to control undergrowth like herbicides or machinery can be more expensive and detrimental to native plants and animals than the careful use of prescribed fire.

What Can Citizens Do to Help Land Managers Continue Using Prescribed Fire?

- **Understand** that prescribed fire is necessary to protect you and your community and it improves ecosystem health.
- **Get Involved** with Firewise and other programs offered by the NC Division of Forest Resources. You can learn about the risks of wildfire in your area and what steps you can take to reduce the threat of wildfire to your community. (www.ncfirewise.org)
- **Join the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council** to help others learn about fire and its role in the forest and other natural areas.
- **Support** legislation and ordinances that promote prescribed burning by professionals.

