

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**PRESCRIBED BURNING
(Ac.)
CODE 338**

DEFINITION

Controlled fire applied to a predetermined area.

The client may be liable for damages caused by fire escaping from their land or for damage caused to others for inadequate smoke management impact.

PURPOSE

- Control undesirable vegetation.
- Prepare sites for harvesting, planting or seeding.
- Control plant disease.
- Reduce wildfire hazards.
- Improve wildlife habitat.
- Improve forage quantity / quality.
- Remove slash and debris.
- Enhance seed and seedling production.
- Facilitate distribution of grazing and browsing animals.
- Restore and maintain ecological sites.

The procedure, equipment, and the number of trained personnel shall be adequate to accomplish the intended purposes.

All burns shall include appropriate firebreaks to conduct a safe burn.

The expected weather conditions, human and vehicular traffic that may be impeded by heat or smoke, liability (e.g., utility lines) and safety and health precautions shall be integrated into the timing, location and expected intensity of the burn.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on all lands as appropriate.

Timing of burning will be commensurate with soil and site conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize effects on soil erosion and soil properties (structure, soil moisture).

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Clients must understand:

- Safety is the **FIRST** consideration in prescribed burning
- The client (landowner or his/her designee) must be on-site throughout the prescribed burn period.
- NRCS personnel **will not** serve as the client's designee.
- A written detailed prescribed burn plan **MUST** be developed **PRIOR** to implementation of the burn.

Weather parameters and other data that affect fire behavior should be monitored during the burn. Carbon release should be minimized by the timing and burn intensity.

The location of utilities such as electric power lines and natural gas pipelines shall be documented to prevent damage to the utility and avoid personal injury.

Smoke impacts must be considered before the burn and should be monitored during the burn. See "[Arkansas Voluntary Smoke Management Guidelines](#)," for proper planning of smoke

CONSIDERATIONS

Burning should be managed with consideration for wildlife needs so as to maintain or improve; feeding, nesting, brooding, winter and escape cover.

Prescribed burning is not meant to be an annual management practice. Burn only to meet a specific management objective. (See Purpose). Generally, it is not necessary to burn an area more often than once every 3-5 years.

Productive woodlands with quality trees intended for timber production may be subject to fire scarring. The burn prescription should specify fires with low heat intensities in these timber stands.

Existing barriers such as lakes, streams, wetlands, roads, and constructed firebreaks are important to the design and layout of this practice.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission (1-800-830-8015), County Sheriff's Office, and local fire department must be notified prior to the ignition of the burn. **Notifying the Arkansas Forestry Commission is a requirement of Arkansas State Law.**

Notify adjoining landowners as appropriate within the airshed prior to burning.

Consider cultural resources and threatened and endangered species when planning this practice

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

A written detailed prescribed burn plan **MUST** be prepared by individuals with appropriate job approval authority **PRIOR** to the implementation of each burn.

All prescribed burn plans shall address but not be limited to the following items:

- Location and description of the burn area.
- Pre-burn vegetation cover.
- Resource management objectives.
- Acceptable weather conditions for prescribed burn.
- Notification check list.
- Pre-burn preparation.
- Equipment checklist/personnel assignments and needs/safety requirements.
- Post burn evaluation criteria.
- Firing sequence.
- Ignition method.
- Approval signatures

In addition to the above, the burn plan **MUST**:

- Be written so that the planned wind direction takes smoke away from roads, residences, or other sensitive areas according to the Arkansas Smoke Management Guidelines.
- Define desired results for a successful burn required by the management objectives to enable a proper post burn evaluation.
- Inform clients of their potential liability if the fire escapes control or smoke damage occurs.
- Require all persons present on the fire to wear natural fiber clothing or "nomex" clothing, and leather boots.
- Require all persons to be physically capable of performing the activities associated with prescribed burning.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The kinds and expected variability of site factors (e.g., fuel condition and moisture content, weather conditions, human and vehicular traffic that may be impeded by heat or smoke, liability, and safety and health precautions) shall be monitored during the operation of this practice.

Sufficient fire suppression equipment and personnel shall be available commensurate with the expected behavior of these factors during the time of burning to prevent a wildfire or other safety, health or liability incident.

Maintenance shall include monitoring of the burned site and adjacent areas until ash, debris and other consumed material is at pre-burn temperatures.

REFERENCES

A Guide for Prescribed Fire in Southern Forests. 1989. Technical Publication R8-TP 11. US Forest Service, Southern Region. Atlanta, GA. 56 p.

Anderson, Hal E. 1982. Aids to Determining Fuel Models for Estimating Fire Behavior. General Technical Report INT-122. US Forest Service, Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. Ogden, UT. 22 p.

Arkansas Voluntary Smoke Management Guidelines. 1998. Arkansas Forestry Association, Little Rock, AR. 12 p.

Roth, Frank A., II. 1999. Prescribed Burning in Arkansas Forests. University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. Little Rock, AR. 6 p.

Scholl, Eric R., and Thomas A. Waldrop. 1999. Photos for Estimating Fuel Loadings Before and After Prescribed Burning in the Upper Coastal Plain of the Southeast. General Technical Report SRS-26. US Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Asheville, NC. 25 p.