

COORDINATION OF PRESCRIBED BURNING FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT

MS-ECS-338-01 (JS)
Rev. February 2000

PURPOSE	TIME OF BURN	SIZE OF BURN*	TYPE OF FIRE	FREQUENCY	REMARKS
REDUCE FUELS	Winter	Large enough to break fuel continuity	Heavy rough: backfire. Moderate-to-light roughs: strip-head	2 to 4 years.	For plantation maintenance burns, annual head fires may be used after reducing heavy roughs by an initial backfire.
IMPROVE WILDLIFE HABITAT					
General					General - Protect transitional or fringe areas. Protect hardwoods.
Deer	Winter preferred	200 + acres **	Winter: backfire	3 to 5 years.	
Turkey	Winter preferred; avoid March-July; Summer burns in August only	200 + acres **	Winter: backfire Summer: strip-head	3 to 5 years.	
Quail	Winter only	Checkerboard or strip if over 160 acres	Backfire or strip-head	2 years.	Leave thickets, stream bottoms
Dove	Winter	Not critical		Not critical	Leave thickets, stream bottoms
Waterfowl	Winter; Spring	Not critical		Not critical	Not recommended in hardwood sites – use on marshy areas only (exposes seeds & roots). Spring burn sets back succession and promotes seed producing annuals.
CONTROL DISEASE	Brownspot – winter	Dependent on infected area - include a buffer strip	Backfire or strip-head (strip-head with higher humidities and light fuels is usually best)	2-3 years.	Avoid leaving unburned pockets of infected seedlings within or immediately adjacent to burn if possible.
ENHANCE APPEARANCE	Winter	Varies with each individual situation - generally small	Backfire	1-5 years.	Requires precise prescriptions to protect vegetative type changes. Recognize effect on annual and biennial flowering plants. Provide pleasing visual lines. Time and method of burning may be critical to public acceptance.

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PREPARE SITES FOR SEEDING and PLANTING	<i>Planting:</i> Growing season for hardwood control, fall and winter for planting. <i>Direct Seeding:</i> Fall and winter for spring sowing. In some areas previous winter for fall sowing of longleaf pine. <i>Natural Seeding:</i> Summer and early fall, prior to natural seed fall.	Large enough to prevent concentrations of birds and rodents (usually 10 acres or more).	<i>Planting or direct seeding:</i> ring fire in slash areas; flank or strip-head fire <i>Natural Seeding</i> <i>Summer:</i> Strip-head <i>Winter:</i> Backfire		Recognize impact on water and wildlife resources since these are generally hot fires.
MANAGE UNDERSTORY VEGETATION	Heavy roughs: winter; Moderate roughs: winter, spring or summer	Not critical	<i>Winter:</i> backfire <i>Spring and Summer:</i> back or strip-head	Varies with management objectives	Summer burns generally result in higher mortality and affect larger stems. Exclude fire from desirable hardwoods in hardwood and pine-hardwood types
IMPROVE FORAGE	Winter for most situations. Split burn if possible (example - Dec. & Feb.)	Not critical**	Not critical but relate to other resources	3 to 4 years.	Split burning provides higher nutritional values over longer period. Individual grass and forb species respond differently to fire. Knowledge of species present and reaction to fire important.
IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY	Will vary with species, understory, and desired use.	Varies with individual situation.	The more rough - the less intense burning technique should be used.		Objectives for burn will influence size, time and frequency of burn. Coordinate with other resource objectives.

*Burn areas larger than 50 acres should be subdivided. Manipulating prescribed burns is much easier on smaller units and limits stem and crown damage if the prescribed burn becomes a wildfire.

**Size of ownership, adjacent land use, etc., may affect size of burn; i.e., on a 200-acre tract, burns of 40 to 60 acres per year provide variety of conditions.

Note - For smoke management purposes, use a backfire whenever possible, as this technique produces less particulate matter.

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