

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION GUIDE
PRESCRIBED BURNING**

338

338 – STEP 1. INITIAL EVALUATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to determine the landowner's desire to apply controlled fire to predetermined areas to control undesirable vegetation, prepare sites for planting or seeding, control plant disease, reduce wildfire hazards, improve wildlife habitat, improve forage production quantity and/or quality, slash and debris removal, enhance seed and seedling production, to facilitate distribution of grazing and browsing animals. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard and Specification 338).

The landowner must be interviewed to determine the purpose and needs for prescribed burning. Questions such as why burn, what to burn, when to burn and how to burn should be answered. The answer to these questions can justify burning based on consideration of alternative methods, and the areas, times and methods of burning can be carefully selected. Some considerations will include the landowner's goals and objectives, existing condition and effects of this practice on existing soil, water, air, plant, animal and human resources. A discussion of NRCS prescribed burning standards and specifications should also take place. Role of the landowner and the person assisting with the burn plan should also be discussed. Additional pertinent questions should be asked on a site-specific basis. (see Considerations for Prescribed Burning NMSU-CES Circular 522)

338 – STEP 2. INVESTIGATIONS, SURVEYS, AND INVENTORIES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to identify the entire mandatory preliminary resource inventory and operations that are required before prescribed burning can be planned and implemented.

Resource inventories will include all data and information needed to make informed decisions in the development of the prescribed burn plan and any follow-up management needs. A complete resource inventory including climate, weather, soils, ecological sites, plant response, fuel load amounts, continuity, density, wildlife and all physical features that might be effected by the burn. If livestock grazing is part of the operations practice standards and specifications for Prescribed Grazing (528a) will be followed. Adjacent land resources that would be effected by fire should also be inventoried. Identify map resources needed such as the proper USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle sheet, soils, and road maps as well as aerial photography. Also include identifying all needed utility clearances, archeological clearances, and the appropriate New Mexico Environment Department Open Burn permit. (call 1-800-321-2357 (ALERT) for utility clearance, New Mexico Environment Air Quality Bureau at [HTTP://WWW.NMENV.STATE.NM.US/AQB/INDEX.HTML](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/index.html) also see Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Practice Job Sheet 338 and 528a 1 thru 7, ENV-1 Environmental Assessment & Resource Inventory Checklist).

338 – STEP 3. PRACTICE DESIGN

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to develop a prescribed burn plan for the location of the prescribed burn.

All burn plans should be reviewed by the New Mexico State Forestry Division and must adhere to the legal restraints in the New Mexico State Statutes Annotated 1978. (Chapters 30-17-1 and 68-2-8)

This practice will be applied in accordance with all federal, state and local laws and ordinances. Resource inventories and local conditions will need to be assessed at the proposed prescribed burn site in order to identify any possible problems that may arise.

Practice Documentation Guide 338-2

A complete prescribed burn plan will be developed with the client that meets the intended goals and objectives.

All appropriate job sheets, maps and reports must be developed with landowners input, review and concurrence. Knowledge of the types of equipment used in the application of prescribed burns is essential, and a list of required accepted equipment must be provided to the landowner. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 338, Practice Specification 338, Job Sheet 338).

II. SITING

The purpose of this step is to insure the ability to recognize the acceptable locations for proposed prescribed burn. Care should be given to make sure the burn site locations are known by all involved and that all obvious safety hazards are recognized and addressed.

III. BURN MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT

The purpose of this item is to insure an understanding of the burn materials/equipment used to implement the prescribed burn. Insure that the fire boss, and burn team has working knowledge of the types of accepted equipment and materials that will be used to implement the prescribed burn. Further knowledge would include the types of ignition, prevention and safety equipment required for the burn. Appropriate standards, job sheets and expectations that include the types and number of each type of burn materials/equipment will need to be provided to the landowner, burn team and/or contractor.

338 – STEP 4. PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to document and describe each component of the prescribed burn plan which includes step by step instructions, construction methods and materials to be used while carrying out the prescribed burn. This will include the documentation of all components described in Prescribed Burn Job Sheet 338. Additional reference material should include as needed and appropriate.

The landowner must be provided with a complete prescribed burn plan in the form of NRCS Job sheet 338 in order to document the prescribed burn installation process. Any items not described in Job Sheet 338 that are essential for implementation of a safe and effective burn will be added to the Job sheet.

338 - STEP 5. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION, MAINTENANCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to assure the proper management and maintenance is completed before, during and after the prescribed burn. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard 338, Practice Specification 338, Job Sheet 338).

This requires a familiarity with fire behavior, plant ecology, weather, climate, soils, and grazing management in order to assure that the burn area meets goals and objects and that the plant community continues to improve over time. These measures should be discussed with and understood by the landowner.

338 – STEP 6. COMPLIANCE OR SPOT CHECKING

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to determine that all work has been completed to the standards required by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All completed NRCS forms should be collected from the landowner and submitted to the appropriate persons. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 338, Practice Specification 338, Job Sheet 338, NM-ENV-1 Environmental Assessment & Resource Inventory Checklist).

II. DOCUMENTS

Copies of all completed job sheets and associated work sheets should be submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative within 10 working days of completion of the prescribed burn. This includes the Practice Requirements for Prescribed Burn, Job Sheet 338 and any other job sheets such as 528a1 - 7 that may be needed for this practice to meet the intended goals and objectives.