

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

PRESCRIBED BURNING

Ac)

CODE 338

DEFINITION

Applying controlled fire to a predetermined area.

PURPOSE

- To control undesirable vegetation.
- To prepare sites for planting or seeding.
- To control plant disease.
- To reduce wildfire hazards.
- To improve wildlife habitat.
- To improve forage quantity/quality.
- To remove slash and debris.
- To enhance seed and seedling production.
- To restore and maintain ecological sites.
- To facilitate distribution of grazing and browsing animals.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all lands as appropriate.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

Cooperators will be cautioned to burn in accordance with state and local laws and regulations, following an approved prescribed burn plan. They must understand that they

may be liable for damages caused by fire escaping from their land or for damage caused to others from inadequate smoke management. They may also be responsible for fire suppression cost, should the fire escape the designated area.

Liability and safety precautions are to be planned before the burn and monitored during the burn.

Adjoining landowners within the anticipated airshed will be notified prior to burning.

Burn only when transport wind will carry smoke away from roads and residences unless adequate safeguards have been taken (traffic control, removal of residents, notification, etc.). People who have known respiratory problems should be removed from the area where smoke intrusion could occur.

When smoke management is critical, burn when conditions are good for rapid dispersion of smoke. The atmosphere should be somewhat unstable so that the smoke will rise and dissipate; but not so unstable as to be problematic in controlling the burn.

Never burn within 1 mile of an airport, unless written permission is obtained from airport authorities.

On the day of the burn, the cooperator will notify all appropriate units of government and adjoining landowners of intent to burn. These will be specified on the plan.

The procedure, equipment, and number of trained personnel shall be adequate to accomplish the intended purpose. The timing of the burn will be based on, as a minimum:

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service or download the standard from the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](#) for Missouri.

**NRCS MOFOTG
January 2005**

338-2

relative humidity, wind conditions, air temperature, and fuel conditions. Guidance is provided in Section IV of the eFOTG. (JS-Agron 18)

Identify and locate on the plan map any potential hazard areas; (roads, headquarters, residences, windbreaks, woodlands, electrical power poles and transmission lines, fences, flammable conduits, etc.).

Firebreaks will be established that separate the area to be burned from those needing protection. A firebreak will be constructed according to specifications as stated in the burn plan.

Erosion control measures shall prevent sediment from leaving the site where bare ground firebreaks are established. Refer to CRITICAL AREA SEEDING (342) for vegetation establishment and FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS (655) for techniques to control erosion where permanent firebreaks are installed in woodland cover types.

Remove all volatile woody species over 4 feet in height within 50 feet of the primary firebreak. Where removal of certain trees is not feasible, branches will be pruned to at least 2 times the expected flame length and residues scattered to assure fire does not reach the canopy of these trees.

Public roads and public rights of way will not be used as primary firebreaks.

If grazing is planned, deferment following a burn will be based on sward height. Guidance can be found in Practice Standard PRESCRIBED GRAZING (528), Section IV of the Missouri Field Office Technical Guide.

All necessary permits must be obtained before implementation of the practice.

Refer to Conservation Information Sheet, IS-MO338, "Prescribed Burning" for additional guidance.

Additional Criteria to Improve Wildlife Habitat

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

NRCS MOFOTG January 2005

CONSIDERATIONS

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 more often than once every 3-5 years. When burning to control undesirable sprouting woody vegetation, it may be necessary to burn two or more consecutive years.

Weather conditions are generally most stable and favorable for burning following the passage of a weather front. Frontal passages are often accompanied by rain. Good burning conditions are frequently present 1-3 days following a rain.

Fire weather forecasts are provided by email during the burn season. Additional current weather information can be accessed on the Internet. (<http://wxp.eas.purdue.edu>, <http://www.weather.com>, <http://www.intellicast.com/weather/usa/content.html>, <http://www.conservation.state.mo.us/forest/fire/>, http://nws.noaa.gov/products/fire_wx/, <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/firewxpage.shtml>).

For prescribed burns on wildlife land, a NRCS or MDC biologist can provide good information to prevent unfavorable effects on wildlife habitat or other species of concern.

Reducing the fuel height to about 1 foot next to the firebreak greatly reduces the intensity of the fire at the fire line. Removing snags and brush piles near firebreak helps prevent fires from escaping or spotting over.

Existing barriers such as lakes, streams, wetlands, private roads, and constructed firebreaks can be used as primary or secondary firebreaks and are important to the design and layout of any prescribed burn.

Woodlands that have site indexes of 60 or above generally should not be burned. If the timber species is subject to fire scarring, but it becomes necessary to burn the site, the burn prescription should specify fires with very low heat intensities.

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

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

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

A written burn plan will be prepared by individuals with appropriate job approval authority for each burn.

Specifications will be developed for each burn and recorded using JS-Agron 18, Prescribed Burn Plan. A prescribed burn plan will be filed with and referred to in the conservation plan.

As a minimum, a burn plan will include:

- Description of the burn area including present vegetation cover.
- Objective and timing of burn.
- Acceptable weather conditions for prescribed burning.
- Notification checklist.
- Preparation of the area for burning.
- Equipment/personnel needs/safety requirements.
- Special precaution areas.
- Ignition method.
- Firing technique and sequence.
- Approval signatures.
- Post burn evaluation.

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.

The Missouri Pre-Burn Checklist (Day of the Burn) JS-Agron 18 will be completed prior to the actual burn.

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 such time as ash, debris and other consumed material are at pre-burn temperatures.

The JS-Agron 18 Post-Burn Evaluation (Day of Burn) and Follow-Up Evaluation (60 – 90 Days after the burn) will be completed for all burns.

A copy of the JS-Agron 18 will be kept in the case file for each burn.