

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
NEW JERSEY  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**PRESCRIBED BURNING**

(Ac.)

**CODE 338**

**DEFINITION**

Controlled fire applied to a predetermined area.

**PURPOSE**

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

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies on all lands as appropriate.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

All prescribed burns shall address the following items:

- Location and description of the burn area.
- Pre-burn vegetation cover.

- Resource management objectives.
- Required 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
- Comply with N.J.S.A. Title 13 Forest Fire Laws.

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

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.

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).

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.

**NRCS, NJFOTG**

**March 2006**

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/) at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>

Consider the location of utilities such as electric power lines and natural gas pipelines 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.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Burning should be managed with consideration for wildlife needs such as nesting, feeding and cover.

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

Notify adjoining landowners, local fire departments and public safety officials as appropriate within the air shed prior to burning.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications will be prepared by certified individuals and prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation. All necessary permits must be obtained and a burning plan developed before implementation of the practice.

The burn plan shall include:

- Description of the burn area including present vegetative cover

- Objective and timing of burn. The prescribed burn season is October 1 to March 15.
- Acceptable conditions for prescribed burn.
- Preparation of the area for burning including dimensions.
- Personnel needed and equipment, including safety equipment, needed to perform burn.
- Special precaution areas.
- Firing technique.

### **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.