



CRP Required Management Practice: Prescribed Burning

Landowner: _____

Tract: _____

CRP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is responsible for administering the rules of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). All questions related to CRP contract requirements, payment, or modifications should be directed to the FSA office where your contract originated.

Required Management Practices are designed to enhance the cover value. This job sheet describes how to implement Prescribed Burning as a required management activity.

PURPOSE

The purpose of required contract management activities is to enhance the wildlife habitat value of the enrolled acres by encouraging a diverse forb/legume community. Forbs and legumes in grasslands are beneficial to birds, pollinators, monarch butterflies, and other wildlife. Prescribed burning is an effective management tool to balance the forbs and grasses in a native planting.

The vegetative structure changes as annual forbs and legumes are replaced by perennial grasses, and eventually, woody plants.

Once established, grassland fields need to be managed to increase diversity.

NOTE: CRP rules do not allow disturbance of cover during the primary nesting season. This rule prevents injury to nesting and fledgling birds. The current primary nesting season for new CRP contracts in Wisconsin is **May 15 through August 1**. CRP participants are also required to control invasive and weed plant species before they produce viable seed. Maintenance activities such as spot mowing, spot spaying, and spot burning may be done during the primary nesting season with

prior approval from the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee.

PRESCRIBED BURNING

When fire is properly applied it can improve grassland habitats by:

- » Creating open ground for wildlife movement by reducing excess plant litter and dense sod formation.
- » Allowing sunlight to reach the soil surface, encouraging the germination and growth of forbs and legumes.
- » Suppressing woody plants and other non-native plant species.
- » Reducing naturally occurring wildfire hazards while enhancing the aesthetic appearance of natural landscapes.
- » Creating structural diversity that especially helpful for enhancing grassland bird habitat.

The habitat quality is enhanced because fire inhibits woody growth, promotes favored seed producing plants, reduces plant residue, increases bare ground, and increases insect abundance.

SPECIFICATIONS

The landowner is responsible for acquiring permits and following all local, state, and federal laws.

Landowners must adhere to the burn plan and are responsible for confining prescribed burns to the designated lands. Landowners are liable for damages and costs to others should the fire escape from the designated area. Landowners are also responsible for damages caused by smoke blowing into neighboring properties, across roads or airport

runways.

- » A written prescribed burn plan must be completed and submitted to NRCS for review before any fires are ignited. Prescribed burning plans will follow the NRCS Prescribed Burning Practice Standard (338) found in the Wisconsin Field Office Technical Guide.
- » NRCS shall not participate in igniting burns.
- » Prescribed burning shall not be performed during the primary nesting season of May 15th through August 1st.
- » Prescribed burns shall not be planned in the following areas:
 1. Areas where the soil surface contains

high levels of organic matter (muck/peat).

2. Areas where burning will cause erosion to exceed tolerable limits.
3. Areas planted to trees and/or shrubs.

CONSIDERATIONS

Evaluate the proposed site to determine the intended objective of the burn, and what conditions are needed to meet the intended objective. See Table 1.

Use discretion when soil conditions are extremely dry or drought conditions are predicted - burning under these conditions may destroy perennial prairie plants.

It is highly recommended that prescribed burning be delayed until after August 15 to reduce the chance of harming fledgling birds and other young wildlife.

Table 1. Burn Objective and Relationship to Burning Time-frame

Burn Objective	Timing of Burn
Promote grasses in introduced plantings	August 2-August 10 or October 1-November 15 or March 1-April 14
Promote forbs and legumes in introduced plantings	April 15-May 14 or August 20-September 30
Promote early forbs in native plantings	August 2-August 10 or November 1-November 30 or March 1-April 15
Promote grasses and late forbs in native plantings	April 15-May 14 or August 20-September 30

CRP Field Number	Acres	Burn Objective	Year	Timing of Burn

Notes: