

PRESCRIBED BURNING

Prescribed burning is planning, setting and managing fires to accomplish resource management objectives.

Prescribed burning is a complicated subject and will not be discussed in great detail here. Interested readers are referred to the many references on the subject, two of which are listed in Appendix 1 on page 87. Consult land managers and scientists who have experience with local conditions if you are contemplating prescribed burning.



Prescribed burning work best when ...

- The noxious weed species you want to control is much more susceptible to the effects of burning than are the intermingled desirable plant species.
- Controlling cool-season grasses in prairie restorations.
- A proper monitoring plan is in place to evaluate the effects and success of the project.



Limitations of prescribed burning include...

- The need for intensive planning to insure that the burn will be safe and accomplish the intended resource management objectives.
- Smoke management problems, especially in urban areas, that limit your ability to burn.
- Availability of crew members who have “red cards” that signify a minimal level of fire training.
- Availability of experienced crews to manage the prescribed burn in your particular fuel type(s).

Pitfalls of prescribed burning include:

- The possibility of burns getting out of control and damaging property and endangering human life.
- Liability issues if a fire gets out of control.
- Arid environments cannot tolerate frequent burning.
- Massive germination and establishment of weed seeds following burning. However, this may be advantageous, in that it may assist in the depletion of the bank of weed seeds in the soil, if you are prepared to control the resulting weeds.