United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Enhancement Activity
E338137Z2

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Short-interval burn

Conservation Practice 338: Prescribed Burning

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Fish & Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Increase the frequency of prescribed burning to help restore ecological conditions in forests and woodlands. Several years of intense burning in certain forest and woodland conditions can regenerate desirable tree species, improve the condition of fire-adapted plants and native herbaceous vegetation, create wildlife habitat (snags and den/cavity trees), limit encroachment of competing vegetation including non-native species, and reduce the future risk of damage from intense, severe wildfires.

Criteria

- States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 338 as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.
- Apply to sites where prescribed burning has previously been implemented at longer intervals (10-20 years), and where burn frequency must be increased to achieve the objectives listed in the enhancement description.
- The prescribed burning frequency will be reduced from the previous regimen to an interval of no more than 3 years between burns.
- Assess the existing fuel load using appropriate tools and methods for the geographic area.

- Assess the need for pre-treatment of vegetation and fuels, and for application of complementary CPSs such as Fuel Break (383), Firebreak (394), and Woody Residue Treatment (384).

- If invasive plants are present, utilize methods and timing that will prevent or control their spread.

- A written plan must be developed and all necessary approvals secured prior to conducting a prescribed burn. The plan will include the following components at a minimum:

    - The objectives of the burn and the expected post-burn conditions.

    - Maps, images and/or descriptions of the proposed burn area and any associated or adjacent smoke sensitive areas.

    - Inventory of available fuels.

    - Required weather and fuel conditions under which the burn will be conducted.

    - Firing sequence and methods.

    - List of equipment and personnel needed and job assignments.

    - Any pre-burn preparation needed to safely and effectively conduct the burn

    - List of appropriate authorities, agencies, departments, individuals, and facilities to be contacted and necessary signatures of approval.

    - Checklist for a post-burn evaluation.

- **Burning criteria:**

    - Follow all components of the burn plan.

    - A current fire weather forecast is required prior to conducting a prescribed burn. Collect weather parameters and other data that affect fire behavior for the day of the burn and monitor the appropriate weather parameters during

the burn. Weather conditions outside those prescribed in the written plan will result in postponement or cessation of the burn.

Documentation Requirements

- 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 that complies with state and local regulations, and NRCS policy, before implementation of the practice.
- Completed post-burn evaluation as required within burn plan.
- Additional documentation as required by NRCS State Office.