United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Animal Enhancement Activity –*ANM11- Patch-burning to enhance wildlife habitat*

Patch-burning to enhance wildlife habitat
Use prescribed burning to create patches of different vegetation structure and species composition for the benefit of wildlife.

Land Use Applicability: This enhancement is applicable to pastureland, rangeland and forest land.

Benefits
Patch-burning is a grassland management activity for landowners interested in improving habitat for wildlife while still maintaining forage production for livestock. This management activity helps create a mosaic of diverse vegetative structure and plant composition in the same pasture Livestock also benefit as different plant species may be available, especially during mid-and late growing season vegetation slumps. Patches of different vegetation composition can extend and/or supplement livestock during the grazing season.

Criteria for Patch-burning to enhance wildlife habitat

1. Burn at least 10% and not more than 40% of the pasture in any year.
2. Avoid burning during peak nesting season for targeted wildlife species.
3. A minimum of two burn treatments should be applied during a 5 year period. Annual application by burning a different patch each year is acceptable and desirable for many wildlife species.
4. A written grazing management plan that identifies:
    a) Wildlife management objectives describing how patch burning will accomplish those objectives.
    b) Percentage of area planned to be burned by year.
    c) Locations, total acres, planned year and season of burns.
    d) The desired frequency of burning (example: burn same area once every 4 years) should be stated and based on the desired plant community's adaptation and response to fire.
    e) Stocking rates that will allow for proper forage utilization.
    f) Areas where fire is to be excluded for habitat considerations, such as desirable shrub stands, stream sides, etc.

5. Prepare a written prescribed burn plan for each prescribed burn that identifies:
    a) Locations to receive burn treatment and level of patchiness desired
    b) Time of burn
    c) Firebreaks locations, if needed
    d) Weather parameters for the burn (temperature, wind speed, relative humidity)[5]

e) Burn plans must be conducted in accordance with all state laws.

Documentation Requirements for Patch-burning to enhance wildlife habitat

- Written prescribed burn plan identifying pasture, acres and dates of prescribed burn.
- A map showing where the activities are applied.

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NH State Supplement
Animal Enhancement Activity –*ANM11- Patch-burning to enhance wildlife habitat*

Criteria

Peak nesting season in NH occurs for grassland bird species occurs between May 15-July 15th.

Burning is controlled on a town-by -town basis in NH. Gaining proper approvals and a burn plan may be difficult.