

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook has been prepared to inform you of the general policies related to prescribed burning on DNR-owned and managed lands, address various aspects of prescribed fire behavior, and present guidelines for planning, conducting, and evaluating prescribed burns. Any policy related to fire management *not* included in this handbook can be found within the Forestry Division's Fire Management Handbook. Specific responsibilities for planning, operations, evaluations, and reporting can be found at the beginning of each chapter of this handbook.

GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Division of Forestry – Serves as the home division for the department's prescribed burn program and is responsible for setting operational policies, allocating determined resource needs, meeting program goals, and implementing prescribed fire.

Division of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks – Serves as a partner that informs and contributes to prescribed burn program policies, defining goals, and implementation of prescribed fire.

FR/WM/NHC Bureau Directors/District Leaders – Responsible for oversight and direction to ensure that prescribed burn activities outlined in this Handbook are accomplished safely and effectively. Collaborate to set planning goals and provide input on policy decisions for the burn program.

Prescribed Burn Specialist – Responsible for providing program guidance/policy for all program planning & operations. Coordinates/develops public/media communication tools and materials amongst the three bureaus. Assists in coordination of statewide/area training opportunities. Serves as the department public contact and statewide representative for prescribed burn partners.

Area Forestry Leader (AFL) – Works with the **Area Wildlife, Parks, and NHC Supervisors and staff** to implement the prescribed burn program within each Forestry Area. The AFL serves as the Technical Reviewer for all prescribed burn plans within organized Fire Protection Areas. The AFL also holds the authority for staffing prescribed burns on DNR-managed lands and coordinating (or designating) staffing with MOU partners on joint-party prescribed burns.

FR Team Leaders, WM/NHC Field Supervisors – Responsible for reviewing IQS (Incident Qualification System) qualifications with prescribed burn staff during each performance evaluation, determining future desired training needs, and ensuring staff qualifications are maintained and updated with the necessary forms prior to each spring fire season.

Cooperative Fire Ranger – Works on prescribed burn program activities within the regions outside of the organized Fire Protection Areas. The Cooperative Fire Ranger serves as the Technical Reviewer for all prescribed burn plans outside of Fire Protection Areas within their individual work region (with the exception of plans they initially write as burn bosses).

Forestry Area Dispatchers – Point of communications for fire management operational resources. Track and record data for planned and ongoing prescribed burns. Support all fire operations by coordinating with the AFL, filling suppression resource orders from the field, maintaining ledger of all dispatch communications, and sharing fire behavior predictions (when available). Serve as the local recipient for all prescribed burn data needing entry into IQS.

Habitat Manager – Habitat Managers determine prescribed burn needs on properties they manage based on management goal, restoration/maintenance status, and established fire regimes for those community types. Habitat Managers are not necessarily the Property Managers for all DNR properties. For Parks and Fisheries properties, wildlife biologists or field ecologists serve as the Habitat Managers. In this situation, Habitat Managers are responsible for working with the Property Managers to determine needs and schedule prescribed burns for the property. Responsible for scheduling prescribed burns, determining specific burn objectives, evaluating if those objectives were met, and scheduling the next prescribed burn for that unit. They are also responsible for facilitating the burn planning & evaluations for any contracted burns not conducted by DNR staff. For more detail on planning/evaluation roles and responsibilities, refer to the Roles and Responsibilities sections in both Chapters 2 and 4.

Crewmembers – Responsible for following policies relating to planning, conducting, and extinguishment of prescribed burns, and maintaining staffing availability in IFFRS during burn seasons. Responsible for submitting burn experiences, fire-related course training certificates, and any other information necessary for maintaining an accurate IQS record.

THE ROLE OF THE BURN BOSS

Scope of the position

The DNR Burn Boss (WRXB) serves a crucial leadership role in the burn program both before, during, and after the burn. Decisions made by this individual effect not only themselves, their crew, or that specific burn, but also the perception of prescribed burning by the general public. This responsibility also comes with expectations of the individual in that role.

DNR WRXBs are fully supported and empowered in their role if they are operating within the expected scope of their position. These fundamental priorities and expectations include:

- Prioritizing safety of crew and the general public in all operational decisions, including the communication of the burn to all required and/or affected parties
- Upholding a professional and skilled representation of the DNR burn program
- Coordinating with the property manager and habitat manager for activation and confirming objectives of the burn will be met
- Having appropriate and up-to-date knowledge of burn unit and firebreak conditions through site visits and communication with the habitat manager
- Assessing the availability and efficacy of burn windows for each of their assigned burns
- Ensuring that all operational burn planning, execution, and evaluations are conducted per program policy
- Ensuring that any volunteer crew members are appropriately authorized and qualified to burn
- Conducting final checks as required in Go/No-go checklist
- Making operational decisions according to policy, experience, and best available knowledge at the time
- Conducting the burn within the accepted parameters listed in the burn plan
- Shutting down their burn *as safely as possible*, when conditions are outside of prescription
- Sharing outcomes and lessons learned to benefit burn boss leadership across the program

Authority of the position

In order to effectively manage fire operations, burn bosses must be confident in the ability and authority of their position. Below are some of the specific authorizations provided to DNR Burn Bosses:

- Have authority to burn through approved burn plan from a “duly appointed forester” ([Wis State Statute 26.12\(5\)](#))
- Delegate leadership authority to maintain span of control
 - o Line bosses, patrolling, on-site media/public visits
- Request adjustments, in consultation with AFL, in crew/equipment if conducting partial unit burns or if day-of conditions warrant.
- Request traffic control assistance from local law enforcement
- Remove any crew member from fireline operations who do not follow operational command and/or policies
- Direct public media or other non-burn crew personnel to leave closed area for their safety and the safety of the burn crew
- May respond to on-site media about the burn, if doing so does not hamper fire operations or safety (See MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS section for more information)

Burn bosses must also understand the limitations of the position. The department has vested suppression personnel with the ability to respond and oversee forest fire incidents; the minimum qualification identified for this forest fire response is Incident Commander Type 5 (ICT5). DNR WRXBs, without the ICT5 qualification, *have not* been delegated the authority to suppress wildfires, and therefore *do not* have the legal authority to engage in the following actions:

- Break infrastructure (wire/fence line) to access a wildfire on private property
- Light a backfire for life/structure/resource protection
- Direct crewmember to direct traffic, unless that crewmember is a fully certified law enforcement officer or has received DOT training. (see TRAFFIC CONTROL section for more information)

However, as noted in CHAPTER 3: Wildfire Declaration & Response/Transfer of Command (pg. 30-7), a WRXB may direct initial attack of spots/slovers when they immediately occur to prevent an escaped prescribed burn, including on private lands as long as they are in compliance with the bullet points above. This recognizes that a WRXB may be the most trained person on site until a ICT5 (or higher) or local fire department arrives, and their duties as a WRXB includes using their training and experience to immediately respond to a spot or sloper. If a wildfire is declared, there is a process to then transfer command of the incident at that point to the appropriately trained Incident Commander (IC). Keep in mind that once the appropriately qualified IC has assumed command, that individual can and may direct staff to conduct the above-listed suppression actions. A qualified ICT5 may also engage in traffic control, though their ability to designate this to other fire control officers is dependent upon whether or not suppression is their primary role. Refer to the TRAFFIC CONTROL section below to learn more. To mitigate risks, a qualified ICT5 should be staffed on prescribed fires whenever possible, which allows staff every safe and effective option for suppressing an escape/wildfire.

LTEs as Burn Boss

Staff members employed in a Limited Term Employment (LTE) position may serve as Burn Bosses on DNR prescribed burns, provided the following requirements are met:

1. The LTE has met the DNR training course requirements for becoming a DNR Prescribed Burn Boss (WRXB).
2. The LTE is familiar with DNR prescribed burn policies/procedures.
3. The LTE's level of experience is adequate for the complexity of the burns they will be leading, based on the supervisor's discretion.
4. The LTE's supervisor makes the final determination, after considering all of the above.

SAFETY

The safety and health of people including those involved with the burn, spectators, travelers on affected roads, and those affected downwind by smoke, must be given top priority. The Burn Boss is responsible for ensuring crew safety is always accounted for; however, all fireline personnel are personally responsible for their own safety during the course of a prescribed burn. All aspects of planning and conducting the burn must have safety as the top priority.

Prescribed Burn Protective Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

Assume everyone directly involved with the burn could come in close contact with fire and should dress accordingly. The latest edition of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1977 Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting shall be used when purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE).

No embroidery or patches shall be added to NFPA clothing with the exception of reflective striping and Nomex thread. All clothing items should fit properly, shall be kept clean, and should reflect a professional image. PPE clothing that has become excessively stained or faded will no longer provide proper protection and should be removed from service (e.g., yellow shirts are not yellow anymore).

Employees should purchase PPE clothing from the Tomahawk Stockroom except for extenuating circumstances (such as odd sizes or out of stock situations). To provide and to promote a high standard of employee protection, all personnel involved with prescribed burns shall wear, at minimum, the following personal protective equipment:

1. Hard hat (NFPA 1977)

- a. The hard hat will have affixed a 4-inch by 1-inch reflectorized strip horizontal across the front, back and both sides.
- b. A chin strap will be part of all hard hats. Hard hats with chin straps securely fastened shall be worn while operating an ATV or UTV for fire operations (All-Terrain Vehicle/Utility Terrain Vehicle).
- c. Hard hats should be inspected for cracks before using. Any hard hat that receives an impact shall be replaced.
- d. Hard hats will be replaced on a five-year rotation age starting on the date the hard hat is put into service. New hard hats in inventory or cache that have not been exposed to sun and use are not considered "in service."

2. Yellow Nomex shirt (NFPA 1977)

- a. The shirt should be tucked into the pants.

3. Green Nomex pants (NFPA 1977)

- a. Pants must be standard forest green with reflective striping and Nomex thread.
- b. A belt should be worn with the pants.
- c. Nomex overalls with a Nomex shirt or a Nomex jumpsuit are also acceptable.

4. Fire Shelter in accordance with NWCG (National Wildfire Coordinating Standards)

- a. A fire shelter is required to be worn by all crew members if they are expected to be more than 100' from an engine (LG units, Marshmasters included), even if they are still operating a hose line. This includes working *within* the burn unit as well as *outside*. This also applies regardless of the use of a bladder bag/back can or an ORV (ATV, UTV, Argo).

5. Gloves (NFPA 1977)

6. Eye protection

- a. Manual Code 9185.5 provides guidance on eye protection. The manual code states that “the Department will furnish eye protection to all employees whose duties expose them to hazards which may cause injury to the eyes and where there is a reasonable probability that injury can be prevented by the use of the appropriate protective devices.”
- b. For employees requiring prescription safety eyewear, only eyewear meeting ANSI 287.1 1989 standards for prescription safety eyewear will be allowed. The employee shall choose and order their prescription safety eyewear according to Manual Code 9185.5.
- c. Goggles must meet NFPA standards (1977 or 1971)

7. Hearing protection for all occasions around pumps, chain saws and heavy equipment

8. Fireline boots that meet NFPA 1977 specifications

Employees engaged in prescribed burning are exposed to flame, fire, heat, sole puncture, ankle injury, heavy equipment, and may walk great distances over adverse terrain. This standard provides the protection necessary for the wildland fire environment, and this has been substantiated throughout decades of utilization by hundreds of thousands of wildland firefighters.

Boots meeting these criteria are considered “Safety Footwear” for compensation purposes for prescribed burn personnel. Rubber knee boots are acceptable for wetter/colder burn unit conditions such as winter (snow-cover) burns and marsh burns.

9. High Visibility Clothing

The policy for Department personnel is:

“All personnel within the right-of-way of any roadway open to the public, who are exposed to either traffic (vehicles using highway for purposes of travel) or to heavy equipment shall wear high-visibility safety apparel that meets ANSI 107-2004 Class 2 or Class 3.”

Federal law requires that all workers within road rights-of-way wear high visibility clothing that meets ANSI 107-2004 Class 2 or Class 3 for better visibility and safety. It is also recommended that personnel exposed to heavy equipment outside of roadway rights-of-way wear high-visibility safety apparel such as clothing that meets ANSI 107-2004 Class 2 or Class 3 standards, high-visibility cruising vests or fire PPE.

There are two types of high-visibility vests generally stocked in Tomahawk: a non-fire-retardant vest for general field work and a fire-retardant vest for fire management personnel. The fire-retardant vest is made from a material that is inherently flame resistant and the vest is coated with a flame-resistant chemical.

Additional PPE Allowed and Recommended

- Cotton or non-synthetic T-shirt to be worn under the PPE shirt. All undergarments should be cotton or non-flammable synthetic material.
- Radio headset or earpiece for equipment operators.
- Day pack or web gear capable of carrying at least one quart of water
- Brush coat (NFPA 1977)
- Fleece Nomex (NFPA 1977)
- Fire resistant shroud for hard hat (NFPA 1977)
- Fire resistant hood/balaclava (NFPA 1977 or 1971)
- Hot shield or equivalent dust mask

First Aid

A minimum of one first aid kit per engine will be present on all burns. Additional first aid kits are preferred and personal first aid kits carried by individuals on the fireline are ideal. First aid kits must be properly maintained. Ensure that all prescribed burn crew members know where available first aid kits are located. All crewmembers on a prescribed burn should be aware of personnel on the burn who have experience with first response medical care and where the closest hospital/urgent care center is located.

Chainsaw Use

The department has established policy for chain saw use by all employees. Refer to Manual Code 9185.3 – Safety Requirements for Chainsaw Operations. The Department’s policies as applicable to prescribed burning are summarized below:

- For prescribed burning, employees must have training per Manual Code.
 - o FR staff are required to have S-212 for felling or bucking burning snags or trees.
 - o FWP staff must take a Chainsaw Safety course that satisfies department requirements.
- First Aid and CPR certifications must be current.
- Cut resistant leg protection meeting [U.S. Forest Service Specification 6170-4F](#) shall be worn.
- Cut resistant footwear is NOT required when on the fireline.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Use

The department has established policy for off-road vehicle (ORV) use by all employees. Refer to Manual Code 9187.9 – ATV Operation for DNR Employees. The Department’s policies as applicable to prescribed burning are summarized below:

1. For prescribed burning, employees must have training per Manual Code.
2. All required prescribed burning PPE must be worn while operating the ATV or UTV.
3. The wildland fire helmet is acceptable for ORV operation, but must be accompanied by a chin strap.

For more information on ORV standards, see **EQUIPMENT INVENTORY AND STANDARDS** in this chapter.

PRESCRIBED BURN QUALIFICATION MANAGEMENT

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has adopted the [Wisconsin DNR Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Guide](#) as official policy on prescribed burn position qualifications and training requirements. Employee qualifications and currency will be tracked in the Incident Qualification System (IQS). The Qualification Guide and supporting IQS documents can be found on the Forestry Intranet page, under the Fire → Protection menu.

One experience for the highest prescribed burn qualification an individual holds needs to be reported through an IQS Experience Form (see below) every five years to maintain currency. Submitting this experience refreshes all lower prescribed burn qualifications. Further information on qualification management topics, such as how to handle lapses in qualification requirements, can be found in the Wisconsin DNR Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Guide.

Beginning in 2024, any new WI DNR burn boss must complete a task book as a burn boss trainee (WRXBt) before being certified as a fully qualified WRXB. See the [Wisconsin Burn Boss \(WRXB\) Task Book](#) for requirements. The WRXB task book can be found on the Forestry Intranet page, under the Fire → Prescribed Burn → Prescribed Burn Resources menu.

The Forestry Certification Committee, which includes FWP representation, is the body that examines an individual’s experiences and training in order to certify their qualification at the WRXB level and above. With the support of their supervisor, individuals will submit their training and experience in that position to the Area Forestry Leader, who will then pass these on to the Committee.

IQS Experience Forms

New employees will need to fill out an Initial Entry Form. Copies of all required training need to be submitted with the Initial Entry Form. Individuals can report their own experiences on the IQS Experience Form – Individual. Prescribed Burn Bosses can complete an IQS Experience Form – Incident for all DNR employees (by position filled) that worked on a single prescribed burn. IQS entry forms are available along with the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Guide on the Forestry Intranet page, under the Fire → Protection menu.

Experience Type

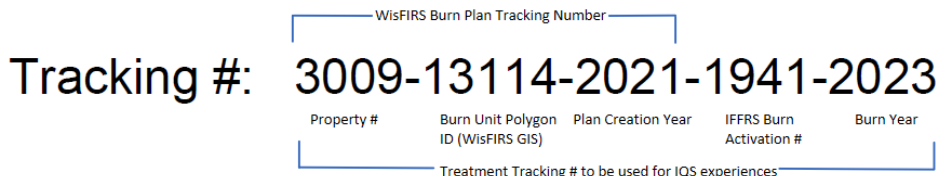
1. OJT (On the Job Training) – used when the individual is filling a role that they have not been assigned a position task book (PTB) for *or* have not completed the required training for (for positions that do not require a PTB).
2. TRN (Trainee) – used when an individual has an open PTB *or* has completed the training (for positions that do not require a PTB). This person is not yet fully qualified for the role that they are filling on the prescribed burn.
3. JOB (Job Qualified) – used when an individual is fully qualified for the role that they are filling on the prescribed burn.

Position Acronym for Common Prescribed Burn Qualifications

1. FFT2 – Basic firefighter
2. FFT1 – Advanced firefighter/squad boss
3. RXI3 – Ignition Specialist (conducts and/or supervises firing and/or holding operations)
4. WRXBt – Prescribed Burn Boss trainee (supervises the entire burn under the direction of a qualified WRXB)
5. WRXB – Prescribed Burn Boss (supervises the entire prescribed burn)

Incident Tracking Number

The tracking number of the completed treatment (prescribed burn) indicates the incident number for staff submitting prescribed burn experiences into IQS. Upon activation, this number becomes standard burn information in the Rx Burn and Live Status tabs in IFFRS, and in the Completed Burns section in the Rx Burn tab for each property in WisFIRS.



An Incident Name will accompany the incident number, which is simply the name of the prescribed burn unit. For example: Incident Name: Marsh_Center Incident Number: 5012-11729-2017-1201-2022.

Forms need to be signed by the employee’s supervisor and routed to the employee’s local DNR dispatcher for entry into IQS. This process applies to all DNR employees, including LTEs. Volunteers used on prescribed burns are not tracked in IQS but do need to have current qualifications for the position that they are filling on the prescribed burn.

ANNUAL FIREFIGHTER REFRESHER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS (RT- 130)

Annual RT-130 courses will provide refreshers on fireline safety topics and hazard mitigation techniques for firefighters. Annual successful completion of RT-130 is required for staff to participate in fire suppression and prescribed burn activities. Recently hired staff who complete S130/190/L180 in the same calendar year also meet the annual RT-130 requirement.

Course content and delivery is determined by WDNR’s Equipment and Safety Team in accordance with NWCG standards presented in PMS310-1. Other agenda items may be selected for area meetings based on the local fire landscape, pertinent current events/lessons learned, and topics requested by field staff. Interactive components and “hands on” aspects are strongly encouraged to help bring the classroom to the field.

Recommended Resources

Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher website

<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/rt-130>

Wildland Fire Lesson Learned Center website

<https://lessons.fs2c.usda.gov/>

PHYSICAL FITNESS REQUIREMENT

All personnel who engage in fire management activities while on the job must have the muscular and cardiovascular capabilities to safely handle any high-risk situation that they may find themselves in. To help ensure this, the prescribed burn program utilizes the Work Capacity Test requirement at the Field Test (moderate) level (completion of a 2-mile walk carrying a 25lb pack in under 30 minutes). Employees who pass the test will be able to participate in prescribed fire duties for one year past the date of the test.

Prescribed burn staff may attend any internal WCT provided that standards listed below are met. DNR staff may also meet the Field Test requirement by attending a WCT held by partnering organizations, provided that they confirm those organizations meet the Department requirements for administering a Field Test in this section.

For the Wisconsin DNR Prescribed Burn Program, the Field Test requirement applies to the following individuals and situations:

1. Forestry employees (LTE or FTE) hired after October 30th, 2011, that have prescribed burning duties identified in their position description. For Natural Heritage Conservation staff, this date after July 1st, 2015.
2. All Wildlife Management employees involved in the prescribed burn program.

3. Any Department employees (who do not have prescribed burning duties currently) who transfer into positions after July 1st, 2015 that have prescribed burning duties in their position description, regardless of other details.
4. FTE or LTE staff who move into positions that are a promotion from their current positions. For example, a forester (FTE) moving into a team leader (FTE) position, or any other LTE moving into an FTE position.
5. Seasonal employees that are initially hired before the dates listed above but work off/on after that date will be required to take the WCT every year prior to burn season *if* they were taken off the payroll with a stop card and were hired again after the WCT was implemented for their program.
6. At their discretion, supervisors may require staff hired prior to the grandfather dates to take part in the Field Test to ensure they can meet the physical demands of conducting prescribed burns.

Results of the Field Test will be recorded by WCT Administrators, entered in the Incident Qualification System, and distributed to employees for personal records on the [Work Capacity Test Record Form](#) (#9100-859). For additional information on Department physical fitness testing requirements, refer to Department Manual Code 9124.2 – Physical Fitness Testing Standards for Employees Assigned Hazardous Duty.

Exceptions

Staff that laterally transfer into the same position (but different location in the state) with no change in position description are still grandfathered in and not subject to the physical fitness requirement. This applies to both LTE and FTE staff. However, should an exempt employee decide to take the WCT, they will then be required to take the test annually.

Volunteers and staff who do not have prescribed fire in their PD are not required to take the Field Test, but will be required to review the physical demands of the work (Manual Code 9124.20 – Physical Fitness Testing Standards for Employees Assigned Hazardous Duty – Appendix B) and sign a Physical Requirement Acknowledgment Form (#9100-240). This form cannot be used as a means to circumvent the prescribed burn program certifications and annual training. Use of this form by DNR staff is for unique circumstances (e.g. Office of Communication staff, etc) as a once-a-year type of event. Supervisors of DNR employees are responsible for collecting these forms, while Burn Bosses are responsible for the collection of forms from volunteers. Acknowledgment Forms must be re-signed each new calendar year. For more information, see “VOLUNTEERS ON PRESCRIBED BURNS” in this chapter.

Requirements for Administering a Work Capacity Test

The Work Capacity Test must be conducted by a trained test administrator who will have obtained the training and annual training updates prior to administering the test. To become a WCT administrator, an employee must:

1. Already serve at a supervisory level. Test Administrators must make determinations such as pulling staff out of the test if they are significantly behind time or are experiencing difficulty during the test. Additionally, if an employee fails the WCT, it becomes a personnel issue in regards to their position duties.
2. Read the [Work Capacity Test Administrator’s Guide](#) (November 2023, PMS 307)
3. View the [Work Capacity Test PowerPoint](#)
4. Ensure that every test location meets all the requirements for holding a WCT:
 - a. While conducting the field test, medical personnel, either a paramedic or two EMTs, must be present at the test site.
 - b. The testing site must be within 10 minutes of a primary care medical facility. The primary care facility must be either a hospital or trauma center with an emergency room. Typically, high school tracks are the ideal testing location in conjunction with a local primary care facility.
5. Act as a shadow to a current test administrator, to first observe how the test is conducted

Preparing for the Test

Inactive individuals should have made a gradual transition (4 or more weeks) to moderate activity (walking 30 – 60 minutes, 3 to 5 times a week) before more vigorous training (with the weighted vest, pack, or similar weighted device) for this test or the job duties. Both male and female-style weighted vests are available from the LeMay Forestry Center for purchase with local budgets. A personal backpack or fireline pack may be also used, as long as the weight within is consistent at the required weigh-ins before and immediately after the Field Test is conducted.

It is recommended to consult your physician to review your individual medical situation prior to taking the Field Test.

Failure to Pass

Failure to pass the Work Capacity Test will be addressed consistent with Manual Code 9124.2 – Physical Fitness Testing Standards. If staff fail the Field Test the first time, per Manual Code, they will be given a second chance to pass the field test. After a mandatory minimum two week wait, staff may retake the test up to eight weeks after the initial date of failure. If they fail the test a second time, prescribed fire activities will be removed from their position description, and they will not be permitted to be involved in prescribed fire. Signing a Physical Requirement Acknowledgment form will also not enable

employees who have failed the WCT to take part in prescribed burns.

PLANNING & PRIORITIZATION

Program Goals

The divisions of Forestry and Fish, Wildlife & Parks view prescribed burning as an effective and necessary management activity to restore and maintain fire-dependent communities as stated in multiple DNR action and management plans.

Objectives

Prescribed burning has been used as a management tool in Wisconsin for thousands of years. Today, prescribed fire is used to meet a diverse set of goals and objectives. These include:

1. **Ecological restoration:** Many of Wisconsin's natural communities benefit from the reintroduction of periodic fire as an ecological process. For this purpose, prescribed fire is employed to restore or rehabilitate the structure and function of a stand, community, or ecosystem.
2. **Wildlife habitat maintenance and/or improvement:** Prescribed fires can support wildlife habitat by supporting forage for game and non-game species, creating new habitat, restoring degraded habitat, and maintaining or improving existing habitat.
3. **Forest management:** In forests, prescribed fire is employed for the purpose of manipulating stand composition, structure, and growth to aid forest management. Forest management burns (aka silviculture burns) are commonly used for:
 - Site preparation for natural or artificial regeneration
 - Control of interfering vegetation and invasive species
 - Maintaining sites free of interfering vegetation and invasive species
 - Conveying a competitive advantage to species adapted to fire
 - Moderating some tree diseases and deleterious forest insects.

Common types of prescribed burns used to achieve forest management goals and objectives include:

- a. **Site Maintenance:** This is a type of prescribed fire used during various stages of stand development to reduce or eliminate undesirable understory vegetation and invasive plants, minimize site mesophication, and maintain a desired stand structure and composition.
- b. **Seedbed Preparation:** This is a type of prescribed fire used to reduce or eliminate low shade and litter depth to prepare a hospitable seed bed.
- c. **Release:** This is a type of prescribed fire used, especially in oak stands, to give a competitive advantage to desirable regeneration and/ stop an impending shift in species composition.

Note: multiple goals and objectives can be achieved through prescribed burns. Site maintenance, seedbed preparation, and release are not incompatible with an individual burn.

Prescribed fire can also be used to reduce hazardous fuels, lessening the severity and frequency of wildfires to protect human and natural communities.

Annual Prioritization and Workload Assignments

Staff are encouraged to review the regional master plans for their ecological landscapes and work with internal & external partners to implement prescribed burn practices as recommended. When contemplating prescribed fire as a tool, consider the impacts of prescribed fire on all aspects of the environment, both on the burn unit and the area surrounding the property. After discussion and agreement between property managers, habitat managers, and foresters at Annual Property Implementation Planning meetings, all prescribed burns must be scheduled using the planning process in WisFIRS. Once burns have been scheduled and the burn plan is approved by the Habitat Manager, they will be displayed on the department's internet site on the APIP page.

For further information, visit the [Property Manager's Guidance website](#).

To ensure that limited burn resources are focused on the highest priorities of each program, prescribed burns that are planned in

Annual Property Implementation Plans (APIPs) are prioritized and compiled annually amongst the forestry areas. Planning acreages are set and approved by the 3 program directors, with the proportions based on amount of program workload in each Area. Planning acreages are determined based on historic accomplishments, plus an additional buffer of plans to take advantage of additional burn windows and utilization of strategic partnerships. Area forestry leaders are tasked with allocating and approving burn boss assignments in their area.

PRESCRIBED BURN MEMO

Memos are occasionally used throughout the department to convey any new legal opinions, policy changes and department guidance/clarification that are not currently included in policy or guidance. The creation of a memo *may* not occur on an annual basis. When these do occur, the prescribed burn team may make recommendations on memo content to division administrators, which will then be subject to a 7-day review amongst bureau leadership. Policy changes included in a prescribed burn memo may impact private citizens as well as DNR employees; when this occurs, the memo must be submitted for a 21-day review period for both internal and external audiences. An announcement will be made through email regarding the review and comment period. All comments, questions, and recommendations from internal staff and the public must be compiled and addressed according to the current department policy for reviewing new guidance.

Prescribed Burn Memo content is valid until incorporated into the prescribed burn handbook, or a subsequent memo provides superseding guidance.

KEY STATE STATUTES AND NR CODES

Chapter 26 – Protection of Forest Lands and Forest Productivity

Fire management staff, especially burn bosses, are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the relevant sections in [Chapter 26](#) of WI state statutes. Many fire management-related statutes exist in this chapter, including the definition of a wildfire (S.s. 26.01), authority for fire suppression in Protection/Cooperative Areas of the state (S.s. 26.11–14), and more.

The [Wisconsin State Statute 26.14\(5\)](#) specifically lays out the expectation that any person setting a fire must totally extinguish that fire before leaving it. The challenge for DNR prescribed burn practitioners is carrying out that expectation while conducting land management activities on state lands. This challenge is the same for any prescribed burn practitioner, private landowner, NGO, commercial operator, etc. The law is enforced equally across all prescribed burning circumstances. All prescribed burn practitioners must attempt to “extinguish” all burning materials before leaving a prescribed burn unattended.

Containment – When a fire is encircled by a fireline, whether it be natural barrier, dozer/scratch line, wet/retardant line, or road, in order to keep the fire from spreading.

Control – To complete a fireline around a fire, locate and cool down all hot spots, making the fire safe under the foreseeable weather conditions, and ensuring that the fire will not rekindle or escape from existing firebreaks. “Controlled” means that prescribed burners have made reasonable and consistent efforts to ensure the burn will not escape control and will remain safe.

Extinguish – “To cause to cease burning.” Evidence of on-going burning, including flame, heat and smoke, would not permit a fire to be considered extinguished. This is the longstanding interpretation of DNR of “extinguish” in both the context of Wis. Stat. s. 26.14(5) and as understood for the purposes of fire suppression efforts.

The DNR continues to interpret the term “extinguish” found in [Wisconsin State Statute 26.14\(5\)](#) to mean “to cause to cease burning,” and applies this definition consistently across the state.

To comply with this longstanding interpretation:

1. Prescribed burn practitioners must extinguish their burns in a timely and efficient manner or provide monitoring of the site until extinguishment is achieved.
2. The burn crew shall make attempts in good faith to locate and suppress any materials that are holding heat and/or smoking.
3. The burn boss must maintain sufficient suppression resources to conduct mop up efforts on the entire burn or to provide sufficient patrolling/monitoring of the site until extinguishment is achieved.

Chapter 29 – Endangered and Threatened Species

[Wisconsin State Statute 29.604](#) includes sections relevant to required incidental take permitting (section 6m) to conduct burns where/near listed species have been documented, and other agency-specific activities (section 6r).

Prescribed burn bosses are required to follow incidental take protocol for any species documented on or near the burn unit. Incidental take authorization is only allowed if the protocols are followed for each individual species. Additional guidance for habitat managers and burn bosses is available at [Incidental Take Protocols for Individual Grassland & Savanna Species & Herptile Calendar & Regulations](#).

Open Burning

Acceptance by the public may be the key to the continued use of this valuable management tool; therefore, [Wisconsin Adm. Code NR 429.04\(2\)](#) must be considered during all phases of the prescribed burn process. It states: "All allowed open burning shall be conducted in a safe, pollution-free manner, when wind and weather conditions are such as to minimize adverse effects and in conformance with local and state fire protection regulations."

Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act

Because prescribed burning is considered a “minor action” under [Wis. Adm. Code NR 150.20\(1m\)\(c\)](#), public notice is ***not required***. This “natural resource management, timber management or environmental restoration” *minor action* is defined in NR 150.03(16m) as follows (emphasis added):

NR 150.03 (16m) “Natural resource management, timber management or environmental restoration” includes all actions associated with the management, economic production, protection and restoration of native and non-native fish, game, plants, trees, and timber, habitat protection, habitat management, habitat restoration, silvicultural practices, forest inventory, chemical and mechanical site preparation, timber harvesting, timber sales, timber transporting, tree planting, direct seeding, forest type conversions, invasive species control, timber stand improvement activities, forest nursery operations, prescribed burning, fire prevention, fire detection, fire suppression, rehabilitation of fire burned areas, environmental remediation, fish hatchery operations, state game farm operations, pesticide or herbicide applications and field surveys for environmental protection.

Although public notice is no longer required, field staff are encouraged to continue to foster positive relations with the public by continuing to publish prescribed burn press releases. Refer to the [Public Communication Tools for Land Management guidance](#) to help determine the appropriate level of recommended public outreach. At a minimum, consider conducting a press release that lists the potential upcoming prescribed burns, by county, prior to the burn season. Property managers should also consider posting notices on-site at common entry points where burns may impact property users.

The Department strives to have public support and understanding of prescribed burning in order to gain greater acceptance of its application as a management tool. Because of this, staff should consider notifying downwind (as well as adjacent) landowners of upcoming prescribed burns and why they are being conducted, as part of the local outreach effort.

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Press-releases

The Prescribed Fire Specialist collaborates with other program public affairs managers to craft prescribed burn press-releases and other communications at the start of and during each burn season. Typically, press releases are done by the Specialist for statewide release; however, if district or other program staff wish to send out a release (e.g., St. Croix area), they can do so provided that a public contact is established, and the release is cleared by both the Prescribed Fire Specialist & the DNR Office of Communications (OC). For larger units or burns with a significant WUI component, prescribed burn bosses and/or supervisors may request assistance from the Prescribed Fire Specialist for any additional, larger scale communication needs (DOT electronic/social media). All prescribed fire-related press releases must go through burn program review and approval prior to submission to the DNR OC.

Interviews and Talking Points

The Division of Forestry has pre-selected media contacts to serve all of the Wisconsin and National media markets. The Division of Forestry Media contact & Prescribed Fire Specialist will work with FWP partners as needed to correctly answer the media’s questions. For policy on media interviews, refer to the [DNR Office of Communication website](#).

Prescribed burn talking points for general and specific scenarios are maintained in the [Fire Communication Plan](#).

On-site Media Contacts

If media arrives on site of a prescribed burn without prior notification, the burn boss (or other designated contact) will ensure the safety of the media representative(s) and answer questions regarding the specific burn and other directly related topics they have knowledge in. If the topic shifts away from this specific burn, that DNR representative will refer the media contact to the DNR Office of Communications (DNR OC). The DNR OC will connect that media member to the correct DNR media contact to answer their specific questions.

A good rule of thumb is to address the media's needs safely, efficiently and professionally so they can get on their way and we can resume operations.

In the event the media arrives on-scene, follow these steps:

1. Take command of the situation—this is your turf and the safety of everyone involved is paramount!
2. Make sure the media, including their air assets (e.g. UAS or helicopter), are not compromising the safety of any operations—if they are, notify Dispatch and/or Law Enforcement immediately.
3. Alert all resources on the fire over the radio that the media is on-scene with their approximate location.
4. Make sure the media is stationed in a designated safe location for information gathering and explain the safety and investigative implications.
5. If possible, assign someone to escort the media and answer questions.
6. No one, including the media, is allowed on the fireline without proper PPE; a good reminder to make sure all fire personnel are always wearing proper PPE during fire operations.
7. If you cannot respond to media questions at that time, provide a contact name or your card for follow-up at a later time.

After the burn, remember to file a [media contact report](#) to your supervisory chain, DNR Prescribed Fire Specialist, and DNR Office of Communications with the name of the media outlet, reporter and what was discussed on-scene.

TRAFFIC CONTROL ON PRESCRIBED BURNS

The only DNR staff that are allowed to direct traffic on public roadways during normal prescribed burn operations are certified law enforcement officers or fire department employees operating within their jurisdictions. All other DNR staff are not authorized to direct traffic and must defer that activity to appropriate law enforcement, traffic officers (e.g. county highway department), or individuals who have received the appropriate DOT training. DNR staff do not have the legal authority to close county or town highways or advise or command drivers to take other routes; however, interior roads owned and maintained by the DNR (such as in Parks properties) may be closed by Parks staff for a burn.

The limited number of DNR staff who are authorized to direct traffic can create a burden that can be overcome by cooperation, mitigation, and pre-planning. These include:

1. Coordinate with Prescribed Burn Specialist for any DOT signage on larger highways prior to the burn day, if needed.
2. Contacting local law enforcement to be on alert to assist in traffic direction if needed.
3. Contacting county or town highway department for appropriate signage, barriers, and personnel to direct traffic if needed.
4. Contacting local fire department to be alert to assist with traffic direction if needed.

Mitigation strategies should be outlined in the burn plan to ensure smoke conflicts with roadways are minimized:

1. Burn with a specific wind direction to minimize smoke issues.
2. Burn with higher wind speeds in your prescription to help carry smoke away from roadways.
3. Alter ignition patterns to minimize smoke exposure time.
4. Burn with more instability to ensure good smoke lift.

Even with these strategies in place, smoke over the road events may still occur. If this happens, burn bosses should evaluate the level of risk to the public and their crew, adjust operations, and request additional resources/assistance as needed.

EQUIPMENT INVENTORY & STANDARDS

A variety of suppression equipment is utilized in prescribed burning. To track these vehicles, a truck and ORV inventory is updated annually prior to spring fire season. A naming convention has been created to assist in identifying these vehicles in the field, and to indicate their level of performance. The first three letters of the naming convention indicate station where that vehicle is assigned (e.g. BRF would be Black River Falls). The first number of the Unit ID indicates the vehicle type: 4, 6, 7 and

8. The second number in the ID indicates the number vehicle that is at that station, of that type. For example, HAY82 indicates the 2nd WM Type 8 vehicle at the Hayward station. Type 8 vehicles ending in 1-5 will be used for WM program vehicles and vehicles ending in 6-9 will be reserved for the NHC program.

Truck Standards

The table below provides the specifics for each vehicle type used in the fire program.

Requirements	Type 4	Type 6	Type 7	Type 8
Tank minimum capacity (gal)	750	150	50	100
Pump minimum flow (gal/min)	50	50	10	10
At rated pressure (psi)	100	100	100	100
Hose: 1 ½ inch	300	300	N/A	N/A
Hose: 1 inch	300	300	200	100
Pump and roll	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum GVWR (lb)	N/A	19,500	14,000	

To project a professional image and identify vehicles during a prescribed burn, all trucks and UTVs must be affixed (at minimum) with:

1. Reflective striping along the side of the truck, from the front of the doors to the back lights
2. An assigned Unit ID that denotes a Type 7, or 8 truck on the left and right corners of both the front and back bumper.

UTV Standard

All new UTV slip-on units must meet the following standards:

1. The above minimum decal requirements
2. The gross vehicle weight rating limit posted, and weight with water must not exceed this limit
3. A gas operated pump
4. A baffled water tank with a minimum 50-gallon capacity
5. Minimum 25ft of hose
6. At least one hand tool

Existing equipment without baffled tanks and/or less than 50 gallons will be grandfathered in until the unit is retired. Smaller tanks are acceptable but will not be considered or labeled as a standard ORV. Temporary vehicle moves can be documented in IFFRS; however, all vehicles must be decaled at their location during spring fire season. Vehicles added mid-season or used temporarily must be decaled as soon as practicable. Decal supplies can be ordered from the LeMay Forestry Equipment Research & Development Center.

Forestry ORVs will be numbered O1-O9 (letter 'O'; not number zero). Wildlife ORVs will be numbered O20-29. NHC ORVs will be numbered O30-39. Standard UTVs will start at the low end, non-standard (ATVs, Argo) will start from the top. For example, the NHC UTV from Fitchburg would be named FIT O31, their ATV would be named FIT O39.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Information on DNR radio communication policy, radio tower locations, & resources can be found on the [Radio Communications intranet site](#).

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS & MOUS

The DNR fire management program maintains a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with other fire organizations that work with the DNR. These MOUs (such as The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) may be for both suppression and prescribed burn activities. Any burn boss that anticipates working with these organizations should be familiar with the boundaries of these agreements. As each MOU varies in policy specifics, the DNR Fire Operations Specialist (Forestry Field Operations Bureau - Fire Management Section) should be contacted for any specific questions regarding the Department's agreement with that agency/organization.

Memorandums of Understanding can be created solely for prescribed burn activities with partnering prescribed fire organizations, with the primary intent of increasing capacity for burning on state lands. Employees who wish to pursue further collaboration with a prescribed fire partner should contact the Prescribed Fire Specialist to initiate & develop the MOU. The DNR fire program retains the right to decide what agreements should be pursued, and the minimum requirements for each MOU.

Employees from partnering agencies/organizations who are “on the clock” as representatives of that agency/organization may hold any supervisory/overhead position on the fireline, with the following provisions:

1. The agency/organization has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department.
2. The partner employee meets the Department's certification requirements for that supervisory/overhead position (unless the MOU specifically states partners will follow their own organization's training and qualification standards). This policy applies regardless of who is the Lead Party for that burn.
3. In cases where the DNR is the lead agency for the prescribed burn, *only* DNR staff may act as the burn boss.

Partner employees who assist on a DNR-led prescribed burn while “off the clock” with their home agency/organization are considered DNR volunteers, and subject to Department policy regarding volunteers on prescribed burns (see next section).

VOLUNTEERS ON PRESCRIBED BURNS

Volunteers

Volunteer: An individual, other than an employee of the Department, who serves the Department without compensation. An “agent of the state” relationship exists when there is benefit to the State and there is direction, supervision and control of the volunteer by the Department.

According to [Wisconsin State Statute 181.0670](#), a volunteer is not liable to any person for damages, settlements, fees, fines, penalties or other monetary liabilities arising from any act or omission as a volunteer, unless the person asserting liability proves that the act or omission constitutes any of the following: (a) violation of criminal law; (b) willful misconduct; (c) an act or omission for which the volunteer received compensation or anything of substantial value instead of compensation; (d) negligence in the practice of a profession, trade or occupation that requires a credential, or other license, registration, certification, permit or approval, if the volunteer did not have the required credential, license, registration, certificate, permit or approval at the time of the negligent act or omission.

Volunteers can fill a variety of roles on the fireline, as determine by their qualifications. DNR staff who are not in the prescribed burn program *cannot* bypass the required training, physical fitness, and annual safety refreshers of the burn program and serve as volunteers on burns. Volunteers from *outside* the Department can participate in DNR prescribed burns if they meet the following criteria:

1. Have approval from the Burn Boss.
2. Have received the required level of training for the position they will hold on the prescribed burn. However, due to liability, volunteers cannot fill a supervisory position (WRXB, RXI3) if they will be supervising DNR employees. Volunteers in supervisory positions are only permissible if they will only be supervising other volunteers.
3. Are equipped with the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
4. Have signed the [Volunteer Agreement Form](#) (DOA-3009). This acknowledgement form must be filled out by the prescribed burn volunteer each calendar year.
5. Have reviewed the physical demands of the work outlined in Manual Code 9124-20, Physical Fitness Standards for Employees Assigned Hazardous Duty, and complete a Physical Requirements Acknowledgement (PRA) (Form #9100-240), stating that they acknowledge the physical fitness requirements and activities associated with prescribed burning. This acknowledgement form must be filled out by the prescribed burn volunteer each calendar year.
6. For driving a state-owned vehicle: Permission to drive state-owned vehicles can be authorized only if the volunteer meets the required criteria in the [Volunteer Driver Vehicle Use Agreement Form](#) (DOA-3685).

Burn bosses will be responsible for maintaining the above-mentioned records for all volunteers under their supervision on prescribed burns. Per records retention policy, these records must be kept for 7 years. Burn bosses are also responsible for documenting these volunteers in the post-burn evaluation.

Burn Bosses must recognize the use of volunteers requires supervision and training as well as the provision of any equipment and the purchase of materials. Volunteers shall receive training and appropriate safety equipment before operating any machine or piece of equipment and be a minimum of 18 years old. Burn Bosses may supply equipment to help volunteers accomplish tasks.

All-volunteer Burn Crews on DNR Land

“Non-agent volunteers” are members of an organized group who are under the control and direction of their group leadership such as Friends Group volunteers or members of a school or youth group, or an individual who has expressed interest in simple volunteer activities of their own choosing such as an Eagle Scout who is directing their own project yet there is benefit for the DNR. DNR employees must still be aware of the activities of “non-agent” volunteers but should not be supervising or controlling the work.

All-volunteer burn crews from partnering organizations may conduct prescribed burning on DNR land, provided that:

1. All crew members meet the required DNR prescribed burn qualifications for the positions they hold on the burn.
2. They hold the same liability insurance as required by burn contractors on DNR land (see the BURN CONTRACTING section of this chapter).

A prescribed burn by an all-volunteer (non-DNR) crew must have the following in place:

1. A [Prescribed Burn Services Contract for DNR-owned Land](#) must be signed by both the partnering organization and the Property Manager responsible for that burn unit.
2. A DNR burn plan must be created in WisFIRS and approved by the appropriate staff. For information on preparing burn plans for volunteer crews/contractors, please see the BURN CONTRACTING section of this chapter.
3. All volunteers who will be present and involved in the prescribed burn must sign the [Non-Agent Volunteer Agreement Form \(1700-072\)](#) prior to conducting the prescribed burn. This acknowledgement form must be filled out each calendar year.

All finalized paperwork for these burns must be kept by the Property Manager and stored for seven years.

Liability

The State Liability Program provides funding for payment of liability claims brought against state officers, employees and agents whose negligent acts while acting within the scope of their employment result in bodily injury or property damage to a third party.

Agents of the State volunteer – If a volunteer is considered an agent of the state, their actions may be covered for liability and legal representation or reasonable attorney’s fees if the volunteer is acting within the scope of the volunteer agreement, under the direct supervision of a DNR employee and within the limits of the training provided by the State.

Non-agent volunteers – Typically there is not liability coverage for group volunteers. However, there may be protections in place depending on the circumstances. While DNR cannot give legal advice to volunteers, we can provide information the volunteers may find useful in deciding if and how to cover themselves when volunteering. Each person should fully consider the risks to themselves and others of their participation as a volunteer, and it is each person’s responsibility to understand any coverage they may have.

Injury coverage – The DNR does not provide any kind of injury coverage to volunteers.

BURN CONTRACTING

If a prescribed burn is to be conducted by a private burn contractor, the Habitat Manager for that particular unit is responsible for moving a prescribed burn contract & burn plan through the approval process. This includes writing the initial sections of the burn plan, soliciting bids and selecting a burn contractor and filling out the appropriate paperwork.

It is recommended that the process for obtaining a burn contract begin at least 6-12 months prior to the desired burn season, due to burn contractor availability and work planning.

When deciding what burn units to solicit bid(s), note that it is possible to include multiple units, even from different properties. However, if the total cost for the units to be burned will be equal to or over \$5,000, project managers shall not purposefully break up the contract in order to avoid the simplified bidding process for contracts \$5,000 or greater. Additional guidance can be found on the [Purchasing/Finance](#) site.

To begin planning for a contracted burn, the habitat manager must:

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1. Develop (or already have) a burn plan on that property in WisFIRS with the following fields completed in the first 4 sections of the plan:
 - a. Denote that the following plan is a contracted plan (Overview)
 - b. A GIS shape of the contracted burn polygon (Location)
 - c. A completed NHI review, including any mitigation actions that the contractor is required to follow (NHI)
 - d. A complete description of the unit, including allowable firebreak type/width, seasons and wind directions for safely conducting the burn, as well as any special precautions in or around the burn unit (Description)

These elements of the plan help to inform contractors as they develop an estimate and are good to provide while soliciting bids. Additional required documentation is covered in a section below.

2. The habitat manager will then estimate the total contract cost. This can be obtained through an unofficial inquiry to a contractor to get a rough estimate. Per acre cost is determined by a number of factors such as burn complexity, current fuel costs, and travel time. This step is necessary to determine if the burn contract will go through the “Simplified Bidding for Services” process (\$5,000 or greater), or if it falls under \$5,000 and can be handled through an informal bid process.

Burn Contractor Requirements for Burning DNR Owned or Managed Land

Contracts will only be offered to contractors who meet certain Department requirements. Contractors are not considered to be qualified bidders unless they meet the following:

1. Contractors must be licensed (either in-state or out-of-state business license is acceptable) and insured \$1,000,000 (minimum liability). Contractors are required to provide proof of insurance (electronic or hard copy) when they submit a bid. Contractors who do not provide current proof of insurance cannot be considered a “qualified bidder”.
2. The selected contractor is responsible for all personnel on the fireline. Personnel estimates are strongly encouraged to have a dedicated burn boss who does not occupy any other fireline positions.
3. By signing the [Prescribed Burn Services Contract for DNR-owned Land](#), they are certifying that all crew members (paid or volunteer) who will be involved in the prescribed burn have the required training qualifications for the position they hold on the fireline. These training requirements are specified below.
 - a. All staff (paid or unpaid) employed by the contractor and present on the burn must be certified, at minimum, as a DNR Fire Crew Member (FFT2): NWCG courses S-130/S-190/L-180, FEMA online courses I-100 & IS-700.
 - b. All staff involved in directing ignition operations shall have successfully completed the training requirements of an Ignition Specialist (RXI3): NWCG courses S-130/S-190/L-180, plus S-219 (formerly S-234) S-290, and FEMA online courses I-100 & IS-700.
 - c. The Burn Boss must meet the minimum training requirements of a DNR Prescribed Burn Boss (WRXB): NWCG courses S-130/S-190/L-180, S290, S-219 (formerly S-234), S-390, and FEMA online courses I-100 & IS-700.

If the selected contractor does not meet the above requirements for DNR-owned or -managed land, the contractor cannot enter into a prescribed burn contractual agreement with the DNR. The contractor must be able to provide proof (upon request) of training certification for all crewmembers involved in the prescribed burn.

Bidding Process

For Burn Units Estimated Under \$5,000

1. If the contract is estimated to be under \$5,000, habitat managers can informally request a bid from several contractors of their choosing. Before they conduct a site visit, potential contractors should be vetted for the above-mentioned requirements. This ensures that potential burn contractors are aware of their requirements for entering into a burn contract with the Department prior to submitting a bid. The habitat manager holds the discretion in selecting a contractor through this process.
2. After receiving all bids, the project manager will select from the pool of qualified bidders based on their best judgment. Selected contractors must provide their proof of liability insurance prior to entering into any contract for work on department-managed lands.

For Contract Work Estimated \$5,000 or Greater

If the habitat manager foresees the total burn unit acreage costing \$5,000 or greater, they must go through a formal bid solicitation process:

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1. The “Simplified Bidding for Services” process requires soliciting and documenting quotes from a minimum of three (3) separate contractors. Potential contractors must be provided the following information prior to conducting a site visit and placing a bid:
 - a. A copy of the initial sections of the burn plan, with the burn unit description additional considerations.
 - b. A [Request for Quotation Form](#), with the necessary information filled in (front page as well as under “Special Conditions”).
 - c. A copy of a [Prescribed Burn Services Contract for DNR-owned Land](#), with the necessary information filled in.
2. Potential contractors should then submit:
 - The [Request for Quotation form](#), with their quotes for services filled in.
 - Proof (electronic or hardcopy) of insurance. In order to be considered a “qualified bidder”, contractors must provide this information (see “Burn Contractor Requirements for Burning DNR-owned Land” above).
3. The habitat manager will document all contractor quotes on the Simplified Bidding Record Form (#DOA-3088). A Burn Contractor will then be selected from this list of quotes based on the lowest per-acre cost, or whatever process has been established with Purchasing prior to the bid process.
4. The habitat manager will then find a requisitioner for their Bureau. The requisitioner will require the name of the Selected Burn Contractor, as well as funding codes for the project. The requisitioner will then generate a Purchase Order for the contract, which will also be mailed to the contractor.

Required Documentation

Any contracted prescribed burn on DNR-owned or managed land is required to have a fully-approved DNR burn plan with the following required fields and/or attached documents:

1. *Habitat manager portion of DNR plan* – As mentioned above, the first four sections of the plan must be completed by the habitat manager (Overview, Location, Description, NHI). Habitat managers can also upload both the contractor plan and burn contract, or they can be uploaded by the Burn Boss (#4).
2. *Contractor’s Burn Plan* – Contractors are required to submit a burn plan with their proposed firing, holding, communications and contingency plans, as well as personnel and equipment clearly stated for each burn unit. This plan is the one reviewed by the Technical Reviewer. Technical review can initially take place outside of WisFIRS, but the plan must ultimately be uploaded, reviewed and approved through the DNR burn plan.
3. *Burn Contract* – The habitat manager is responsible for filling in the burn unit information in the [Prescribed Burn Services Contract for DNR-owned Land](#). A dollar amount should only be included in the payment section if the DNR is directly supplying the funds. If the burn is being funded outside of normally allocated funds (stamp funds, Friends of groups, etc.) a burn contract must still be filled out for liability purposes. In cases where outside funds are being used, simply put “0.00” in the dollar amount. Habitat managers will send the contract through the Prescribed Burn Specialist, who will obtain signatures from both the Fire Management Section Chief (signature authority) and the selected contractor. A fully signed electronic copy will be sent to all parties and then attached to the DNR burn plan.
4. *Burn Boss portion of DNR plan* – Even though this is a contracted plan, it still needs an internal DNR burn boss to fill in the required sections in their part of the plan and route it for technical review. If the habitat manager is not a burn boss, they can ask another habitat manager/burn boss on the property to complete these steps for them. Below are the required fields for the burn boss sections of a contracted plan:
 - Potential wind directions (Prescription Tab)
 - Personnel & Equipment #'s and types (Implementation Tab)

These are still required for tracking metrics for the burn program.

Once these items have been completed, the DNR burn plan should be routed to the appropriate Technical Reviewer, which should occur no less than 30 days before the anticipated burn date(s). The prescribed burn may only take place once the plan is fully approved (and purchase order has been created, if applicable).

Once the plan is fully approved, habitat managers will provide the selected contractor with a copy of the approved DNR burn plan (with attachments) and the [DNR Burn Evaluation Form](#).

Pre- and Post-Burn Requirements

Burn Activation and Tracking

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Habitat managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate Forestry Dispatch Area is notified when the burn is anticipated to happen. This is done through the burn activation process in the Individual Forest Fire Reporting System (IFFRS), either by the habitat manager (primarily) or through the burn boss who assisted with plan development (if the habitat manager is not in the burn program). As with all prescribed burns on DNR-managed land, the contracting burn boss is required to communicate with DNR dispatch on prescribed burn status (i.e., ignition, mop-up, and burn out).

Data Collection

Habitat managers are responsible for ensuring that the selected contractor is provided with the burn evaluation form, and that the collected data is entered into burn evaluation in IFFRS. This information can/should be entered by the Habitat Manager or the DNR burn boss who assisted on the plan. Burn evaluations are submitted within 30 days of the burn date.

Habitat managers are also responsible for conducting the fire effects evaluation for each burn, which should take place the following growing season after the burn. This is to determine if the specific burn objectives were met, and (based on that information and suggested fire return interval), when the burn should be scheduled again.

Policy/guidance regarding both post-burn and fire effects evaluations can be found in Chapters 3 and 4 of this handbook.