
FIRE AS A RESTORATION TOOL ON PRIVATE LANDS

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PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

- Provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners, local governments, businesses, and non-profits for conservation
- Work with all habitat types – upland, wetland, and stream
- Projects are customized to fit landowner goals and prioritize federal trust species



WISCONSIN'S ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES



PFW IN CENTRAL WISCONSIN

- Sandy Soils
- Habitat Diversity
- Fire-dependent Ecosystems



PHOTO: USFWS/Joel Trick





BARRENS AND SAVANNAS WITH PFW

- No single definition for “barrens”
- Savanna restoration a priority for PFW
 - KBB habitat
 - Wild lupine
- Much of Central Sands was prairie and savanna pre-colonization
 - Managed by wildfire, wildlife grazing, and prescribed fire by Native Americans
- Oak and pine barrens abundant, but fire-dependent
 - Jack pine

WHAT PROBLEMS DO BARRENS AND SAVANNAS FACE?

- Lack of prescribed fire
- Invasive species
- Succession to woody species
 - Brush, brambles, trees
- Conversion to agriculture
- Over-grazing



HOW DO WE RESTORE AND MANAGE BARRENS?

Forestry Mowing



Hand-cutting



Logging



HOW DO WE RESTORE AND MANAGE BARRENS?

Herbicide Treatments



Native Plant Seeding



Mowing



FIRE!



2/7/2024

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WE NEED FIRE

- Trees (even oaks) grow like weeds when unchecked or used as a regenerative tool
- One of the best ways to deal with invasive species
- Fire is the most effective tool to manage barrens and prairies
 - Ecologically, financially, time-effectiveness
- Fire is beneficial for both plants and animals

FIRE AS A RESTORATION TOOL

- Resets the “ecological clock”
 - Recycles nutrients
 - Stimulates native species growth and reproduction
 - Sets back invasive species and woody encroachment
 - Consumes dead and down material
 - Exposes bare mineral soil for planting
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FIRE ON PRIVATE LANDS

Objective, Planning, Implementation, Resources, and Problems



PHOTO: USFWS/Ryan Hagerty

OBJECTIVE

- Stimulate native species growth
- Keep open grassland open by setting back invasive species or unwanted woody encroachment
- Inter-seeding



PLANNING FOR FIRE ON PRIVATE LANDS

- Getting landowners on board
 - Wildfire history of area
- Is the project site suitable?
- Creating burn units and breaks
- Site access – trucks, ORVs, foot travel only?
- Pay attention to structures, roads, etc.
- What about the neighbors?



GETTING FIRE ON THE GROUND



Who can burn?

- Local fire departments
- Contractors
- Local groups of experienced burners
- Landowner themselves

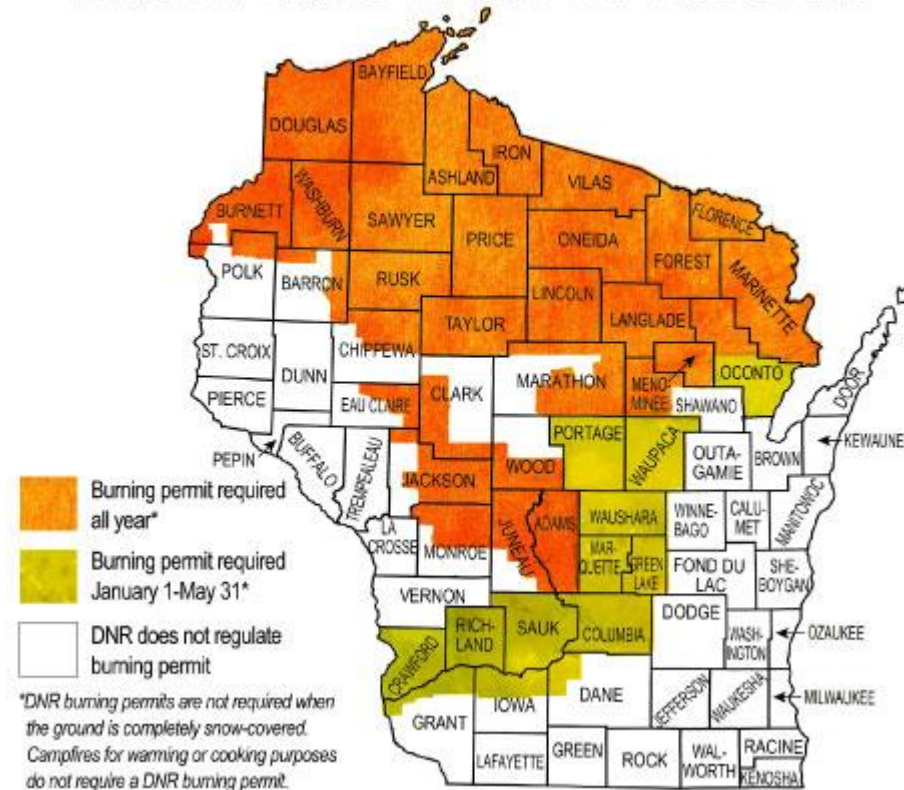
Implementation

- How busy is the burn crew?
- Is suitable weather likely?

PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

DNR FOREST FIRE PROTECTION

- Lack of contractors
- Cost
- Insurance issues



- Parcellation
- High fire danger areas
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

FIRE IS WORTH IT!

Our #1 most effective tool for managing grasslands, barrens, and more.

And it can be done safely with the right precautionary measures.



THANK YOU!

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