

# Prescribed Burning for Wildlife

*Job Sheet*

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)  
University of Missouri Extension – The School of Natural Resources

<b>For:</b>	<b>County:</b>
<b>Field(s):</b>	<b>Farm #:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tract #:</b>
<b>Designed By:</b>	<b>Contact Information:</b>

## WHY USE PRESCRIBED BURNING FOR WILDLIFE?

**PURPOSE:** Prescribed burning is applying a controlled fire to a predetermined area as a habitat management tool. It improves wildlife habitat by setting back the successional stage of an area, controlling undesirable vegetation and reducing wildfire hazards.



## SPECIFICATIONS:

- Prior to burn, develop a written burn plan to outline the burn job requirements.
- Burns should be conducted under the supervision of a qualified and trained individual.
- Burning should be managed with consideration for wildlife needs such as nesting and feeding cover.
- Fall and winter burns generally favor the forb component in mixed stands, and helps improve plant structure and diversity for wildlife habitat.
- Burning in spring and fall of the same year greatly reduces stands of cool-season grasses, including tall fescue.
- For greatest wildlife benefit native warm season grass should be burned between July 16 and March 15. Cool season grasses should be burned between March 15 and April 30.
- Burn the area on a three-to-five year cycle to control woody encroachment. When burning to control undesirable sprouting woody vegetation, it may be necessary to burn two or more consecutive years.
- Patch burning can be used in conjunction with livestock grazing to provide both improved grazing and wildlife cover. Burning up to 1/3 of each pasture or paddock each year has been shown to double grassland bird populations.

**MAINTENANCE:**

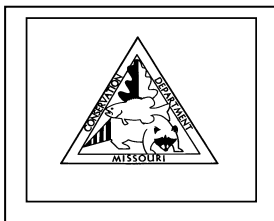
- Burn approximately one-third of the managed area annually. Strips or blocks may be left unburned within the burned area to provide a continuous source of cover and nesting habitat.
- Maintain mowed/plowed permanent firebreaks according to the burn plan.

**PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Provide nesting and brood habitat for quail, turkey and other ground nesting wildlife.
- Provide natural food and cover for rabbits, deer, quail, and turkeys.

Consult with NRCS or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

Comment:



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