

Assistance

Burning is carried out by personnel certified in Prescribed Burning. Your local Georgia Forestry Commission, trained land managers, and professional consulting foresters can write plans and assist with the procedure.



P. O. Box 819
Macon, GA 31202
1-800-GA-TREES
GaTrees.org

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Prescribed Burning *Using Fire Wisely*



What is Prescribed Burning? - Defined as a prescribed fire (Rx fire), which is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health, and reduce wildfire risk.

A Healthy Approach

Prevention plays a primary role in managing ecosystem health. Just as physicians prescribe treatments for personal long-term medical benefits, guidelines have been developed by forestry professionals to help us manage our ecological environments. Through awareness and education, we can avoid potential dangers that can cause irreparable harm to our forests, our homes, and to wildlife.

History

Early American settlers found Native Americans using fire in virgin pine stands and adopted the practice to provide better access, improve hunting, and to remove brush and timber for farming. Land managers have used fire since the early 1900s. Controlled burning has many economic and ecological benefits when managed properly.

Learn Before You Burn

Prescribed Burning is defined as a prescribed fire (Rx fire), which is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health, and reduce wildfire risk. If this definition sounds complicated, that is because Prescribed Burning is a very delicate process that should be managed and executed by professionals. Your local Georgia Forestry Commission can offer valuable assistance with Prescribed Burning. Professional foresters and forest rangers consult with landowners to develop forest management strategies, write Prescribed Burning plans, and recommend certified personnel for Prescribed Burning execution.

Benefits of Prescribed Burning



Fuel Reduction

One of the most important reasons for Prescribed Burning is to reduce naturally occurring fuels within forest areas, especially those near populated urban areas. Prescribed Burning reduces the risk of life threatening wildfire and economically devastating timber loss.

Site Preparation

Prescribed Burning is the most affordable, environmentally sound method for preparing an area for seeding or planting. Harvest remnants may retain nutrients that could be used by new plantings while inhibiting mechanical replanting. Prescribed Burning hastens the return of the nutrients to the soil and removes the brush for efficient replanting.

Disease Control

Certain pathogens that reduce growth in pines or other species can be controlled or eliminated with Prescribed Burning. Fire destroys diseased foliage, while fire tolerant trees remain undamaged and healthy.

Wildlife Management

Prescribed Burning is actually an efficient and economical tool for improving the habitat for certain wildlife species and maintaining wildlife populations.

Biological Community Restoration & Maintenance

Prescribed Burning is an irreplaceable process in maintaining biological diversity and balance. Many plant and wildlife species are dependent on periodic fire. Plant species have developed fire tolerant tendencies. Many species on federal and state endangered lists depend on fire for their survival. Simply replanting areas with local species is not adequate for natural systems restoration. Prescribed Burning is critical to replenishing types of vegetation that attract wildlife to the area.



Special Considerations - A process of such enormous capabilities also has the capability of being destructive if not managed and implemented by an experienced and qualified certified burn manager.

The Georgia Forestry Commission has developed a set of Prescribed Burning guidelines that lead to safe and efficient results. Following is a list of critical factors that must be considered in developing a Prescribed Burning plan. Professional assistance is available from certified prescribed burners and trained land managers. Call the Georgia Forestry Commission for more specific information.

Professional Fire Control

A qualified team of certified personnel should plan and execute the burn. Sufficient holding crew and equipment should be on site during the burn.

Property Protection

Properly prepare area prior to prescribed burning to ensure the fire is confined within the boundaries.

Smoke Impact

A professional smoke management plan is recommended in many cases to accurately assess impact on smoke-sensitive areas including roads, residences, towns, etc.

Wind Predictability

Steady winds are critical for success. Ideal speeds vary from 3-5 mph in the stand, based upon goals.

Preferred Relative Humidity

Preferred relative humidity ranges from 30-55%.

Optimum Temperatures

Temperatures less than 60 degrees are generally preferred, but higher temperatures may be utilized to meet specific objectives.

Fine Fuel Moisture

Forest fuels such as pine straw, leaves, and grasses, should have a moisture content of 5-10%.

