



What is?

PRESCRIBED BURN

A prescribed burn, also called a controlled burn, is the intentional application of fire to live and/or dead vegetation for land and resource management purposes.

FIRE FACTS

In order to meet preidentified objectives, prescribed burns are lit under specific conditions to produce desirable results such as favorable plant response, healthy forest and rangeland conditions for grazing and wildlife habitat, silvicultural treatments, indigenous cultural practices, and reduced wildfire hazard.

What are types of prescribed burning?

Pile burning and broadcast burning are the two primary types of prescribed fire. Pile burning generally involves lighting piles of [fuels](#). Broadcast burning involves fire applied across a predetermined area ranging in size from an acre or less to tens of thousands, generally after an area has not received precipitation for some amount of time to encourage fire movement.

When and where is prescribed fire used?

Determining whether, when, where, and how to burn involves careful considerations of [weather](#) and fuel conditions before, during, and after, regardless of whether it is a pile or broadcast burn. Pile burning is conducted with as few as one or two people well after fire season has been declared over and significant rain and/or snow have been received. Broadcast burning is typically conducted by burn teams in the spring and fall, relying upon fuel conditions and weather aligning to allow for safe application of fire that also results in desirable changed land and resource conditions. Burn bans, fire season declaration, industrial fire precaution levels, seasonal wildlife restrictions, hunting season, and public use restrictions also factor in to deciding when and whether to burn.



Broadcast burn, P.C. Amanda Rau

Prescribed burn planning, implementation, and post-burn monitoring and evaluation.

Planning includes preparing and following a prescribed burn plan that clearly defines a window of weather and fuel conditions, anticipated [fire behavior](#), and desired effects to meet predetermined objectives. Pile burns generally do not involve an extensive plan when compared with broadcast burns. Putting the prescribed burn plan into action involves the assemblage of a team to both light and hold fire within a predetermined boundary using a combination of ignition devices and wildfire suppression equipment such as engines and water tenders. Art comes together with science in this phase, where fire is applied in such a way that produces the right amount of [intensity](#) to meet land and resource management objectives while remaining well within control. Post-burn evaluation and monitoring can range from plot sampling to visual observations of effectiveness. Seeding, planting, and other vegetation management activities are often implemented after a prescribed burn.



Pile burn, P.C. Carrie Berger

What about smoke?

[Smoke](#) produced by prescribed burns are subject to local, county, state and federal air quality requirements depending on the location of the burn. As a best practice, consideration for impacts to communities should be given regardless.

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For more information:

Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils, INC., www.prescribedfire.net

TNC, [Why We Work with Fire](#)

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