

Prescribed Burns at the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

March 2015

Summary

The DNR is planning prescribed burns in Sauk Prairie Recreation Area, the DNR portion of the former Badger Army Ammo Plant. The Burn Units and number of acres burned each year will vary. Most prescribed burns are conducted in the spring of the year, but fall burns also have their benefit so some prescribed fires may occur in the fall.

What is a prescribed burn and why is it used?

Prescribed burning is the use of fire under specified conditions. With proper timing, prescribed burning controls many undesirable woody plants and herbaceous weeds, while stimulating desirable plants, improving wildlife habitat, and reducing the potential of property damaging wildfires.

Who will conduct the burn?

DNR staff trained in prescribed burning along with trained volunteers will be conducting the prescribed burn.

Is the burn planned for daytime or evening?

A prescribed burn typically occurs during the daytime, but may involve some mop-up areas of downed trees later into the evening and the next day. Weather forecasts are checked in the morning and on site to confirm conditions meet the required conditions stated on the burn plan. The prescribed burn is very dependent on weather conditions.

What about the smoke?

Smoke control is an important aspect of any prescribed burn plan. Prior to burning, experienced personnel carefully review the burn area and the proximity of houses, roads, and other smoke sensitive areas. This information is then incorporated into the plan and the prescribed burn occurs when favorable conditions (e.g., wind) minimize the amount of smoke reaching these areas.

What is a Burn Plan?

Prescribed burn plans will be prepared by DNR Staff according to DNR policy. Some of the topics covered on the prescribed burn plan are habitat on the burn unit, types of firebreaks, how much staff and equipment is needed, and weather conditions needed, to name a few. Safety is a priority. This plan goes through an approval process by the burn coordinator, property manager, a technical reviewer, and the burn coordinator's supervisor.

Will DNR burn the planned acres all at once?

The planned acres are split into many burn units. Each year, staff will determine what burn units to include in the rotation for the given year. Due to weather and schedules all units on the list for the year may not be burned.

What safeguards are in place if the fire moves beyond the planned burn area?

Every burn plan has a Contingency Plan section that covers how to handle spot fires and escaped fires.

Which local fire departments will be notified prior to a burn?

Sauk County Dispatch is contacted before a prescribed fire is started along with DNR Fire Dispatch.

Who do I contact for more information?

Nancy Frost, DNR Wildlife Biologist, 608-448-0367.