

toric natural forest or grassland community would have been for your property and what you want your woods and open lands to look like in the future. Then a plan based upon the current conditions of your property will be developed to reach those goals. In some instances timber stand improvement practices such as thinning and harvest may be incorporated to reach your habitat restoration goals. In addition, depending upon your restoration goals, the fire prescription will also take into consideration the seasonal timing, desired fire intensity, fire return frequency, and appropriate weather conditions to achieve the desired fire effects.

By working with a trained fire practitioner a Prescribed Burn Plan will be prepared which will take into account all of the safety precautions which should be considered for your burn. This plan would address acceptable weather conditions (temperatures, wind speeds, wind directions, humidity levels), natural and man-made fire breaks, smoke management, fuels to be burned, equipment needs, personnel needs, contacts and permissions needed, and contingency plans.

References

Information pulled from brochures, unpublished reports and team working session notes from the Kentucky Prescribed Fire Council, the Cumberland Fire Learning Network plans, Land Between the Lakes Fire Learning Network plan.

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From the Woods...

Kentucky Woodlands Magazine recently interviewed Bert Pearson, Oldham County woodland owner, to learn his experiences with fire. He worked with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) to implement controlled (or prescribed) fire on his property.



KWM: How has prescribed fire helped you with your property?

Bert: In both the case of woodland and open field burns, burning is a great tool for returning the nutrients held in the dead organic material (brush, grass, woody material) back into the soil. These controlled or prescribed burns also eliminate the clutter of dead material, which impairs movement of small animals and birds and reduces the chance for large unplanned fires in the future.

KWM: How did you learn about prescribed fire?

Bert: When I purchased my property I reached out for support from the private lands biologist with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources as well as my service forester from the Division of Forestry. Chris Grash is the private lands biologist I work with and before I accomplished my first burn he provided me with a “burn plan”, which provided an overall plan for the burn, including weather conditions, restrictions and equipment required for a safe burn.

KWM: Tell us a little about your prescribed fire experience?

Bert: My personal burn experience has been in preparation for native grasses and wildflower plantings. The first attempt was less than ½ acre and I quickly learned the advantages of back burning or setting fires on the downwind side of the area to be burned and letting the fire burn slowly into the wind. Fire can move quickly across a field and having multiple fire breaks is advantageous. I was astonished at how the vegetation returned to a burned area quickly as well as the lushness of the vegetation.

KWM: What advice do you have for other woodland owners considering using prescribed fire?

Bert: First, I would recommend contacting your private lands biologist, whom you can find on the KDFWR web site, to provide a burn plan. I would do some reading to become familiar with prescribed fire. For weather information, visit the UK College of Agriculture weather web site at <http://www.agwx.ca.uky.edu>. Notify the local authorities of your burn plans. Lastly, I found out you can't have too many friends available when you are burning, to help oversee the project.