

Dept. of Natural Resources: Conducting Statewide Prescribed Burns

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 2, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Michele Witecha, DNR Prescribed Fire Specialist
Michele.Witecha@wisconsin.gov or 608-333-3664

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced today that fire management crews plan to [conduct prescribed burns](#) on DNR properties throughout the state from March 2 through mid-June.

These burns take advantage of Wisconsin's optimal conditions during the spring. Additional prescribed burns will occur in late summer and fall (mid-July through November).

The DNR utilizes prescribed burning to preserve and restore fire-dependent ecosystems found within state-managed properties throughout Wisconsin. These burns mimic the natural benefits fire historically provided: a decrease in dead grass (thatch) buildup; improved spaces for wildlife to feed, nest and raise young; and an increase in native grass and wildflower growth.

Wetlands, prairies, oak/pine barrens and oak savannas in Wisconsin have developed throughout history with periodic fire occurring across the landscape. Many of these communities would not exist without fire, occasionally restoring the balance between open grass and brush.

DNR staff spend months comprehensively planning each prescribed burn and begin pre-season preparations and refresher training in January. Staff assess weather forecasts (temperature, RH, windspeed and direction) and vegetation moisture to

determine if fire behavior will be within the desired range and meet the objectives of the burn. Based on daily weather forecasts, the decision to burn is evaluated in the morning and at the burn site. Where required, local law enforcement and fire officials are notified in advance.

DNR staff conduct prescribed burns only when weather and vegetation conditions meet strict standards for safety, smoke management and burn effectiveness.

In 2021, all burns conducted on DNR land will follow additional COVID-19 operational protocols to further minimize health and safety risks to burn crews and the general public. If prescribed burns are conducted near roads or recreational trails, signage will be posted to notify the public on the morning of the burn. For public safety, please avoid these areas while the burn is being conducted.

Visit [the DNR's website](#) to view where DNR prescribed burns are occurring across the state and learn more about the benefits of prescribed burns.