

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Begins winter prescribed burns

Posted on Monday, Feb 6, 2023

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that fire management crews are starting to perform prescribed burns on DNR properties throughout the state where local conditions can provide a safe and effective burn.

DNR crews will be burning cattail marshes and/or wetlands to clear the buildup of dead vegetation and open waterways for waterfowl to feed and nest. By burning in the winter, DNR staff take advantage of wet conditions and frozen ground, which reduce the heat and intensity of cattail marsh burns.

Winter burns mark the beginning of the fire management season for DNR crews. Additional windows of opportunity for prescribed burning will continue through spring, and open again in late summer and fall (mid-July through November).

Prescribed burns support healthy ecosystems for an abundance of plants and animals in Wisconsin. Historically, periodic fire (either lightning or human-caused) would remove the dead vegetation while stimulating native plant growth. Marshes, wetlands and the native species that live there have adapted to periodic fire and even depend on it.

Planning a burn can take months and crews must be ready when the appropriate weather condition (or “prescription”) is right for the burn. DNR staff make the decision to conduct these prescribed burns only when weather and vegetation conditions meet strict standards for safety, smoke management and burn effectiveness. Even after such careful planning, weather forecast evaluations, vegetation moisture measurements and staff trainings, each burn is reassessed on the morning of the burn at the burn site.

When conducting prescribed burns near roads or recreational trails, the DNR will post signs to notify the public. **For your safety, we ask you to please avoid these areas while the burn is being conducted.** The DNR also notifies local law enforcement and fire officials in advance about when and where DNR prescribed burns will take place.

To view the status of where prescribed burns are currently happening across the state, visit the [DNR WisBURN page](#). For a more detailed look at historic, current and planned DNR prescribed burns, visit the [DNR Prescribed Fire Dashboard](#).

For more information regarding the benefits of prescribed burning in Wisconsin, [visit this DNR webpage](#).