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Prescribed Fire as a Management Tool

LITTLE ROCK, AR - Forestry and conservation agencies across Arkansas commonly use prescribed fire as a management tool during the months of February - April, when weather conditions allow. Prescribed fire achieves many management goals including enhanced wildlife habitat, improved wildfire safety and site preparation for new growth. Find a full fact sheet of the many benefits for forests and grasslands, [here](#). Private, state, and federal entities use prescribed fire as a management tool. Last year, landowners and agencies applied prescribed fire to 222,375 acres across Arkansas.

“Prescribed fire is a valuable management tool to keep forests and grasslands healthy,” says State Forester Joe Fox. “Prescribed fires are slow-moving, and low to the ground. Prescribed fire is well planned, and executed for specific landowner goals,” he says.

February - April and September - October are the best seasons to use prescribed fire, when vegetation is dormant. Burn crews carefully monitor weather factors to select days when wind speeds are low (less than 15 mph) and humidity levels are moderate (above 35%) to allow for safe burning conditions that accomplish specific management goals for forests and grassland. However, weather during these periods can change quickly to create high wildfire danger, when humidity drops and wind speeds increase. Fire crews and landowners must monitor conditions closely at all times, and never leave fires unattended. Find safe burning tips, [here](#).

As with any fire, prescribed burns also create smoke. [Voluntary Arkansas Smoke Management Guidelines](#) have been followed by forestry agencies and landowners for many years. The guidelines were developed by multiple Arkansas forestry and conservation agencies to provide science-based guidelines that keep smoke residue away from populated areas. “Arkansas’s Voluntary Smoke Management Guidelines are a proven method for working together as an industry to use prescribed fire responsibly,” says Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

Landowners can find prescribed burns reported to the AAD Dispatch Center for private, state, and federal land, [here](#). Find prescribed burns planned for the Ouachita National Forest, [here](#). Find prescribed burns planned for the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest, [here](#). Agencies that frequently use prescribed fire as a management tool include AAD’s Arkansas Forestry Commission, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, the Arkansas National Guard at Camp Robinson and Fort Chaffee, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and others.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission is an agency of the Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD). The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Learn more: www.aad.arkansas.gov. Find information about wildfire safety, burn bans, and prescribed burns, here: www.arkfireinfo.org.

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