

The U.S. Forest Service uses prescribed fire as a management tool on National Forest lands.

During a prescribed burn we strive to minimize any inconveniences caused by this type of operation, however, there may be increased traffic and you may smell smoke.

- Control lines will be constructed around the perimeter of the burn.
- Burns are conducted when weather conditions meet certain safe criteria.
- Forest Service personnel and fire fighting equipment will be located at the site during the burn.
- After the firing operation, burning material will be extinguished near the control lines.
- There may be small flames and smoking stumps inside the perimeter of the burn area for several days.
- Fire personnel will return to the burn area every day until the fire is out. This may take a day or two depending on the weather and the vegetation type.
- After the fire is out, the control lines will be returned to a vegetated condition.

If you would like more information, or you have questions about prescribed burns in your area, please contact the Forest Service office nearest you.



Visit us on the web!
www.fs.fed.us/9/ottawa

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**IN CASE OF WILDFIRE
DIAL 9-1-1**

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**Ottawa
National Forest**



*"Caring for the Land
and Serving People"*

**Ottawa
National Forest
Prescribed Fire
Program**



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Eastern Region

Why We Burn

Fire is a natural part of many ecosystems on the Ottawa National Forest.

Ecosystems such as *jack pine forests, prairies, pine barrens and savannahs* evolved with fire. Modern firefighting altered the natural cycle of fire that maintained these valuable habitats. As a result, many plants, birds and insects have become rare or endangered.



Federally endangered Kanner Blue Butterfly on horsemint (Monarda punctata), a prairie species.

Fuel management is an important part of the forests' fire program. Fire reduces the natural buildup of forest fuels (twigs, branches and dead grasses). Prescribed fire consumes available fuel, reducing the potential for catastrophic wildfire.

Prescribed fire reduces hazardous forest fuels.



Benefits of Fire

Fire in the ecosystem is a natural and revitalizing process.

Fire:

- Reduces the accumulation of forest fuels that increase the chance for a devastating wildfire.
- Recycles forest nutrients into the soil.
- Minimizes insect populations and spread of disease.
- Encourages and maintains the growth of native trees and plants best suited to fire adapted ecosystems.

Fire is used to promote prairie grasses such as big and little blue-stem.



- Removes forest litter, preparing a seed bed so that seeds can take root.
- Removes non-native species that threaten an ecosystem's health.

Prescribed burning can effectively and safely restore fire to an ecosystem.

How We Burn

Prescribed fires are carefully planned in advance, long before ignition happens.

Burns are done **only** when optimum temperature, humidity, wind speed and fuel moisture content occur—ensuring that the fire remains inside the designated boundaries and accomplishes objectives.

Fire lines are either plowed or mowed, depending on the fuel type to be burned.

Plowed line is used where fuels are heavier and vehicle access is limited.

Mowing causes less soil disturbance and is very effective in controlling fire in grasses.



Often burns are done in late afternoon or at night, when weather conditions are ideal to carry out a burn safely.



Prescribed fires are usually ignited by hand using drip torches, fuzes or flare guns.