

SUPPORT GOOD FIRES AND PREVENT BAD ONES



Good fires are planned prescribed fires to help improve wildlife habitat and promote healthier forests while reducing risks from wildfire.



VS.



PRESCRIBED FIRES

are set intentionally in a defined area for specific management objectives.

WILDFIRES

are unplanned and costly, potentially threatening life and property.

FIRE IS PART OF THE FOREST

Fire is a natural part of the environment and frequently occurred throughout North Carolina. Many of our forests require fire to remain healthy and thrive. Historically, fire was part of everyday life for Native Americans and early settlers. It was used to clear areas for hunting and foraging, promote habitat for important wildlife and reduce pest populations, among other reasons.

As population increased, more people were impacted by lightning-ignited and human-caused fires, leading many to advocate for the exclusion of all fire from the woods.

This resulted in the buildup of vegetation that fueled increasingly intense wildfires and allowed less desirable plants to out compete fire-dependent native species, changing the structure of our forests.

Over time, prescribed burners have returned to the age-old practice of using fire, supported by changing public perception and science-driven recommendations. Today prescribed fire is an established management tool, benefiting the forest by mimicking the frequent, low intensity fires that once occurred.

GOOD FIRES PROMOTE HEALTHY FORESTS

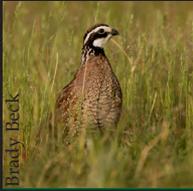
Prescribed fire mimics the benefits of naturally occurring fires by:

- Opening the forest canopy, allowing diverse plants to grow.
- Improving habitat for many wildlife species.
- Controlling competition from undesirable vegetation.
- Recycling nutrients back into the soil.
- Reducing leaf litter and woody debris that fuel hard-to-control wildfires.

HOW WE MANAGE FIRES SAFELY

Trained and experienced prescribed burners always:

- **Make a plan (and have a backup plan):**
A written burn plan is specific to each prescribed fire.
- **Know the weather:**
Temperature, humidity, wind, etc. all affect fire behavior.
- **Establish fire breaks or lines:**
Barriers like roads or streams help keep the fire contained.
- **Burn when conditions disperse smoke to reduce exposure:**
Notify local authorities and neighbors.
- **Light a small test fire:**
If the test fire goes well, the burn will proceed.
- **Ensure the fire remains safely within the fire lines:**
Prescribed burners monitor and "mop-up" the fire line.



Brady Beck



Nathan Howell



Skip Pudeny



*"Some ecosystems need fire to thrive...
Prescribed burns are one way forests stay
healthy. Another way is when you are careful
with fire as you explore the outdoors."*

- Smokey Bear

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ncforestservice.gov/goodfire



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