



# Preparing to Safely Use Prescribed Fire for Longleaf Management



## Checklist for Private Landowners

### Advance Work

- Have a Forest/Habitat Management Plan prepared by a qualified natural resource management professional. (See handout *How to Find Help For Restoring Longleaf*)
- Apply for cost share – Optional. (See handout *How to Find Help For Restoring Longleaf*)
- Become a NC Certified Burner through the NC Forest Service's Burn Certification Class, including completion of a certification burn supervised by a certified burner. (See handout *How to Become a North Carolina Certified Burner*)
- Determine if your farm/timberland insurance policy covers prescribed burns. If not, get insurance from a private insurance company; for example, Outdoor Underwriters specializes in this type of policy. Per burn insurance is available.
- Develop a Prescribed Burn Plan for each tract you wish to burn and submit to NC Forest Service.
- Construct adequate firebreaks to contain the fire within the burn area. Contact the NC Forest Service or a contractor with heavy equipment if assistance is needed.
- Check for and cut, rake, or remove dead trees or potential hot spots (brush piles, fallen tree tops, or debris piles) near fire lines.
- Determine how many people will be required for your burn crew and begin making those contacts.
- Remind burn crew to wear sturdy leather boots and cotton jeans, shirt and cap.
- Get a Burn Permit from the NC Forest Service. You can apply online 24/7 ([http://ncforestservice.gov/burn\\_permits/burn\\_permits\\_main.htm](http://ncforestservice.gov/burn_permits/burn_permits_main.htm)) or call the NC Forest Service office in your county during standard business hours. It usually takes about ten minutes to get a burn permit; burn permits are good for 30 days.
- Contact adjacent landowners and neighbors via phone calls, mail or in person at least 2-4 weeks prior to the burn. Keep records of these notifications.

• A list of NC Forest Service contacts for each county is available at <http://www.ncforestservice.gov/Contacts/counties.htm>

• The NC Forest Service provides information about Consulting Foresters at [http://www.ncforestservice.gov/Managing\\_your\\_forest/consulting\\_foresters.htm](http://www.ncforestservice.gov/Managing_your_forest/consulting_foresters.htm) and <http://ncforestservice.gov/Contacts/pdf/cf/cfd03.PDF>

• The NC Forest Service maintains a list of Prescribed Burning Contractors at [http://www.ncforestservice.gov/Managing\\_your\\_forest/pb\\_vendors.asp](http://www.ncforestservice.gov/Managing_your_forest/pb_vendors.asp)

• Good background information about prescribed burns is available at [ncprescribedfirecouncil.org](http://ncprescribedfirecouncil.org)

• Online web application that is a pocket guide for Prescribed Fire Smoke Management: <http://smokeapp.serppas.org/>

## Day-of-Burn Activities

- Check current local weather conditions to make sure that they are within the range identified as 'acceptable' in your Burn Plan. Keep updated on the weather conditions throughout the day. Use the NC Forest Service's Fire Weather Intelligence Portal (<http://climate.ncsu.edu/fwip/index.php>) for checklist items such as relative humidity, temperature, wind speed, wind direction, and vent rate. Use the National Weather Service/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website for checklist items such as 1 hour fuels, 10 hour fuels, days since rain and drought index (<http://www.weather.gov/rah/fire>). Document these forecasts.
- Check equipment to make sure you have everything you need, and that it is all in good working order and safe to use.
- Contact Emergency Services (911) in your county (let them know it's a non-emergency call) and tell them where you will be conducting your prescribed burn.
- Contact your neighbors, particularly those with properties adjacent to the burn area to let them know you will be conducting a prescribed burn.
- Make sure you have an adequate number of people on your burn crew. Check that all members of the burn crew are properly dressed and in good physical condition.
- Review the burn plan with your burn crew; include safety information and emergency plans, and make sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- Re-check your firebreaks to make sure they contain no burnable materials. Take down or rake around any dead trees that could fall across the firebreak.
- Conduct a test burn to check that the prescribed fire will behave as predicted, smoke can be managed as planned, and the desired results can be obtained. If the fire and smoke behavior do not match expectations, decide if a safe burn can be conducted and the smoke managed adequately; **if not, put the fire out and cancel the burn**. Implement your burn plan **if and only if** conditions meet the prescription described in the burn plan.
- Mop up after the burn to prevent re-ignition of the fire and to reduce post-burn smoke problems. Mopping up is extremely important! Most fire escapes and spot over fires are started by smoldering fuels, such as snags close to the line, after the initial fire has passed; fires can restart up to a few days following the burn. Complete the burn evaluation to determine if it met your objectives and went as planned. Note items to consider at the next burn at this location. Visit the burn site at least once daily until the fire is completely out.

Following these steps can offer private landowners protection under the NC Prescribed Burn Act from lawsuits arising from smoke-related damage or injury.

(See handout *NC Prescribed Burn Act*)