



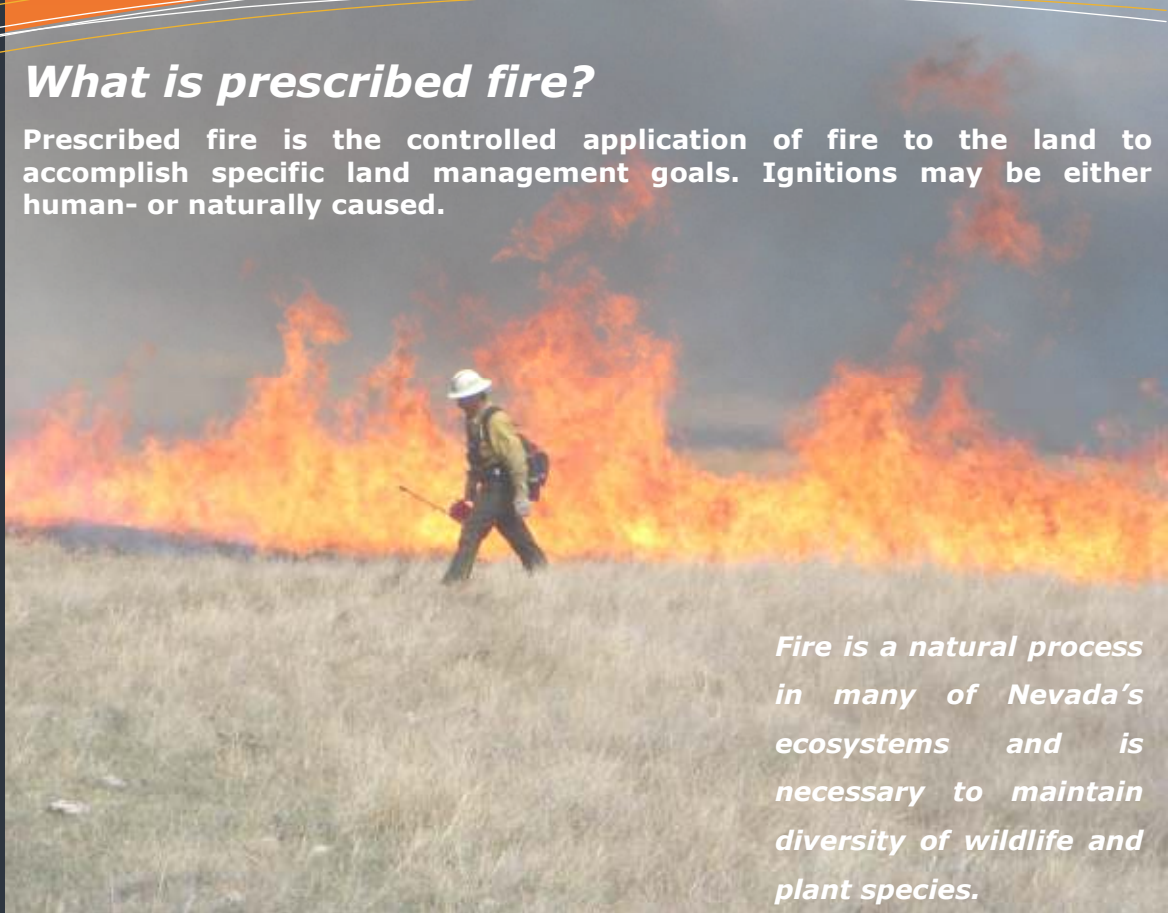
Prescribed Fire

What is prescribed fire?

Prescribed fire is the controlled application of fire to the land to accomplish specific land management goals. Ignitions may be either human- or naturally caused.

Do not burn if:

- ✓ You don't have a written and approved burn plan
- ✓ You can't stay with the fire until it is safe.
- ✓ You don't have the needed equipment or people.
- ✓ Your firelines aren't in place and functional.
- ✓ You don't have the right weather or it is expected to change during the burn.
- ✓ You haven't contacted neighbors, the rural fire department and the Conservation Department.



Fire is a natural process in many of Nevada's ecosystems and is necessary to maintain diversity of wildlife and plant species.

Benefits of Prescribed Fire

Reducing fuel build-up

Dead wood, overcrowded, unhealthy trees and shrubs, and thick layers of pine needles and other surface materials can all contribute to catastrophic wildfires.

Preparing the land for new growth

When excess vegetation or needle layers are burned off, nitrogen and other nutrients are released into the soil and become available for new plants to grow.

Helping certain plants germinate

Many native plant and forest communities have adapted to fire for their germination and growth. Seed contact with bare soil (such as that exposed by a fire) is necessary for some species to naturally regenerate. (Lodgepole pine is one such example.)

Naturally thinning overcrowded forests, woodlands, rangelands, and marshes

Historically, natural fire thinned Nevada's forests. Thinned forests can recover faster and are more resistant to insect and disease attacks. Many of Nevada's landscapes are overcrowded with woody vegetation, resulting in a lack of vigor and health.

Creating diversity needed by wildlife

Fire creates a varied land and vegetation pattern that provides diverse habitat for plants and animals. Grazing wildlife benefit from new growth as shrubs produce succulent edible leaves when re-sprouting after a fire.

Prescribed Fire

Nevada's Fire History

Nevada is located in the Great Basin, which is known to be inhabited by fire dependent ecosystems. Each ecosystem (e.g. Sierra Nevada pine forests, aspen woodlands, pinyon-juniper woodlands, sagebrush steppe, etc.) have specific fire return intervals that have been identified by researchers and scientists. For tens of thousands of years, Native Americans regularly used fire to enhance habitats for species in which allowed them sustain their culture through food, clothing, tools, and other wares that made life possible in these harsh lands. Additionally, many landscapes burned at least once per century and sometimes more often due to natural ignitions or human ignitions.

Once ignited, fires burned uncontrolled until being extinguished along natural barriers (e.g. rock outcrops, rivers, etc.) or by unsuitable weather conditions. In the last century, active fire suppression has removed fire as natural, process that sustains the ecology of our ecosystems. In response, fire fuels have accumulated creating mega-fires that burn over 100,000 acres or more per fire. In addition, invasive species such as cheatgrass have created conditions where fire return intervals have increased from 50 years to every three years. Fires are now burning with greater intensity, size, and frequency than ever before.

IMPORTANT TERMS

FIRE DEPENDENT ECOSYSTEM

– ecosystem where fire is essential for the survival of many plant species and a natural part of healthy, functioning ecosystem

PRESCRIBED FIRE

– fire used in a landscape to accomplish resource management objectives

WILDLAND FIRE USE

– the management of naturally ignited fires to achieve resource benefits, where fire is a major component of the system.

WILDFIRE – an unwanted fire which is suppressed

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

– developed areas near wildlands which may be at risk from wildfire

BURN BOSS – the person who directs operations during a prescribed burn

Legal Application of Prescribed Fire

Private landowners are able to apply prescribed fires on their lands if they abide by the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and pertinent local fire protection district regulations. NRS Statutes that need to be followed include:

NRS 527.126 - Requirements to conduct fire – must be conducted pursuant to a written plan which has been submitted to and authorized by NDF and under direct supervision of at least 1 person who is qualified to oversee such fires and who remains on site for the duration of the fire. A controlled fire which is commenced pursuant to this section and which complies with laws relating to air pollution shall be deemed in the best interest of the public and not to constitute a public or private nuisance.

NRS 527.128 - Written Plan – The plan must be prepared by a person qualified to oversee a controlled fire and contain at least:

- A description and map of the area to be burned
- A list of personnel and equipment necessary to commence and control the fire
- A description of the meteorological factors that must be present before commencing a controlled fire, including surface wind speed and direction, transport wind speed and direction, minimum mixing height, minimum relative humidity, maximum temperature and fine fuel moisture
- A description of considerations related to common behavioral patterns of fire in the area to be burned, including various burning techniques, the anticipated length of flame and the anticipated speed of fire
- A signature of the person who prepared the plan

Before signing the written plan, the person qualified to oversee the fire must evaluate and approve the anticipated impact of the fire on surrounding areas which are sensitive to smoke. The state forester firewarden shall establish the qualifications for a person to oversee a controlled fire.

For more information contact your regional Resource Management Officer

**Western 775-849-2500
Northern 775-738-3454
Southern 702-486-5123**



DEPARTMENT OF
**CONSERVATION &
NATURAL RESOURCES**