

The Shawnee National Forest plans to burn about 4700 acres in several prescribed fire projects in the next fiscal year depending on funding and weather and fuel conditions. These burns will be conducted under controlled conditions between October 2011 and May 2012.

The purpose of these projects is to:

1. Stimulate growth of native vegetation well-adapted to fire, and impede vegetation that is not.
2. Improve wildlife habitat.
3. Improve the visual quality of the area.
4. Reduce the likelihood and severity of a wildfire, thereby increasing safety for the public and firefighters.

Here are some additional facts about prescribed burning:

- Prescribed fire is a management tool used to improve the forest community by deliberately starting a fire under very controlled conditions.
- The planned project follows a carefully prepared burn plan. The burn plan contains specific information regarding the allowable weather and fuel conditions to carry out the burn (called the "prescription"). It also contains the organizational requirements and directions to follow in the event of medical emergencies or other unforeseen events. If these variables are not in the pre-approved range to ensure control and smoke dispersal, the fire will not be lit.
- Safety is ensured by establishing fire lines around the burn area, staffing with appropriate crews and equipment, and only burning when weather conditions are "in prescription."
- While a prescribed fire usually removes leaf and pine needle litter, small trees (seedlings and saplings), and brush, the burn area in most cases will show few signs of fire after "green-up" in the spring.

The weather will determine exactly when the burn will take place. Due to the variability of seasonal weather, it is possible that this project may not occur. The actual burning period, where smoke and noise from equipment will be present, will last 3-5 days. We will try to limit any burning impacts to adjacent land owners. Some roads may be closed for short periods during the burn.

If you are interested in additional information, please contact Scott Crist or Bob Little in the Shawnee National Forest Supervisor's Office at (618) 253-7114, or visit our website for updated information at www.fs.fed.us/r9/Shawnee.