

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOREST SERVICE

Operation Order 2010-204

Effective: December 1, 2010

## **PRESCRIBED FIRE**

### **General**

This order supersedes 2008-204 Prescribed Fire and all previous operation orders and policies pertaining to prescribed fire operations.

### **Objective**

This operation order establishes the policies and procedures for conducting prescribed fire operations within Maryland on public and/or private land. All prescribed fire operations shall comply with MD DNR regulations COMAR 08.07.04 Forest Fire Protection and MD MDE regulations COMAR 26.11.07 Open Fires Authority. This policy will serve as guidance to other Units within the Department.

### **Prescribed Burn Plans**

In compliance with the above regulations, for prescribed fires occurring before 4 pm EST, all prescribed fire practices greater than one acre shall have a written prescribed burn plan. Any practices less than one acre may be approved with a verbal plan at the Project's discretion and issued a DNR Forest Service Burning Permit.

Prescribed burn plans shall be submitted in the DNR Forest Service standard plan format (Attached) or may be submitted in other written format containing all of the same required information. Plans shall have attached maps including general site location, site map of proposed burn area, and one and five mile smoke impact radius from burn site.

The landowner/agent or the County Forest Service office may prepare the prescribed burn plan. Applicant shall submit the prescribed burn plan to the Forest Service at least 30 days prior to the projected start date of the plan. A Prescribed Burn Plan number shall be assigned by the Fire Manager using the year-region # format (Western 2010-1001; Southern 2010-2001; Central 2010-3001; Eastern 2010-4001). The Fire Manager shall review and approve the plan within 15 days or request additional information needed from the applicant. Upon approval the plan shall be returned to the applicant and a copy sent to the local Forest Service office. Prescribed Burn Plans shall be valid for the calendar year in which the burn is scheduled to occur as specified in the plan.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all other federal, state, and local jurisdiction laws and regulations and acquiring any necessary permits from those agencies.

All firebreaks are to be constructed and completed in compliance with the approved prescribed burn plan. Upon completion, the applicant shall notify the local Forest Service office. A DNR Forest Service Burning Permit may then be issued for the site.

### **Ecologically Significant Areas (ESA)**

Prescribed Burns conducted for ESA management on state lands require a written objective provided by the WHS State Restoration Ecologist. The State Restoration Ecologist then must review and approve the Prescribed Burn Plan before submission to the Fire Manager.

### **Agency Conducted Prescribed Fire Operations**

The Forest Service does not accept warm season grass burn requests for private lands or prepare private land warm season grass plans. The Forest Service may conduct warm season grass burns on state lands managed by the unit as a low priority project if personnel are available. The Forest Service may assist other DNR Units with burns on lands managed by their unit as a low priority project at the discretion of the Regional Forester if personnel are available.

The landowner/agent may request the DNR Forest Service to conduct a prescribed burn on private property. Requests shall be prioritized within the region for anticipated prescribed burn windows. Agency priorities for prescribed burns are:

1. State Lands
2. Understory and Hazard Fuel Reduction
3. Site Prep
4. Marsh

If the Agency is to conduct a prescribed burn on private land, a DNR Forest Service Prescribed Burning Agreement (Attached) shall be completed. The agreement shall be in effect for the same duration as the approved prescribed burn plan. The Forest Service shall provide an estimated cost within the prescribed burning agreement. Cost shall be per the approved DNR Forest Service Prescribed Burn Rate schedule (Attached). Rate schedule shall be reviewed annually by the State Fire Supervisor and approved by the Director.

All prescribed burns shall be completed within compliance of the approved prescribed burn plan. The Burn Boss shall verify all personnel on site are in compliance with DNR Forest Service Wildland Fire Training and Personnel Protective Gear Operation Orders. Prior to ignition, the Burn Boss shall ensure current and expected conditions are within the approved plan prescription and complete and sign the Prescribed Burn Checklist

(Attached). If all questions on the checklist are answered “yes”, the Burn Boss may proceed with the test fire.

Upon completion of the test fire, prescribed burn operations may commence. The Burn Boss is responsible for monitoring weather conditions and shall terminate operations if any element becomes out of prescription.

Upon completion of the prescribed burn operation; all exterior firelines shall be mopped up to ensure control. At least one responsible person shall remain on site until danger of fire escape has passed. Burn Boss shall arrange for periodic patrol of the site until the fire is declared out. The Burn Boss shall also evaluate any post fire rehab efforts needed and ensure the practices are completed.

The Burn Boss shall complete a post burn evaluation form (Attached) and submit to the Fire Manager within ten days.

### **Qualifications**

All prescribed burn operations shall be conducted and supervised by a qualified and experienced Burn Boss. Burn Boss qualifications are as follows:

Forest Service personnel should be certified as a Wildland Firefighter I and working toward certification as a Wildland Firefighter II and shall have completed at a minimum S290 Intermediate Fire Behavior and I200 Basic ICS and have a minimum of 2 years experience as a firefighter on wildfire and prescribed burn incidents.

Other agencies, landowners, or contractors shall have successfully completed a minimum 16 hour workshop on prescribed fire procedures and have 3 years experience as a participant in prescribed burn or wildfire incidents or have 5 years experience as a participant in prescribed burn or wildfire incidents.

### **Notifications**

The Burn Boss or designee shall ensure notification at least 24 hours prior to prescribed burn operations:

1. All adjacent landowners
2. Fire Manager
3. County Air Quality Officer (if applicable)
4. Land Unit Manger (State Lands)
5. State Restoration Ecologist (ESA Management)

Burn Boss shall notify the following prior to ignition of the test fire:

1. Local Forest Service office
2. County Emergency Operations Center

This operation order is effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven W. Koehn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'W'.

Steven W. Koehn  
Director / State Forester