

THE RURAL FIREFIGHTER

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Nebraska Forest Service

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Burn Permits on Red Flag Days?

This spring, there have been a number of escaped land management burns conducted under conditions that were, at best, marginal for open burning. The especially surprising thing about these escapes is that many of them were conducted with a valid burn permit, despite high winds, low relative humidity and, in some cases, red flag warnings issued by the National Weather Service!

With this in mind, let's review an article that was printed in *The Rural Firefighter* three years ago regarding appropriate conditions for open burning. First, what is prescribed burning? One definition is: The skillful application of fire under exacting conditions of weather and fuel in a predetermined area, to achieve specific results. Let's break that definition down.

"Skillful application"

— This denotes that the burn boss and anyone assisting have had sufficient formal training and experience to complete the burn safely.

"Under exacting conditions of weather and fuel"

— Conditions will vary by site, but in general, temperatures should be 40-80 degrees, relative humidity 25-60 percent and wind speeds 5-15 mph. Burning at the low end of those conditions could create an incomplete, patchy burn that fails to meet management goals, while burning on the high end of the range can lead to intense, possibly dangerous, fire behavior that exceeds

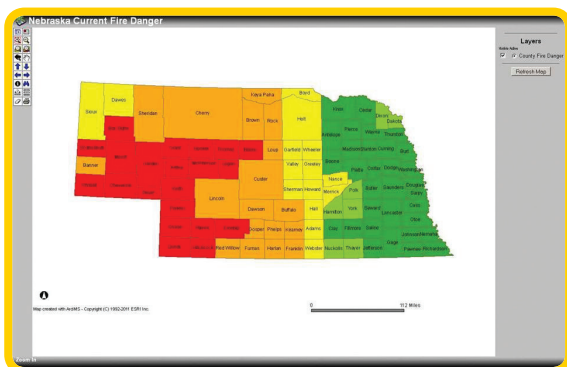
our capacity to control. Utilize available resources, such as the Rangeland Fire Danger Rating and daily fire behavior forecasts, to determine if the day planned for burning has the appropriate weather "window." The weather conditions at the beginning of the burn are just half the story. Conditions in the hours during and following the burn are just as important! Consider postponing a burn during frontal passage or if the Rangeland Fire Danger rating is in the high category. No open burning should take place if fire danger is in the very high or extreme categories.

"In a predetermined area" — Fuel breaks are the only things separating prescribed fire from wildland fire.

"To achieve specific results" — Reducing hazardous fuels, increasing forage and improving habitat are valid reasons to utilize prescribed fire. "Paint

it black" isn't a management goal! Keep statutory requirements in mind, too. Most firefighters know of the open burning ban in Nebraska Statute 81-520.

Prescribed burning is an increasingly popular management tool in Nebraska, but as a state our experience with it is still growing. As fire service professionals, we must ensure that our involvement in prescribed burning is done safely and does not become a threat to those we volunteered to protect nor to those we call upon to answer the call for assistance.



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Tips From Tex

By now, every volunteer fire department in the state should have received the 2011 Emergency Assistance for Wildfire Control, a.k.a. "The Yellow Book." Even though we hope we will never have to use it, it's available just in case. Hopefully, you have at least given it a cursory glance and know what to do if you need an aerial applicator(s) to assist you with a wildland fire.

Recently, I spoke at the Nebraska Aviation Trades Association Conference in North Platte. My message to the aerial applicators was twofold. First, I wanted to thank those who have participated in the program for the past 35+ years and second was to try to recruit more for the program. I received many good questions and comments from the group but there was one that stuck with me the most. Several applicators expressed concern that fire departments will not call them for help when it's needed. They went on to say that if they are not going to be called to help, then why should they go through the paperwork shuffle to renew their agreement every year? Of course, I can see their point because I'm the guy on both the sending and receiving end of that paperwork shuffle. And their follow-up question was, "Why are the fire departments not calling us for help?" This was the easiest question for me to answer, because I could not.

This program was developed by the Nebraska Forest Service in cooperation with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. It doesn't cost the fire department anything to use this program. The program started with over 100 applicators throughout the state. Today, we have just 21 applicators enrolled in the program.

If you need assistance in understanding this program and how it works, please give me a call and I'll be more than happy to come out and work with you or your mutual aid association. If you

would like some training on working with aerial applicators, contact the state fire marshal's training division office. They have a great training program on using aerial applicators and their aircraft. This is a great program available to volunteer fire departments and I encourage you to make use of it, if needed.

Until next time, stay safe!

George J. (Tex) Teixeira II
Fire Resource Manager



Country Living

For most people, a home in the country represents a peaceful contrast to fast-paced city life, providing an opportunity to maintain a job in the city while enjoying the aesthetics of a country home.

The movement of people from towns and cities to rural areas is a national trend that began in the 1960s. For many, a rural home has become a dream come true. However, homes are often built for aesthetic values and economic considerations with little regard given to fire protection. Placed in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) where fire is a natural part of the ecology, these homes are in peril.

Every year, many homes in the WUI



are damaged or destroyed. Many of these homes could have been saved if simple precautions had been taken before a fire struck. By taking steps to

protect their property, homeowners can prevent their dream home from turning into a nightmare.

The most effective prevention device invented is your attitude. With a positive, proactive attitude, you can enjoy your country home with confidence.

Fires starting within the home can threaten your safety whether you live in the city or in the country. Each room deserves special consideration. There are a number of things you can do to protect your home from fire.

INSIDE THE HOME

Kitchen

- Keep flammable curtains and towels away from burners and stoves.
- Move handles of pots and pans away from the front of the stove.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
- Make sure electrical outlets are designed to handle appliance loads.

Living room

- Install a screen on your fireplace.
- Store ashes in a metal container and dispose of them away from structures.
- Clean fireplace chimney/flue annually.
- Don't use extension cords.

Bedroom

- Turn off heating pads when not in use.
- Don't smoke in bed.

Bathroom

- Unplug curling irons and hair dryers when done; store in a safe location until cool.
- Don't use electric appliances in tubs.
- Keep radios away from wet areas.
- Install ground fault outlets in circuits near water (sinks, tubs).

Garage, basement and entire home

- Store matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Place emergency numbers and directions to your home near the phone.
- Install smoke detectors between living and sleeping areas; change the batteries in the spring and fall.
- Disconnect electrical tools and appliances when not in use.

- Install a solid wood door with self-closing hinges between living areas and garage.
- Install fire extinguishers in the basement and garage.
- Dispose of oily rags in metal containers.
- Store combustibles away from heat sources (hot water heater, furnace).
- Store flammables, such as paint and varnish, in metal cabinets.
- Install a residential sprinkler system with a water source on an alternate source of power.

By Bob Vogltance and Larry Wiles



Apparatus Spotlight

We know Nebraska firefighters are very proud of the effort and energy put into every piece of equipment that comes through the Nebraska Forest Service Fire Shop. We are too!! Well here's your chance to show it off! Send the particulars of the piece of equipment and at least one high-quality digital image (300 dpi x 300 dpi) to cmccoy3@unl.edu and we'll be glad to get you some kudo's for all the work you do!

This inaugural Apparatus Spotlight focuses on **Malmo Fire Department**. and their new "**Water Dawg**." **Fire Chief Ryan Welton** said, "This truck was put together by volunteer fireman from the Malmo Fire Department. Equipment



previously was off of another 6x6 so no taxpayer dollars went into this project. A big Thank You! to those who helped out with this extreme makeover!"

Chassis Information: 1962 forestry-owned military 6x6 (previously owned by Red Cloud Fire Department). A five-speed transmission backs up a 6-cylinder turbo diesel, 6-wheel drive truck.

Fire Package: 1,200-gallon poly tank with 25hp Honda pump (mounted low reducing the chance to lose prime) constructed on the original cargo bed. A 10" rear dump was included to enable the truck to be used as tender as well as an initial attack apparatus. It also has an electric hose reel with 100 feet of 1" line, two 1" side nozzles, two rear seat SCBA packs, two 750 watt detachable telescoping lights, a 2500

watt generator, 24v left and right (60gpm) front nozzle boom controls with monitor, 150' 1.5" skid line, 3" quick-fill valve along with a set of Monster Super Single tires and rims.

For more information on this build, contact the Malmo Fire Department at mvfd@nntc.net.

Nice job Malmo firefighters!



Cost Share Update

This year, we received 147 applications for the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program. All have been scored, but at this time, we are awaiting notice from our federal partners about whether the program was funded and how much money Nebraska will receive. We know this can put your purchases in a holding pattern for now, but you can be sure that just as soon as we know the status of the grant program, we'll get the word out.



Calendar of Events

May 20-22	Nebraska State Fire School, Grand Island
July 15-17	State EMS Conference Kearney
Sept. 10	Nebraska Fallen Firefighters' Memorial Service, Kearney



Wildland Fire Certification 'Glide Path'

More than 90% of the 1,000 firefighters in the Nebraska Incident Qualification System have taken just the basic steps in getting into the system. For those interested in obtaining higher level certification, here's how to do it.

This is a condensed explanation, so if you'd like more details, head to the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) website (www.nfs.unl.edu/fire/redcard). There you will find a link to the Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide (PMS 310-1). It has all the information on the system and also works very well to cure insomnia.

Moving beyond the firefighter type 2 (FFT2) level to the advanced firefighter (FFT1) level requires a combination of courses and on-the-job training. Some courses are required while others are "recommended" (though many of these are the hands-on courses).

On-the-job training is tracked through a position task book (PTB) issued to the firefighter. A PTB contains a list of tasks and duties to be performed under the supervision of a firefighter certified at a higher level. Upon completion of each task, your supervisor (fire chief, officer, etc.) initials the task to signify that you have done the job successfully.

When the book is complete, the final evaluator (who must be certified at or above the same level) recommends the

firefighter for certification. The PTB is submitted for review, and if no further experience is recommended, the firefighter will be considered qualified *and* certified at the next level. Subsequent levels are completed in the same way.

Utilization of Existing Experience

We know there are firefighters across the state who are *qualified* to perform in these positions, but lack the *certification* required. In an effort to recognize previous experience and count it toward certification, an "Experience Equivalency" system was developed. This system waives PTB requirements up to single resources boss provided a firefighter has a documented level of firefighting experience and number of years on the fireline. Course requirements do not change. Documentation of experience must come from the fire chief and can be submitted on an Experience Reporting Sheet or other suitable documentation. Details of the Equivalency system and reporting forms are available in the IQS Forms section on the NFS website. If you believe you have the necessary experience to utilize this system, please act quickly. The Experience Equivalency system will "sunset" in August 2012, after which we will transition to the standard training-PTB-certification process.

As always, please call for more information.

No certification to engine boss (ENGB)

FFT2

No prerequisites

Required training

I-100 Introduction to ICS

S-130 Firefighter Training

S-190 Introduction to Fire Behavior

L-180 Human Factors in Wildland Fire

Recommended Training: None

Fitness Level: Arduous

Position task book: None

FFT2 to FFT1

Prerequisite: FFT2

Required training

S-131 Advanced Firefighter

S-133 Look Up, Look Down

Recommended training

S-211 Portable Pumps and Water Use

S-212 Wildfire Powersaws

Fitness level: Arduous

Position task book: FFT1

FFT1 to ENGB

Prerequisite qualification: FFT1

Required training

S-230 Crew Boss (Single Resource)

S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior

Recommended Training

I-200 Basic ICS

L-280 Followership to Leadership

S-231 Engine Boss

S-234 Ignition Operations

S-260 Incident Business Management

Fitness level: Arduous

Position task book: ENGB

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