



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Loess Hills Alliance Report



Nicholas Salick — Harrison, Monona, & Pottawattamie Counties

Jan.— Mar. 2019

CRP Workshops

In March USDA and partner staff in Harrison, Monona, and Pottawattamie counties held workshops focusing on CRP and mid-contract management (MCM). We sent a targeted mailing based on FSA records to contact producers who had MCM requirements in 2019 and 2020. Getting multiple producers together at the same time was an excellent opportunity to review basics of maintenance, what kind of documentation they need to turn in to FSA for cost-share, options for management practices used to fulfill MCM, and a basic overview of preparations for a prescribed fire.

The group setting offered a chance for producers to ask questions, which were often shared by other land managers in the room. Side conversations and discussions after the workshop helped many attendees leave with a plan in place to complete their MCM. I was able to set up follow up appointments with several landowners who attended the workshops to further create MCM plans, work on controlling woody vegetation, get technical assistance on weed issues, and to further improve habitat for wildlife. 



Above: District Conservationist, Dale DuVal, discusses best management practices for preventing volunteer trees and controlling Canada Thistle.

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Fire Contacts

With the number of acres requiring MCM ballooning over the coming years, there is likely going to be more prescribed fire on the ground. Providing resources to landowners who wish to implement prescribed fire can be as simple as providing them with up to date contact information for their fire department and fire contractors.

Over the quarter I contacted each fire department in Harrison county to obtain the best phone number instead of the listed, and often unmanned, phone lines. I was able to present to the Harrison County Fire & Rescue Association, a collection of all fire departments and the Emergency Management Agency in the county. The presentation was an excellent opportunity to make local emergency agencies aware of the increased potential for fire on the ground, and make myself available for questions as they get more and more calls from landowners about prescribed fire.

Prescribed Burning Harrison County

Why prescribed burning?
Prescribed burns are controlled fires that are purposefully set under a specific set of conditions in order to meet management objectives. When properly managed, these fires regenerate natural areas, restore habitat for ground nesting birds, habitat for wildlife, and increases native plant diversity. Employing prescribed burns on your land is one of the best things you can do to promote stand health and wildlife habitat.

Management objectives and goals
No fire should be lit without first establishing a set of management objectives. These objectives set your purpose for burning and what you want to accomplish with the burn. Management objectives determine the optimal timing and conditions under which the burn will be conducted. For example, the purpose of the burn may be to set back cool-season grasses and promote warm season native grasses, with the long term goal of improving pheasant habitat. Local NRCS staff and natural resource professionals can help you identify the goals and objectives you have for your stand.

Safety starts with a burn plan
Burn plans are a necessary component of prescribed fire. They detail vital information for conducting a safe prescribed burn that fulfills management objectives. Burn plans should be planned by trained personnel. Information about burn plans is available at your local NRCS office or through the practitioners on the reverse side.

Attaining a burn permit
Most prescribed burns in Harrison County do not require a burn permit unless there is a burn ban in place or when weather conditions create a high risk of wildfire. Inquire with your local fire department prior to conducting a prescribed burn.

Pre-burn timetable
Being safe means being prepared. It is the landowner's responsibility to ensure the site is properly prepared prior to burning and notifications are made in advance of the burn. Follow the following timetable to prepare for your prescribed burn.

12 Months Prior to Burn

- Develop Prescribed Burn Plan
- Mow fuelbreaks bi-monthly during growing season before burn
- Remove dead trees and brush piles that are within 20 feet of fuelbreaks
- Scout for any safety concerns to burn crew, such as poison ivy or old fence wire

3 Months Prior to Burn

- Notify adjacent landowners/neighbors of intent to conduct a prescribed burn. Ask if residents have medical conditions that would worsen if there is smoke
- Arrange for crew and equipment needed

1 Month Prior to Burn

- Obtain necessary permits from fire department (burn permit, department contact info on reverse)
- Clean vegetation around access points for vehicle entry to burn area

1-2 Days Prior to Burn

- Check weather forecast for day of burn
- Notify adjacent landowners/neighbors of intent to conduct prescribed burn
- Drive around site to check fuelbreaks and access points
- Test to insure that all burn equipment is functioning properly

Day of Burn

- Check weather forecast
- Review pre-burn checklist prior to ignition (included in burn plan)
- Ensure remain livestock, equipment, pets are removed if needed
- Notify fire department, governmental units, etc.
 - EPD 11 Centres Non-emergency – (712) 644-2244
 - Fire department contact info on reverse
- Be sure burn crew understands the implementation plan

Prescribed Burn Practitioners Harrison County

Prescribed burns should only be planned and implemented by trained personnel. Listed below are private vendors and governmental entities that offer prescribed fire as a service in the county. These practitioners are able to assist landowners with all aspects of prescribed burning and can help you make your fire as safe and effective as possible.

| Emergency Management / E911 | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Agency | Mailing Address | Phone | Contact Name |
| Harrison Law Enforcement Center | 111 S 1st Ave Logan, IA 51546 | Non-emergency line (712) 644-3244 | Larry Oliver |

| Contractors | | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|-----------------|
| Company | Mailing Address | Phone | Contact Name |
| Caleb Wehlers | 2824 23rd St Logan, IA 51546 | (712) 315-7088 Wehlers3@gmail.com | Caleb Wehlers |
| Chaste Fire | 2501 Liberty Rd #126 Midwest City, OK 73110 | (877) 241-6382 cchaste@chastefire.com | Chet Dodell |
| Custom Seeding and Habitat | 11 Timber Ridge Humboldt IA, 51548 | (515) 895-7043 customerseeding@yahoo.com | John Kallmorgen |
| Freedom Creek Prairie | 2574 190th St Preston, IA 50589 | (641) 344-4722 freedomecprairie.com | Rick Schaefer |
| Hunter's Management Group | 2803 Newton Rd Logan, IA 51546 | (641) 895-2305 hmgroup@hmgia.com | Brady Blomquist |
| Prudentem | 63584 29th St Nevada IA, 50201 | (515) 357-1200 blake@prudentem.com | Luke Grun |
| Wehlers Fire Equipment LLC | 1449 Abramson Dr Council Bluffs, IA 51503 | (402) 578-1935 kody.wehlers@gmail.com | Kody Wehlers |

| Fire Department Districts | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| City | Mailing Address | Phone | Contact Name |
| Dundee | 715 Iowa Ave Dundee, IA 51529 | (712) 269-9446 | Joyce Cegill |
| Little Sioux | 507 N 1st St. Little Sioux, IA 51545 | (402) 630-0807 | Tim Colson |
| Logan | 112 N 3rd St. Logan, IA 51546 | (712) 218-0175 | Craig Charbonneau |
| Magnolia | 372 Magnolia St. Magnolia, IA 51550 | (402) 746-4125 | Charlie Green |
| Missouri Valley | 2511 Missouri Valley, IA 51556 | (712) 209-0245 | Caleb Wehlers |
| Modale | 107 S Main Modale, IA 51556 | (712) 209-0231 | Jesse Peil |
| Mondamin | 107 S Main Mondamin, IA 51557 | (712) 646-3919 | Michael Paffcorn |
| Pocria | 112 Main St. Pocria, IA 51560 | (712) 485-7127 | Mark Carlson |
| Plum | 106 E Main, Plum, IA 51584 | (712) 456-3881 | Jim Fanchik |
| Woodbine | 70 Bas Brown Dr. Woodbine, IA 51570 | (712) 590-0992 | Mark Leader |

Prescribed by Pheasants Forever – The Habitat Organization for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
712-644-2244, Fax: (712) 644-2210, ext. 3
E-mail: (712) 644-3244, Fax: (712) 644-3245
E-mail: (712) 644-3244, Fax: (712) 644-3245

This information has been prepared in a public service and it constitutes an endorsement by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service, or the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. While all care has been made to provide a complete and accurate listing of services, missions or other entities may occur and, therefore, other reliable source of information should be consulted. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Left: One side of the handout provides a timetable for everything to do leading up to a burn starting 12 months before fire ever hits the ground. **Right:** The second side of the handout shows all contact info for fire departments, Emergency Management, and fire contractors.

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Burn Planning

This quarter I've been working with lots of landowners to write burn plans. Through conversation and written plans I'm able to ensure that landowners understand proper firebreak construction, how to implement backing fire that is lower intensity and better at consuming volunteer woody vegetation, and improve their grasp on the equipment and personnel required to have a safe burn.

Performing site visits allows me to identify specific safety hazards, like utility polls, brush piles, or electrical junction boxes. Incorporating these into burn plans allows landowners to plan ahead and avoid burning these sensitive areas. Putting together a good burn plan stacks the deck in the landowner's favor, and ultimately leads to more sound land management. 

From a visit with a landowner working to clear cedars from high quality natural areas on his property in the Loess Hills. This project works within woodland management plan . On this site visit we helped him delineate the borders of his project area, and discussed best practices for removing trees without having negative impacts on the ground.



By the Numbers...

| Interaction Type | FY19 Qtr. 3 |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Landowner Contacts | 82 |
| Site Visits w/ Landowners | 9 |
| Habitat Proposals | 5 |
| Habitat Projects | 12 |
| MCM Plan | 2 |
| Burn Plans Written | 6 |
| Total | 116 |



Local SWCDs

Thank you to all our partners!

**37.5 Acres of Brush Management
through the Restoring Royalties
State Wildlife Grant**

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