



Increasing Prescribed Fire Capacity: Prescribed Burn Associations

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Members of the Custer Prescribed Burn Association and the Central Nebraska Prescribed Burn Association at work

OPPORTUNITY Prescribed fire is becoming one of the most rapidly adopted contemporary grassland management tools throughout the Great Plains. However, many private landowners do not feel they have adequate training, equipment or labor pool to safely and effectively conduct a prescribed fire.

SOLUTION The development of prescribed burn associations—cooperative groups of private landowners—has been used as an effective fire delivery mechanism throughout the Great Plains. Landowner-led prescribed burn associations support the growing use of fire by minimizing or eliminating the capacity barriers typically encountered when seeking to use prescribed fire.

COSTS AND LOGISTICS Funding for the start-up costs for a prescribed burn association is often acquired through grant sources, from other conservation partners interested in private land prescribed fire, or a combination of the two. This funding helps cover initial meeting expenses, equipment purchases, and training opportunities. Costs for the individual fires conducted by members of a prescribed burn association—such as meals for the crew, equipment costs, fuel, burn unit preparation, liability—are covered by the landowner(s).

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THIS SOLUTION?

“The prescribed burn association model had been used successfully in other part of the Great Plains, to the south, in Oklahoma and Texas, so we stretched these models to fit the needs and opportunities in our area.”



Range of prescribed burn associations
Map: Kansas Forest Service
(<https://bit.ly/2lqgXPO>)

KEY THINGS TO KNOW:

- ▶ Non-agency, non-professional prescribed burn association members need to be the primary decision-makers in a prescribed burn association.
- ▶ Take enough time to time to scout and develop quality leadership among prescribed burn association membership.
- ▶ The prescribed burn association model is very adaptable in private land systems, and can be molded to fit an unlimited range of ecological, social and regulatory frameworks.
- ▶ Human diversity can be well represented in, and add value to, prescribed burn association membership.

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TREN) are part of *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together* (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

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