

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge

W28488 Refuge Road
Trempealeau, WI 54661

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Manager**

Prescribed Fire Season Begins at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, reminds the public that prescribed burning will take place on the refuge from now through May. In the event that dense smoke would create hazardous conditions such as low visibility, visitors can expect refuge roads to be closed for several hours for safety reasons. This spring, the staff plans to burn several units when conditions are right for a safe, effective prescribed burn.

Prescribed fires are planned, controlled burns that take place in uplands consisting mainly of prairie habitats. They are conducted by qualified, trained employees and volunteers according to an approved annual fire plan, principles of restoration ecology, and fire and weather behavior.

Safety of people and property are the two top priorities during prescribed fires. Local authorities and neighbors are notified prior to each burn. The refuge fire crew mows and rakes fire breaks in advance, utilizes pumper trucks capable of pumping large quantities of water for suppression, and dresses in appropriate, safe fire clothing and gear. Weather conditions are regularly monitored as changes in wind and moisture can signal the crew to alter techniques.

Prescribed fires are important because they reduce hazardous fuel loading which helps prevent or reduce the chance for wildfires. Spring prescribed fires will help eliminate these fuels in a controlled fashion when weather permits.

They also improve habitat for wildlife by recycling nutrients and eliminating invasive woody plants and noxious exotic weeds. Fire helps restore ecologically degraded fields and meadows by stimulating native prairie plant growth and propagation. Some prairie plants cannot germinate unless exposed to the extreme heat of fire, and are displaced by nuisance plants when regular fire cycles are interrupted.

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1936, lies within the Mississippi River flyway. This 6,446 acre Refuge contains rolling prairies, rich wetlands and bottomland forests which support a variety of wildlife species. It is an isolated backwater, providing needed resting and feeding area for waterfowl and other birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit for American people.

For more information, contact the Refuge at (608) 539-2311, ext. 6 or stop in at the Refuge office M-F, from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.