



Common tools used in Prescribed burning: (from top left, clockwise) Pulaski, McCloud, shovel, drip torch, backpack pump, fire hoe.

Region 3 of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Midwest region of US Fish and Wildlife Service
Year to Date statistics on prescribed burns
as of August 2015* :

<u>State</u>	<u>Acres Burned</u>
Iowa	6,402
Minnesota	15,614
Missouri	6,953
Michigan	900
Illinois	705
Indiana	4,729
Wisconsin	10,912



Total Regional Acres Burned: 46,215

*As reported by the Eastern Area Geographic Coordination Center
of the National Interagency Fire Center



Refuge staff igniting a burn.

Spring 2015,
2,163 acres of tallgrass prairie and oak savanna were burned at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge.



Prescribed burns

What is prescribed burning? Sometimes called “Controlled Burning”, it is the intentional application of fire to a certain area of land.



Trained and qualified wildland firefighters conduct prescribed burns according to a plan, called a prescription, under specific weather conditions and safety protocols. Usually, burning takes place in the fall or the spring, when vegetation is dry, brown, and will carry fire.

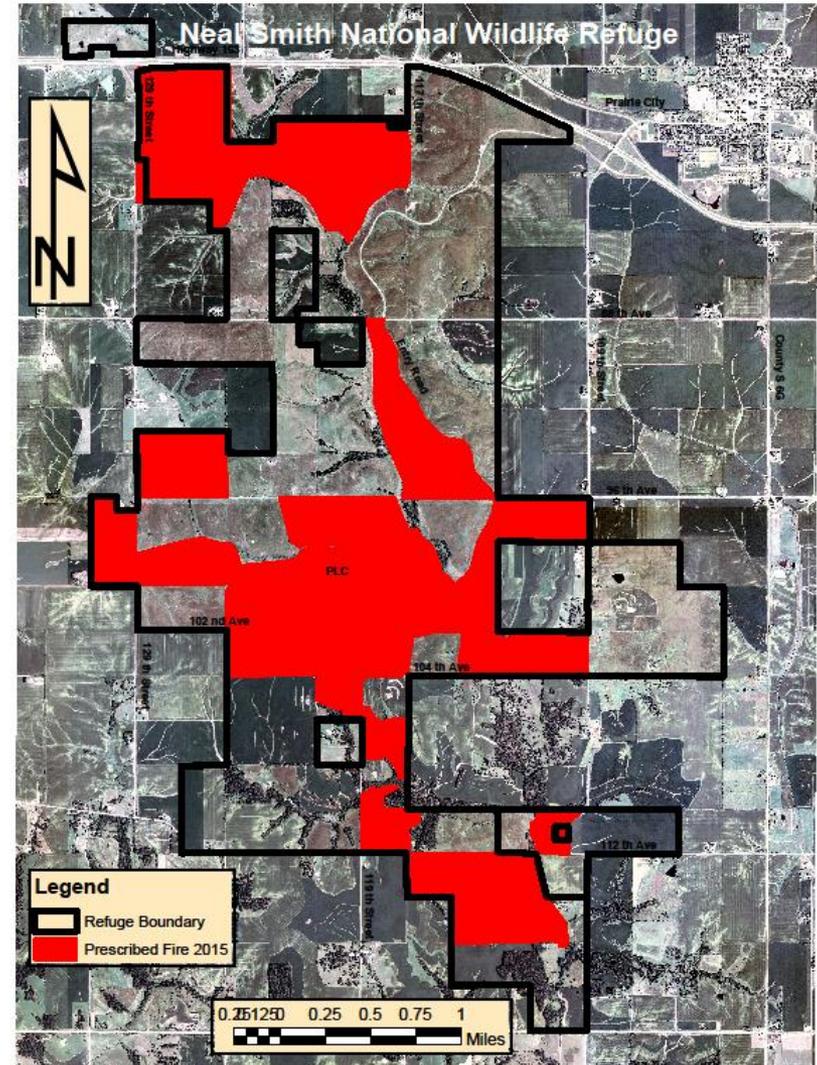
Why is burning important? Tallgrass prairies and oak savannas are fire adapted ecosystems in which fire is a natural component. Prior to the European settlement of this area, fire was a common occurrence, whether it was started by lightning strikes or native peoples. Controlled burning returns the element of fire to the ecosystem, which has otherwise been eliminated by modern land practices.

Prescribed fire burns off dead vegetation, which has many important benefits:

- Returns nutrients to the soil
- Promotes new growth
- Enhances species diversity
- Improves wildlife habitat
- Controls invasive plants
- Prevents the encroachment of unwanted woody vegetation.
- Reduces the hazard of wild fire.



At Neal Smith, the land is divided into burn units, designated sections of the landscape using features such as roads and creeks as natural fire breaks which keeps fire contained within that unit. These areas are burned to simulate natural fire occurrences of pre-settlement history.



(created by R.Hager)

Map showing areas treated with prescribed burns from to Spring 2015 at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge.