



**Oregon Department of Forestry  
Certified Burn Manager**

**The what and  
why of  
prescribed fire**

Photograph: OSU

Presentation developed by John Punches, Chris Adlam and Carrie Berger

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**Prescribed  
fire - defined**

Fire purposefully implemented  
to achieve management  
objectives

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**WHY BURN?**

What are some common reasons  
landowners or land managers  
may want to burn on their  
properties?

Make your own list (3 minutes)  
Share and discuss with larger group (5 minutes)

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### Evaluating Prescribed Fire Goals

Goal – as commonly stated	Nuance
Reduce fire risk	Changes fuel conditions for next fire – doesn't eliminate potential for fire
Reduce woody encroachment	May shift to more grass
Control invasive species	Fire has mixed effects on invasive species, often favors invasive grasses
Improve wildlife habitat	Alters vegetation – with pros and cons for individual wildlife species
Reduce insects and disease	May attract bark beetles
Protect cultural resources	May expose them to theft or vandalism
Maintain or enhance recreation	Results are in the eye of the beholder
Prepare site for tree planting	Removes woody material and other fuels, but may promote invasives
Restore forest tree species composition	Challenging to accomplish – particularly once past seeding stage

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### Fuels reduction

Burning reduces live & dead fuels, ladder fuels, and can therefore reduce wildfire intensity.



Photo credit: Chris Adlam

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### Natural resource management Rx

- Pasture or range management
- Forest health or species composition
- Favor rare & endangered species



Photo: Mazzyhawk Devine Services

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### Who Burns?

- Agencies
- Fire departments
- Municipalities
- Conservation groups
- Loggers/ranchers/landowners
- Contractors
- Prescribed Burn Associations
- Indigenous tribes



Photo: Chris Adlam

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### Cultural burning and prescribed fire are NOT synonymous

Cultural burning is the use of fire by Indigenous communities for cultural, social, ecological, and other purposes. It plays an important role in Tribal traditions, identity, and sovereignty.



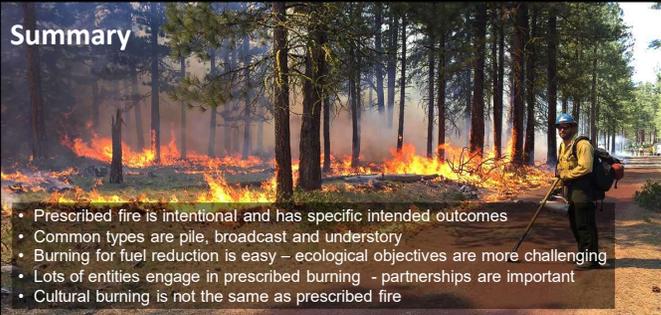
Photo: Chris Adlam

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### Summary

- Prescribed fire is intentional and has specific intended outcomes
- Common types are pile, broadcast and understory
- Burning for fuel reduction is easy – ecological objectives are more challenging
- Lots of entities engage in prescribed burning - partnerships are important
- Cultural burning is not the same as prescribed fire

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