

Forestry Notes



Prescribed Fires in New Jersey

In New Jersey prescribed fires are used to reduce the hazardous accumulations of forest fuels. This aids in the prevention of catastrophic wildfires

Fire is part of the Forest Environment

Fire, in a natural or prescribed form, is important to the maintenance and health of most ecosystems. However, with more residential subdivisions and developments in New Jersey, especially in the fire prone pinelands, the dangers and damages from wildfires continue to increase.

The wise use of prescribed fires to reduce forest fuels, coupled with other fire protection measures helps provide an effective level of fire protection in the wildland urban interface.

As the name implies, prescribed fires are used only when weather, and other conditions in the forest and surrounding areas, meet the conditions as described in the prescription.

Other benefits of prescribed fires:

- ◆ More economical and less destructive than mechanical means of fuel reduction
- ◆ Used to manage wildlife habitat
- ◆ Useful in removing certain non-native invasive plants
- ◆ Helpful in preparing sites for seeding and planting
- ◆ Vital in the perpetuation of fire dependent forest trees such as pitch, pond, and shortleaf pine trees.



PRESCRIBED FIRES ARE GOOD FIRES

They can imitate natural forest events and help protect property, lives, and natural resources.

They are carefully planned fires.

WILDFIRES ARE BAD FIRES

In New Jersey, prescribed burning plans for private forestlands must be developed by the landowner, a professional forester, or a legally authorized agent.

These plans must be submitted to the New Jersey Forest Fire Service for review, approval, and permits.

The prescribed burns must be completed at the owner's expense; however, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service can provide specialized equipment if the landowner is willing to reimburse the Forest Fire Service for its equipment and operator's wages.