


NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
March 6, 2012

**E-MEMORANDUM**

TO: District Superintendents  
Park Superintendents  
DPR Burn Bosses 

FROM: Mike Lambert, Chief of Operations

SUBJECT: Prescribed Fire Update

Prescribed fire continues to be an important management tool in our efforts to reduce hazardous fuel levels, protect biological diversity and protect rare species and their habitats. Because the inherent constraints of conducting prescribed burns such as weather, fuel loads, the proximity of park neighbors and smoke management vary greatly across our state, careful coordination among all administrative levels and between cooperating agencies is essential. While it is important that our resource management goals are met, safety, for our park staff and the general public must not be comprised.

In order to comply with the established protocols for the proper planning and implementation of prescribed fire, I ask that all Division Burn Bosses review and follow **DPR Staff Directive 02-03: Fire Management Guidelines** prior to ignition.

Please note that section 6.8, **Pre-Burn Notifications and Checklists** states that, *"No prescribed fire will be ignited unless the pre-burn checklist in Part F of the burn unit prescription has been completed (See Appendix 3). Prescribed fires will either not occur or will be extinguished if the checklist cannot be completed or changes in weather, smoke, management, or fire behavior exceed prescription parameters. It will be the responsibility of the burn boss to ensure that all personnel and equipment requirements specified in the pre-burn checklist have been met, that all weather parameters are within prescription, and that appropriate checklist have been met, that all weather parameters are within prescription, and that appropriate warning signs are in place. The completed pre-burn checklist must confirm the following points:*

- \* Park has an approved fire management plan and prescriptions in place.
- \* Proper burning permit obtained.
- \* All equipment fully operational.
- \* Firebreaks inspected and determined to be adequate.
- \* Emergency protocols covered.
- \* Updated fire weather in hand.
- \* Notifications made to: DISU; CHOP; DPR PIO; NC DFR; local fire departments; adjoining land owners.



- \* Adequate protection in place for sensitive biological features and park facilities.
- \* Warning signs, closures, or other public information in place.
- \* Adequate crew is on-site, and all crew members meet DPR firefighter training and protective equipment requirements.
- \* All crew members have a radio or a partner with one.
- \* On-site weather parameters measured and ALL parameters within prescription.
- \* Smoke dispersal conditions adequate; personnel posted at potential trouble spots.
- \* Test fire is within prescription and anticipated behavior.”

Also note that in section 6.7, **Burning Categories and NC DFR Readiness Plan Levels**, “*All prescribed fires conducted by NC DPR staff will occur under NC DFR Burning Category 2, 3, 4, or 5 (See Appendix 4). Under no circumstances will any prescribed fires occur when the Burning Category is classified as 1. Burn ignited under Burning Category 5 have the potential for severe fire behavior; therefore, burns on Category 5 days should be limited to units with light fuel loads and are to be undertaken with extreme caution and only after consultation with NC DFR staff. Regardless of burn category, fires should be planned so that ignitions are completed by one hour before sunset.*

*Unless otherwise advised by DFR personnel, prescribed fires will be allowed only under NC DFR readiness Plan levels 1-4 (See Appendix 5). Burning restrictions will be in force in North Carolina state parks whenever the Readiness Plan reaches Level 5, any time the DFR cancels burning permits, or at the PASU's, DISU's or CHOP's discretion.”*

Active wildfires or events that necessitate the deployment of division staff may constrain a parks ability to conduct prescribed burns due to availability of park staff and other resources. Therefore, DPR burn bosses and operations staff should ensure adequate resources are available to safely conduct prescribed burns while balancing the operational needs of the park and division.

For your reference, a complete copy of the DPR Fire Management Guidelines is attached. Because these guidelines address important liability, training, and equipment issues, it is important that you are familiar with the entire document. Thank you for your diligence and your commitment to our Division's fire management program.

Attachment

cc: Lewis Ledford, Director  
       Bryan Dowdy, Parks Chief Ranger  
       Brian Strong, Chief of Planning and Natural Resources

Signed copy retained by Denise Williams, Operations Section