PRESCRIBED FIRE IN ACTION

How Fire Benefits Forests, Wildlife, and Oak Regeneration

Saturday, August 22, 2026 | 9:00 AM–1:00 PM | Black River Falls, WI

9:00–9:45 AM — **Welcome & Workshop Overview | Black River Falls Library**
Keith Phelps, UW-Madison Extension Forestry

9:45 AM–12:00 PM — **Guided Field Tour**

Stop 1: Fire Ecology and Oak Woodland Health - Waazija Haci State Natural Area
Paul Napierala (WDNR Field Ecologist) & Keith Phelps (UW-Madison Extension Forestry)

- Wisconsin's fire history and oak ecosystems
- Ecological impacts of fire suppression
- Benefits of prescribed fire for native plants, pollinators, and wildlife
- Lessons learned from recent prescribed fire activities

Stop 2: Prescribed Fire as a Forest Management Tool – Overmeyer Hills Recreation Area
Ian Remus (WDNR Forester) & Brad Hutnik (WDNR State Silviculturalist)

- Using prescribed fire to promote oak regeneration
- Management objectives for recent burns
- Integrating prescribed fire into woodland management plans
- Long-term benefits for forest health and resilience

Stop 3: Wildlife Benefits of Fire and Forest Management - Overmeyer Hills Recreation Area
Jordan Winkenbach & Carly Lapin (American Bird Conservancy)

- How prescribed fire improves habitat for forest birds
- The role of sustainable timber harvesting in supporting wildlife
- Managing oak woodlands for biodiversity

Stop 4: Planning and Conducting a Prescribed Fire - Overmeyer Hills Recreation Area
Paul Napierala (WDNR Field Ecologist) & Ian Remus (WDNR Forester)

- Preparing burn units and establishing fire breaks
- Equipment and tools used during prescribed fires
- Weather conditions needed for safe burning
- What a typical prescribed fire operation looks like
- Burn permits, risk management, and training opportunities

12:00–1:00 PM — **Working Lunch *(provided)* & Closing Discussion - Black River Falls Library**

- Overview of Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council training and resources (10 minutes)
- Next steps for incorporating prescribed fire into woodland management
- Questions, discussion, evaluation, and closing remarks

1:00 pm — **Adjourn**

Forestry & Wildlife Program, Division of Extension, University of Wisconsin-Madison · Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources · American Bird Conservancy · Tallgrass Prairie & Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium · Joint Fire Science Program · Wisconsin Forestry Center, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point · Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council