

Prescribed fire on private lands: Myths, realities, and opportunities

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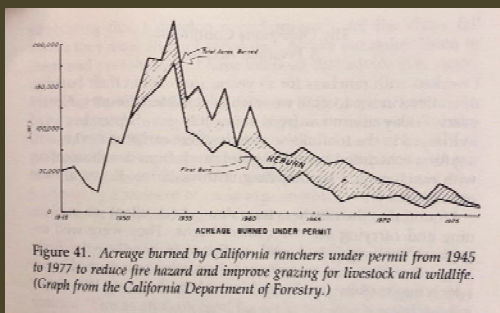
Who's using Rx fire in northern CA?

- Total of ~50,000 acres/year in northern CA
- Federal agencies = 91% of burning*
- Very little private lands burning!

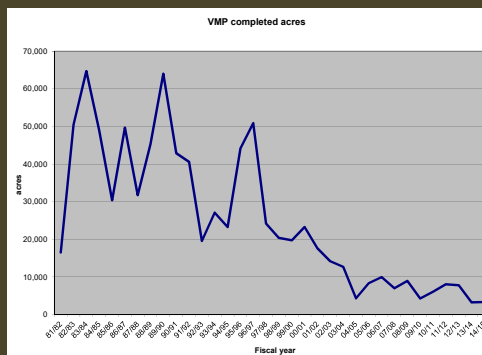


*From Quinn-Davidson and Varner 2012

Ranch burning in CA 1945-1977



CAL FIRE VMP acres per year, 1981-2015



Options for private lands burning



Pros

- Liability covered by CAL FIRE
- Low cost for landowner
- Experienced crews/resources
- Permits/air quality covered

Cons

- Limited agency capacity
- Planning time/environmental compliance
- Not guaranteed

Options for private lands burning



Pros

- Contractor provides insurance
- Landowner can set expectations and timeframes
- Experienced crews/resources
- Permits/air quality covered
- Environmental compliance

Cons

- Cost!!



Options for private lands burning



Do it yourself

Pros

- You're in charge—do it when and how you want
- Low cost
- Environmental compliance

Cons

- Liability
- Manpower/resources
- Permits/air quality



Options for private lands burning



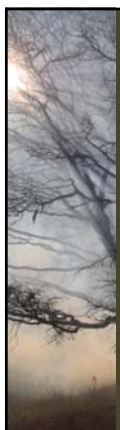
PBA

Pros


- You're in charge—do it when and how you want
- Low cost—volunteer based
- Environmental compliance
- Equipment/labor pooled through PBA
- PBA can apply for grants/funding
- Every burn is a training opportunity

Cons

- Liability (though you can hire a burn boss with insurance)
- Permits/air quality
- Someone has to coordinate



Option	Cost to landowner	Success rate
VMP	Very little...cost of lunch for crews, equipment time for prep	Limited
Private contractor	\$10-20k per day?	High
Do it yourself	Equipment time/labor	High? (small scale only)
PBA	Equipment time/labor Optional: Burn plan + burn boss (\$1.5-2k)	High



Prescribed fire myths



Liability: "It's just too risky"

- Simple negligence law
- Fire often covered in farm insurance policies
- There are good ways to mitigate liability:
 - hire burn boss
 - include neighbors in project planning
 - start with small, simple units




Permits: "Too much red tape"

- Only **two permits** needed for Rx fire:
 - Year round: air quality permit and smoke management plan (exemptions available for no-burn days)
 - During fire season (typically ~May 1-Oct. 31): CAL FIRE permit required



Population: “Too many people”

- California has more open space and wildlands than many areas where more burning happens (SE)
- Public support for Rx fire is high. Studies consistently show >80-90% approval rates across the country (*McCaffrey et al. 2015*)



Topography/fuels: “California is too complex—it’s not like Nebraska or Texas”


- Many of the areas that need fire on private lands in California are low complexity—grasslands, woodlands
- Management objectives in CA are similar to other states where they do more burning



Bringing the PBA model to CA



Hunt Burn: 6/29/17



- Goals: provide training and reduce invasive grass cover (medusahead)
- 18 acres, 25 volunteers, 2 VFD engines



Mazeppa Burn: 10/31/17



- Goals: provide training and restore coastal rangelands (reduce *Baccharis* cover)
- 140 acres, 23 volunteers, 6 fire departments

VFD support was amazing!

Provided a great training opportunity



Chalk Mt. Burn: 12/14/17



- Goals: provide training and maintain oak woodland restoration area
- 20 acres, 12 volunteers, 1 VFD engine



Burn trailer is here!!

- California Deer Association donated \$24k to kick off Rx burning in Humboldt County with the purchase of a burn trailer and 3 slip-in units.
- Redwood National Park also donated used hand-tools, hose, and other items




Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association

- Hosted first official Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association meeting on March 9
- Board of Directors & by-laws established




Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association

- Building list of projects and ranking strategy
 - 2200 acres of projects identified
 - Must participate in other burns to get your project on the list
 - Burns planned for this spring—join us!



Questions?

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