



Prescribed Burning And You

A guide for landowners and
land managers



Is prescribed burning right for your property?

Ecosystems in Northern California have adapted over millennia to thrive with the regular interval of fire. As a land manager or landowner, you play an important role in this system.

Indigenous people used — and continue to use — fire for ecological and cultural benefit. However, the early 1900s ushered in an era of fire suppression and removal of indigenous stewardship practices that fundamentally altered the health of our forests and grasslands.

Today, recognition is growing that regular intervals of applied fire is crucial to improving the health of our landscapes and the safety of our communities.

With abundant overgrowth in many ecosystems across Northern California and extended wildfire seasons due to climate change, a growing number of landowners and land managers are choosing prescribed fire as an effective treatment that can offer a multitude of ecological and risk-reduction benefits.

Reintroducing a fire regime on your land can require significant preparation, collaboration, and commitment.

This guide outlines what you need to know and do if you are interested in bringing good fire back to your land. It may help you to better assess your readiness in planning, preparing, and supporting a prescribed fire.

Fire Forward® — a prescribed fire program of Audubon Canyon Ranch

[Fire Forward](#) is a prescribed fire and capacity-building program of Audubon Canyon Ranch, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Since 2017, Fire Forward has trained hundreds to plan and implement prescribed fire and treated thousands of acres with regionally tailored fuels reduction practices.

We provide expertise, advice, and on-site support to help you achieve your stewardship objectives. If prescribed fire is a good fit, we will connect you to

the training, tools, prescribed fire managers, skilled volunteers, and practitioners to make it happen.

Fire Forward is made possible by funding from landowners, organizations, and agencies, who share the costs of prescribed fire and vegetation management activities on their lands. It is also underwritten by donations and grants from generous individuals, businesses, foundations, and local community groups.



Preparation, permitting, resource allocation, and liability

What Fire Forward® Provides:

- Expertise and qualifications for leadership and management of prescribed burn operations, including qualified burn boss (CARX or RXB2), firing boss, and/or other qualified leadership.
- Liaison with local and state agencies
- Site visit and assessment report
- Burn operations maps and media maps
- List of preparatory work required by landowner/manager
- Permit application support
- Burn Plan and other document preparation, fire behavior modeling, and risk management planning, all in support of meeting due diligence standards in the state
- Coordination of trained volunteers and practitioners for prescribed burning
- Gear to outfit participants in appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and equipment to support operations, such as Type 6 engine, UTV with slip-on tank, portable tanks with pumps, hose, and brass, etc.
- Pre- and post-burn support and monitoring
- Press release and public outreach plan development and implementation
- Sharing of liability and signing of Good Fire Alliance hold harmless agreement

What You Provide:

- Willingness to collaborate with Fire Forward and local agencies
- Completion of all preparatory work including but not limited to creation or improvement of control lines, installation of shaded fuel breaks, limbing up trees around unit perimeter, removal of dead snags near unit perimeter, cutting access through fences, and more as required by Fire Forward and regulatory partners. (This can be supported by Fire Forward's prescribed fire crew as part of fee-for-service if needed or preferred.)
- Support Fire Forward in contacting neighbors and share press release to NextDoor and other local forums
- Permit application involvement
- Participation in or presence on the prescribed burn
- "Mop-up" support (patrolling/monitoring the site and addressing concerns after the burn for three days to two weeks, or until the fire is out)
- Food for all practitioners and volunteers during the burn, a restroom facility, and sometimes a camping option
- Support identifying an appropriate water source for burn operations and an appropriate briefing/staging area
- Sharing of liability and signing of Good Fire Alliance hold harmless agreement

10 steps to bringing Good Fire back to your land

Step 1: Assess goals and readiness for contributing needed financial and labor resources

Step 2: Share information about your site and project with Fire Forward (may be online survey, phone call, etc.)

Step 3: If your project is determined to be a good fit, participate in a site visit

Step 4: If site is deemed suitable for prescribed burn, complete all preparatory work outlined by Fire Forward

Step 5: Final site visit(s) and walk through with Fire Forward and other agencies, discussion of timeline

Step 6: Communication with neighbors

Step 7: Burn plan to ignition:

a. Landowner/manager provides key information to Fire Forward for incorporation in the burn plan

b. Fire Forward and the Landowner/Manager partner to ensure that proper permits are in place and an estimated timeframe will be set for burn window

c. Humidity, wind, and vegetation conditions must be right for the prescribed burn. If the land is too wet, ignition will not happen. The Landowner/Manager will be the eyes on the ground and will work

with Fire Forward to assess if the timing is right — this is largely accomplished through sending of guided videos of fuels on landscape to Fire Forward team.

Step 8: Ignition — Landowner/manager is present and provides dinner to crew, restroom facility, and identifies staging area for briefing and resources to park. Camping option may also be needed for some burns, especially in forest and woodland ecosystems that can require multiple days of patrol.

Step 9: Mop-up — Monitoring/patrol of site happens for as long as Fire Forward deems it necessary, typically until the fire is “out.” This can last one day in grass ecosystems up to about three weeks in heavier fuels such as redwood forests and previously logged forest areas. Landowner/Manager complies with patrol standards and extinguishes heats that pose any potential threat to containment or political support post-burn until site is deemed complete by Fire Forward. Landowner/Manager stays in communication with Fire Forward about conditions on site and can reach out at any hour with questions or concerns.

Step 10: Monitor and adapt your ongoing stewardship goals.



Fee-for-service rate structure

Audubon Canyon Ranch's Fire Forward collaborates with landowners, public agencies, and conservation partners to lead prescribed burns. Our mission means we never turn away someone due to lack of funds.

Site Visit — <i>Includes free initial consultation</i>		Price	33% subsidized	66% subsidized	100% subsidized
Site Visit, post visit summary report and custom site map		\$450	\$300	\$140	\$0
Site visit, with follow-up of alternative recommendations if broadcast burning is not appropriate for your site.		\$250	\$167	\$83	\$0

Prescribed Burn Coordination		Price	33% subsidized	66% subsidized	100% subsidized
Standard-complexity one-day broadcast burn		\$6,000	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$0
Daily rate after day 1		\$1,500	\$1,000	\$500	\$0
Low-complexity, off-season burn		\$1,500	–	–	–

Equipment					
Standard	Fireline gear/PPE, utility truck w/ saws, torches, hand tools, backpack pumps	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$0
Standard+	Items above plus UTV w/ Q-TAC water delivery system	\$800	\$533	\$267	\$0
Full	Items above plus hoses and brass, portable pump(s), portable tank(s)	\$3,230	–	–	–
Additional days: fees for retention of gear and equipment beyond day 1		To be discussed as needed			

Plans and Permits: if applicable, paid by landowner or billed for by Fire Forward					
Smoke Management Plan and PFIRS Management		\$200	–	–	–
-OR- Air Quality Permit and PFIRS Management		\$100	–	–	–

Meals: daily rate if landowner cannot provide					
Breakfast and coffee, 30–50 people, \$8/person		\$240–400	–	–	\$0
Lunch, 30–50 people, \$15/person		\$450–750	–	–	\$0
Dinner, 30–50 people		Landowner must provide a robust dinner to all fireline personnel			
Add'l meals (mop-up/patrol period), 5-25 people		Provided by landowner or billed at \$8–15/person			

Not included: landowner's unit preparation effort (creation and or/improvement of control lines, under advice from Fire Forward), and bathroom facilities. These are direct costs landowners resolve with their own resources. rev. 8/9/23

Acknowledgements & Additional Resources

This guide was initiated by and developed in collaboration with [Green Valley Farm + Mill](#) and [Regenerative Forest Solutions](#).

Additional resources:

[California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire](#) →

