



Brush Pile Burning Policies and Procedures Checklist

Natural Areas Volunteer Handbook *Revised: September 2020*

Brush pile burning must be done properly to ensure it is safe, the fire is contained, the smoke doesn't cause a nuisance to nearby residents, and the public and fire officials are properly notified. Volunteers are required to follow the policies and procedures outlined below and complete the checklist prior to burning piles on county lands. All sections that apply to the project must have boxes checked before burning can take place.

Brush Pile Burning Policies and Procedures Checklist

Location-specific steps: *(if your project is located in one the areas below, complete these steps before proceeding)*

- If in NW Dane County DNR Protection Area:** Ground must be completely covered in snow. DNR places restrictions from January 1 to May 31 on lands in the DNR Protection Area, including the townships Roxbury, Mazomanie, Berry, Black Earth, Vermont, and the northern tier of sections in Blue Mounds. On the day of the burn, check the daily burning restrictions <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestfire/restrictions.html> or call the hotline 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876) to get final approval.
- If in the City of Madison city limits:** written General Burning Permit required and \$50 fee submitted at least 30 days before planned activities. Details are found on the City of Madison FD permits webpage: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/fire/permits-inspections/licenses-permits/licenses-permits-applications>

In advance of burning, ALL PROJECTS must notify:

- Dane County Non-emergency Duty Supervisor (608-267-3913)
- Local Fire Department: See Appendix 6 of handbook to find your local Fire Department contact information.
- If March/April: Permission to be burn must be obtained from Dane County Parks (DCP) natural areas staff.

In advance of burning, ALL PROJECTS must meet the following environmental conditions:

- DNR Fire danger rating is LOW. Danger rating can be found here: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestfire/restrictions.html>
- Winds are below 20 mph and predicted to stay calm
- Wind direction blowing smoke away from people, signs, structures, and roads.
- Temperatures below 75 degrees F and predicted to stay cool
- No air quality notices are in place for Dane County. Visit this DNR webpage to confirm air quality conditions: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/airquality/status.asp>
- Brush pile will be located in an area where heat will not cause damage to desirable vegetation or other important natural resources.
- Snow/bare soil (i.e. tilled soil, harvested hay w/o residue) is completely covering the ground OR DCP Certified Burner with approved burn plan is present to supervise the burn.

If snow/bare soil is not completely covering the ground, and site occurs outside DNR Protection Area, ALL PROJECTS must meet the following conditions:

- Pile must be supervised by a DCP Certified Burner. Successful completion of NWCG courses S-130 and S-190, DCP Certified Land Steward Orientation, and Certified Burner Orientation qualifies an individual to become a DCP Certified Burner.
- DCP Certified Burner must follow a burn plan that is approved by DCP natural areas staff.

Additional condition-specific steps:

- If temps above 40 degrees:** you must have a minimum of five gallons of water available on site.
- If temps below 40 degrees:** suppression tools such as shovels and/or rakes available in lieu of water.

Per State law, fire must be extinguished. Contact natural areas staff for advice on extinguishing fires. Failure to comply with any of these guidelines may lead to revocation of brush pile burning privileges.