UWSP Fire Crew

• Established in 1986
• Para-professional
• Memorandum of Understanding with Wisconsin DNR
• WI DNR provides oversight, training, and some equipment.
• Fire Crew reciprocates with personnel when requested
UWSP Fire Crew

- Offers students who join
  - Fire Training
  - Prescribed Fire Experience
  - Opportunities to Experience Fire in Other Parts of the Country (Fire Tourists)
  - Wildfire Suppression Experience
Training

- Through combination of WI DNR staff, faculty, cooperators, and qualified alumni, the following courses have been offered to crew and the public.

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Prescribed Fire

• Originally burned campus owned lands

• The Crew offers prescribed fire services to landowners throughout Wisconsin for prairie and savannah restoration.

• Fire Crew assists with burns on agency managed lands
Restoration Assistance Through Prescribed Fire

- Brochure from the Wisconsin Central Sands Regional Plan by the University of Wisconsin, Madison and The Nature Conservancy listing Fire Crew as source for prescribed fire.

### Prescribed Fire

**Why you do it:**
Historically, fire was essential in maintaining many wetland plant communities. Without fire, these areas can become dominated by woody plants and herbs, leading to the loss of fire-sensitive species. Prescribed burning can help maintain a habitat for many species, including native grasses and herbs.

**How you do it:**
Prescribed burning involves setting fires under controlled conditions to mimic natural fire patterns and maintain the health of wetland ecosystems. It is a crucial management tool for preserving biodiversity and restoring ecological balance.

**Documentation:**
Documentation of prescribed burning activities should include maps and photographs to track changes and progress over time.

### Mechanical Removal of Vegetation

**Why you do it:**
Mechanical methods can be used to remove vegetation when fire is not an effective or feasible option. This can help reduce competition with native species and restore the ecosystem.

**How you do it:**
Mechanical methods include mowing, herbicides, or plowing to remove vegetation. These methods are often used in conjunction with other techniques to create a comprehensive restoration plan.

**Documentation:**
Documentation should include notes on the type of vegetation removed and the methods used.

### Invasive Species Control

**Why you do it:**
Invasive species can disrupt native plant communities and reduce habitat quality. Prescribed fire can help control invasive species by reducing their abundance and promoting the growth of native species.

**How you do it:**
Prescribed fire can be used to reduce the spread of invasive species by creating gaps in the vegetation cover, which can help native species regrow.

**Documentation:**
Documentation should include records of the species targeted and the effectiveness of the prescribed fire.

### Establishment of Native Vegetation

**Why you do it:**
Planning native species can help restore and maintain natural ecosystems. Prescribed fire can be an effective tool for establishing and maintaining native plant communities.

**How you do it:**
Prescribed fire can be used to create conditions favorable for the establishment of native species by removing competition and improving soil conditions.

**Documentation:**
Documentation should include records of the species planted and the methods used to create the appropriate habitat.
“Fire Tourists”

- During winter and spring breaks Fire Crew members travel to other regions of the country to gain fire experience.
- Past trips have visited Eglin Air Force Base near Pensacola, FL; Blackwater NWR Maryland; St Johns River Water Management District, FL.
- This year trips visited Gold Head State Park in Keystone Heights, FL over Winter Break and plan to visit Oklahoma over Spring Break.
Fire Suppression

- Fire Crew members support the state and federal wildland agencies.
- For WI DNR they serve as lookouts, “riders”, and hand crews.
- Busy fire years Fire Crew provides 25-30 squads of 4-7 members. Real busy fire days as many as 80 Fire Crew members are assigned.
I want to thank:
UWSP
Dr. James Cook, the Fire Crew Faculty Advisor
Brad Kildow, WI DNR Coordinator to the Fire Crew
The Fire Crew members for allowing me to serve as the Crew Leader