



Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge

Prescribed Burns

What is a Prescribed Burn?

Looking at the landscape in front of you, you will see that much of it has been burned. What occurred here is something called a prescribed burn. Prescribed burns are fires that are set intentionally by professionals to manage a landscape. They are strictly planned and controlled to prevent disasters.



The Importance of Fire:

Fire is necessary to manage landscapes and protect wildlife habitat. Prescribed burns kill invasive plants and maintain important grassland habitat by removing trees and shrubs. Having occasional controlled fires can actually prevent larger, more destructive fires from causing harm to both wildlife and human communities by removing excess fuels such as leaf litter and dead wood. Also, some coniferous tree species have serotinous cones, which shed their seeds when heated by fire. The saplings then grow in the burned area.



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