

# How to start a Fire Program

## Checklist

- ❑ Document the need(s)
- ❑ Build support
- ❑ Insurance
- ❑ Find people (aka "a crew")
- ❑ Training
- ❑ Tools and equipment
- ❑ \$\$\$\$\$



# Understand your organization's need for fire



- ▶ Operational need
- ▶ Fire in your ecosystems
- ▶ How involvement will impact your people and projects
- ▶ Could your goals be met in other ways?
- ▶ Can your operational needs be met using contractors? Why or why not
- ▶ The benefits of operational fire vs. the expense?



# Strategic reasons (e.g. Good forage)



*Patch Burning:  
Integrating Fire and Grazing  
to Promote Heterogeneity*



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Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management  
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service  
Oklahoma State University



Build Support among your coworkers,  
administration and board





# Insurance

- Your general liability coverage probably covers you for everything except leading burns or contracting services
- May need supplemental coverage that specifically mentions burns
- A \$3 million liability policy should cover most situations
- Several non-profits in Michigan have gotten coverage and are burning
- Additional cost to HP is still TBD, we are working on it
- When in doubt, ask for help



# Staffing and Partnerships in Land Management



Your Staff (2 to 3)

Short term or As needed

Community service groups

Other Conservancies –  
GTRLC, LTC, TNC,  
Headwaters, etc.

Americorps

Students – MSU, GVSU  
LSSU, etc.

Conservation Districts

Fire Departments

Partner Agencies

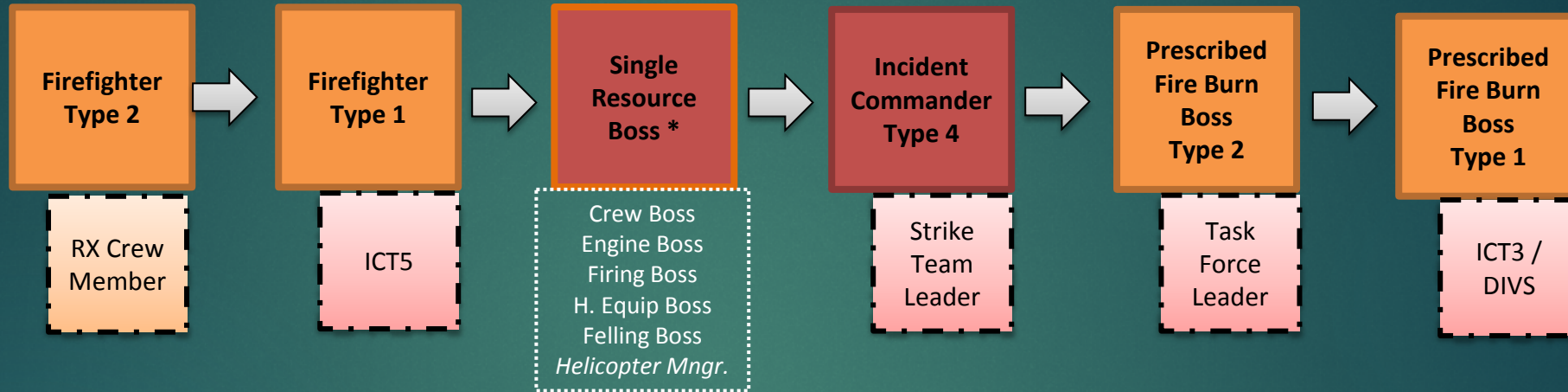




How are you going to use NWCG?



# Training Curriculum



Required Training  
 S-190  
 S-130  
 L-180  
 ICS-100  
Add'l Training  
 None

Required Training  
 S-131  
 S-133  
Add'l Training  
 S-212  
 S-211  
 S-219

Required Training  
 S-290  
 S-230  
 ICS-200  
Add'l Training  
 S-270  
 S-234  
 L-280  
 S-260  
 S-231  
 S-232

Required Training  
 S-200  
Add'l Training  
 S-215  
 S-234

Required Training  
 S-390  
Add'l Training  
 RX-301  
 RX-341  
 RX-301  
 L-380  
 RX-410

Required Training  
 S-490  
Add'l Training  
 RX-410  
 RX-510  
 M-581  
 M-580

# Performance Based Qualification System



- Training
- Experience
- Competency
- Leadership
- Continuing Education
- Physical Fitness

Training = hands-on experience in a safe environment.





# Leadership Development



# Tools and Equipment

| Item  | Number | Cost            | Total           |
|---|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
| PPE – Nomex, hard hats, boots, shrouds, line gear, shelter  | 8      | \$1,500         | \$12,000        |
| Hand tools – Rakes, rogue hoes, shovels, flappers, Pulaski. | 20     | \$75            | \$1,500         |
| Road signs  | 6      | \$300           | \$1800          |
| Power tools (chainsaws, backpack blowers, brush cutter)     | 5      | \$750           | \$3750          |
| ATV   | 2      | \$6000          | \$12,000        |
| UTV   | 1      | \$12500         | \$12,500        |
| ATV/UTV Portable pumps and water tanks                      | 5      | \$400 - \$1,500 | \$2,000         |
| Drop tanks  | 2      | \$800           | \$1600          |
| Hose, nozzles and fittings                                  | 30     | \$200           | \$6,000         |
| Communications  | 10     | \$50 to \$1200  | \$2,500         |
| Ignition devices  | 6      | \$150           | \$900           |
| Weather kits  | 3      | \$250           | \$750           |
| Truck based slip on   | 1      | \$7500          | \$7500          |
| Trailer (flatbed and enclosed)                              | 2      | \$5500          | \$11,000        |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>   |        |                 | <b>\$75,550</b> |





# Fire funding

- ▶ Grants
  - ▶ NFWF
  - ▶ USFWS – Partners for Fish and Wildlife
  - ▶ Wildlife habitat grants
  - ▶ Forestry and forest health
  - ▶ Think about Educational or Vocational grant programs
- ▶ Look for surplus equipment from partners and local fire departments
- ▶ Local foundation grants
- ▶ Partners operational funds (match)
- ▶ Include 30% extra over equipment costs for maintenance
- ▶ Plan for 10-25% private operations

# You must have a plan

## The Prescribed Fire Burn Plan

Table 3. Content of a prescribed burn plan as outlined in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG 2008).

- Signature Page
- Go/No-Go Checklists
- Complexity Analysis Summary
- Description of Prescribed Fire Area
- Goals & Objectives
- Funding
- Prescription
- Scheduling
- Pre-Burn Considerations
- Briefing
- Organization & Equipment
- Communications
- Safety & Medical
- Test Fire
- Ignition Plan
- Holding Plan
- Contingency Plan
- Wildfire Conversion
- Smoke & Air Quality Management
- Monitoring
- Post-burn Activities
- Maps
- Fire Behavior Modeling
- Complexity Analysis
- Job Hazard Analysis
- Technical Reviewer Checklist



# Before the Burn

- Ensure adequate fire breaks for expected fire behavior
- Notify Neighbors and Agencies
- Secure Burn and Smoke Permits
- Study Weather Forecasts
- Request Spot Forecast
- Do a walk-through of the operation and crew briefing



# After The Burn



- Mop-up and patrol
- After action review (Evaluation)
- Documentation
- Equipment and control line rehabilitation
- Monitoring: did we meet our objectives?

# Take Home Messages

1. The right fire program is different for every situation.
2. Take the time to understand yours, use this network to build a compelling case.
3. Think creatively about sources for people, tools, training and funding.
4. A fire program will take years to build, but the time to start has never been better.
5. Fire can be a high leverage strategy that contributes to all aspects of our work from staff development (team building and leadership) to community partnerships, communications, fundraising, and direct improvements to land and water.
6. Please take your time and be responsible, in the eyes of the public everyone who burns is essentially the same. What you do will impact the rest of the wildland fire community.
7. **ASK FOR HELP!**

If we get this right we are recreating fire culture

