



# *Early Successional Habitat*

## NATIVE WARM SEASON GRASSES (PRAIRIE) MAINTENANCE

### **Prescribed Burning (Practice Code 338) - Dates – (spring: March – April) / (fall: Oct – Nov)**

Removes vegetation debris (duff) increasing bare ground, controls woody plant invasion, promotes growth of grasses/forbs that produce wildlife food, and stimulates legume growth important for Pheasant and Quail chicks. Burning will be one of the most efficient and useful management tools for Warm Season Grasses and Forbs. After the second growing season burn 1/3 of the Warm Season Grass Field each consecutive year. Used properly, fire is a safe and economical tool, but careless burning can threaten life and property. Late spring fires promote warm season grasses as well as inhibit woody encroachment. Late summer (Mid -August to Late-September) fires promote forbs, so this type of fire may be better occasionally to promote the forbs in the stand. If prescribed fire is unable to be conducted, a conservation mowing management activity may be acceptable over short durations (i.e. drought, wet during burning season).

**Firebreak Establishment (Practice Code 394) -** Established firebreaks aid in the process of prescribed burning. Maintenance Firebreaks can be established by disking or repeated mowing. Firebreaks should be at least 30 feet wide consisting of cool season legumes (e.g. clover/alfalfa/timothy). Firebreak mowing should be done between August 1 and August 15 at a height of 8" to 15". Never early cut and DO NOT bail the area. Mowing Firebreaks once a year can control woody growth, stimulate legume growth, and prevent weed invasions. *Mow firebreaks in the late Fall before a burn.*

### **IT IS THE LANDOWNERS RESPONSIBILITY TO GET PREPARED FOR A PRESCRIBED BURN!!!**

When conducting a controlled burn take all the necessary precautions, retain the necessary permits, and inform the necessary agencies. Pay careful attention to wind direction and speed, humidity, firebreaks, and the surrounding landscape.

### **Strip Disking**

If prescribed burning cannot be completed on the property, then strip disking is a viable alternative to help enhance wildlife benefits. Lightly disking in an established grass stand will help rejuvenate the forbs in the stand. This type of management is typically done between October 1 and April 15. Only disk approximately 1/3 of available habitat at any one time to make sure there is other habitat available.

### **Conservation Mowing**

Conservation mowing is mowing between August 1 and August 15 at a mowing height of 8" to 15". Never early cut or DO NOT bail the area. Conservation mowing once a year can control woody growth, stimulates legume growth, and prevents weed invasions.

