

Prescribed Fire Phragmites Management

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Past Management

- 68,000 acres in the state
 - 20,000 acres are marsh
- Most marshes were 100 percent Phrag
- Chemical application followed by prescribe fire
- Goal was to eliminate standing dead and increase native vegetation



Current Management

- Management goals have changed
 - Maintain current level of Phrag
 - Areas along tree line and ditches do not get sprayed
 - Prescribe fire 5-7 years
 - As much to eliminate dead spots in the marsh



Prior to the Prescribed Fire

- Location
- Burn plan
- Smoke and fire behavior modeling
- Finding enough personnel
 - 10-14 qualified people
- Equipment
 - Boats, ignition devices, PPE, track vehicles, suppression tanks
- Fire breaks
 - Natural or made



Day of the Prescribe Fire

- Conditions for the day
- Personnel briefing
- Know the plan and each assignment
- Breaks are all checked
- Fire and smoke behavior acting as predicted



Time of Year

- Restricted for Fish and Wildlife
 - Air quality permits October- April 30
 - Trapping leases on marsh until March 15
 - Green up starts in early April
 - Leaves less than 40 days to find proper conditions

Pros to Burning

- Fuel reduction
- Increase native vegetation
 - Increase native fauna
- Aides in cleaning up rack in marshes
- Increases young shoots
- Benefit to wildlife
 - Increase annuals first year after burn



Species Benefited



DNREC DIVISION OF
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NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Cons to Burning

- Time investment
 - Fire breaks, modeling, setting up the day of the fire
- Finding enough personnel
 - Safety to the crew
- Perceived air quality issues



Final Thoughts

- Benefits outweigh the negatives
- Are marshes a fire driven ecosystem?
 - The fire benefit to eliminating Phrag and dead areas is present
 - Do marshes need to be burn more often?
- Benefits to wildlife are well documented
- Eliminates a possible monoculture



Comments? Questions?

