

Moose Lake News

By Jim Onarheim

Several Moose Lakers attended the Wisconsin Musky Expo in Wausau WI. over this past weekend. This is an annual event that happens every year at the Wausau Convention center. This show was attended by hundreds of sport show fans throughout northern Wisconsin. According to many, the show did have a record attendance. This was compared to the last previous years. Compared to previous years. Fishing guides Larry Ramsell, John Myhre and Mike from Jenks Bait and Tackle were in attendance along with many other Hayward residence. I had a chance to speak with all three of these men about the show. They were extremely impressed with the number of vendors that were in attendance compared to previous years. Mike from Jenks Bait shop told me he was on a buying trip for his sport shop. The others told me they were just looking at new items, lures, bait, and new tackle, including many different fishing rods. People were buying many \$50.00 musky lures. Rob Sparhawk was selling his sunglasses at the show.

Wildfire Prevention: Every year thousands of wildfires are started in Wisconsin as a result of careless use of fire in and outdoors. Since 98 percent of these fires are caused by humans, wildfire prevention aims to teach people about the dangers of accidentally igniting fires with the expectation that safe burning practices will lead to fewer wildfires.

This is very important because a wildfire in the wrong place can destroy homes and landscape causing stress on wildlife and ruining the aesthetic beauty of our forest. Preventing wildfires also reduces the cost of firefighting efforts and economic losses associated with property damage, timber loss and large-scale evacuations.

Wildfires do not discriminate. Under the right conditions a wildfire can happen to anyone who uses fire outdoors carelessly. Any person responsible for setting a fire to the land, either accidentally or intentionally, and allowing it to become a wildfire is liable for all suppression cost and potentially any damage.

The average cost of fighting a wildland fire in Wisconsin is nearly \$1000 depending on the suppression resources used.

HISTORY OF FIRE IN WISCONSIN

Fire was as much a part of the pre-settlement Wisconsin environment as rain, drought, and the passing of the seasons. For thousands of years, wildfires occurred naturally through lightning strikes or were set by Native Americans for the purpose of preparing settlements and attracting game species. Because frequent fire played a significant role in the development of much of Wisconsin's native plant communities, many plant and

animal species now depend on fire for their continued existence. These periodic fires have been all but eliminated in Wisconsin in the last 150 years.

Fire is a natural and necessary component of ecosystems such as native prairies and oak openings and pine and oak barrens. Periodic fire is required for regeneration and growth of fire-adapted species within these systems. Land managers use prescribed burning to assist in restoring and maintaining these rare plant and animal communities.

PRESCRIBED FIRE VERSUS WILDFIRE

Prescribed burns differ greatly from wildfires in many ways. Prescribed burns are set intentionally after considering the safety of people and property, ideal weather conditions, wind direction and smoke management. Wildfires are uncontrolled and unplanned and often occur on days where weather and fuel conditions are primed for large fire development. They also have the potential to do great harm to people, structures, and natural resources. While a prescribed burn occurs under conditions conducive for low to medium fire intensity (e.g., flames that will clear mid-story brush and open up a woodland area), wildfires can grow to an intensity level capable of completely burning an entire forest stand.

BENEFITS

Fire and wildlife have a historic and complex relationship in grassland, wetland, and savanna communities. Prescribed fire is rarely lethal to most wildlife yet has a profound effect on habitat by increasing the number of native plant and animal species present food sources for wildlife. The wildlife species that benefit most from prescribed fire are those that rely on open habitat in one or more stages of their life cycle. Examples of these animals are grassland birds, sharp-tailed grouse, waterfowl, and pheasant. Prescribed burns also help to stimulate flowering herbaceous plants (forbs) a source of food for white-tailed deer. Additionally, wildflower abundance and diversity support a wide variety of insects and other invertebrates, a food source that provides benefits all the way up the food chain.

Some specific advantages of prescribed burns include:

- stimulating prairie grass growth and improving habitat for upland game and waterfowl;
- creating pockets of open water for waterfowl amidst cattails proliferating in low areas;
- stimulates the growth of wildflowers, which attract insects—a vital food source for young game and non-game grassland birds;
- improving cover type for grassland nesting birds such as pheasants, and spur native vegetative growth for songbirds; and
- creating open pockets of bare ground, increasing diversity and richness of ground foraging, seed-eating small mammals, and birds.

BENEFITS TO PLANTS

Many of Wisconsin's native plants developed adaptations to survive in a fire-prone community. For instance, fire-adapted prairie grasses and flowers develop deep roots and buds beneath the soil, enabling them to withstand the fire, while shallow-rooted non-native plants succumb to the heat. But these plants do not simply tolerate fire better than others, they actively benefit from fire. For instance, by removing accumulated leaf and grass litter and invading brush, fire stimulates the growth of native herbaceous species and maintaining the open character of these systems. Prescribed fire also returns nutrients to the soil, which in turn benefits the entire plant community.

Without fire, the structure and species composition of a plant community changes, providing the opportunity for invasive plants to overwhelm the site and allowing faster-growing species (e.g., maple) to shade out the slower-growing seedlings (e.g. oak). These communities would become uninhabitable to many of the wildlife species that depend on it, especially those that have very specific habitat requirements. Maintaining the integrity of these plant communities is especially crucial in critically rare ecosystems such as pine or oak barrens and oak savannas. Conducting prescribed burns in these systems ensures their continued integrity for future generations.

Some specific advantages of prescribed burns include:

- maintaining the vertical structure and/or open nature of fire-dependent plant communities:
- creating open pockets of bare ground, increasing seed-to-soil contact for plant species:
- reducing competition for slower-growing native trees that would otherwise 4 out:
- recycling nutrients from burned fuels back into the soil: and
- reducing the presence of fire-intolerant non-natives by exploiting their sensitivity to heat.

DOMESTIC LAND MANAGEMENT

Prescribed burning is one of the least expensive and most environmentally-sound ways to accomplish this practice. Removing the layer of dead grass ("thatch") ensures better seed-to-soil contact for planting. Nutrients are released into the soil during burning to further enhance the re-establishment of a new forest, crop planting or Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) planting. Research has shown forage for livestock can be improved in quality and quantity with timely burning. For instance, protein content increases significantly in many grass species in the growing season after a burn.

REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK

This objective is especially important in forests in proximity to urban areas. Reducing fuel loads is one of the most effective elements of any fire prevention and management program. Reducing brush in the mid-story of forests reduces the possibility of brush

acting as "ladder fuels" for fire to reach the crowns of trees. Additionally, by reducing the fuel loading in open communities like prairies and wetland, fire intensity (flame height and rate of spread) is reduced and fires are easier to control and suppress.

DNR PRESCRIBED BURNING

To meet specific land management objectives, prescribed fire is conducted under weather conditions conducive to creating the desired fire behavior (intensity). These weather conditions are less extreme than when most wildfires usually occur, leading to fire behavior that is easier to manage and suppress, should the need arise.

Prescribed burning typically occurs during the early spring (March through May) and late summer/fall (July - November), but can occur beyond these periods if conditions allow. These are the periods when desirable plant and animal species are less active. In the spring, this typically occurs shortly after the snow has melted, but before significant green-up has occurred. In the late summer/fall, this is typically after plant moisture levels have decreased and some good hard frosts have occurred before winter precipitation.

Pool League met last Thursday with six teams present or twelve players. The games continued until 10:30 where we finally had a first and second place winners decided along with who was going to receive the TP award. It was a fun time for everyone. First place went to Bill Stednitz Dane Resh Second place went to Holly Christison and her partner Bruce Vanfleet. The TP Award was given to Darryl Enk and Russ Smith. The last evening of Pool will be April 10 with the following Thursday March 17th for our year end pool party. Special pool games like we did last year along with some very good food will also be on the menu.

Birthday greetings this week go to our Fire Chief Mike Schmidt on the 22nd of March. Sally Myers on the 23rd, Morgan Schroeder on the 24th. Tex and Pat Maina both on the 26th of March. Happy Birthday to all of you. There are no anniversaries this week

Stay safe everyone and enjoy your week with moderate temperatures. Please send your items of interest to my new e-mail address emta984@gmail.com or call my landline at 715-462-4448 or my cell at 715-577-8880. Moose Lake Improvement association website is <http://mliahaywardwi.org> The Town of Round Lake Web site is <https://www.townofroundlakewi.org> and the Round Lake Fire Department website is <https://townofroundlakefire-rescue.org> JO