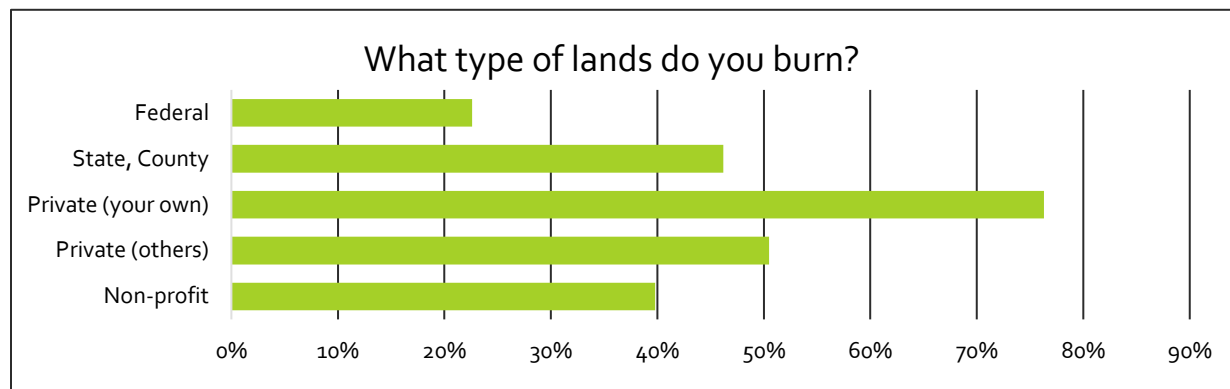


NON-FEDERAL PRESCRIBED FIRE SURVEY SUMMARY

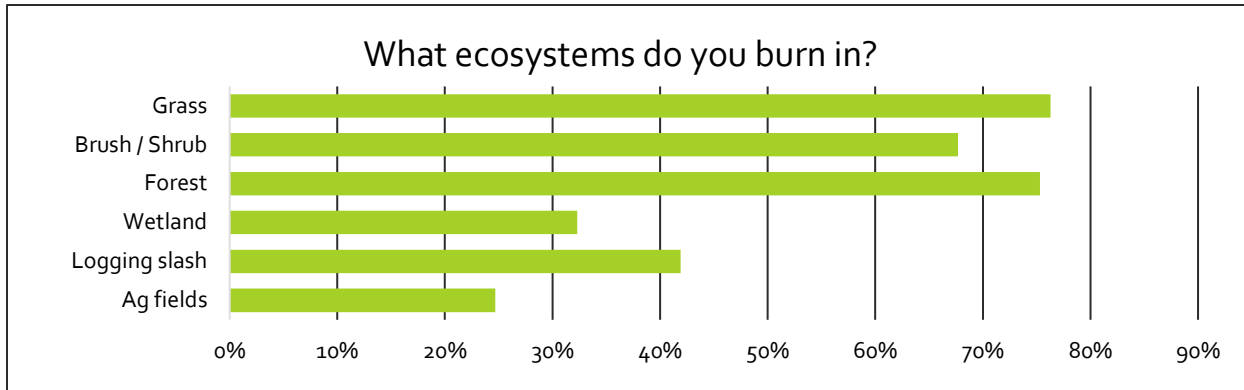
The Forest Stewards Guild, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy’s Fire Learning Network, sent out a survey on the implementation of prescribed fire in the fall of 2019. Prescribed fire is widely recognized as a crucial tool for protecting communities from wildfire and restoring forest health. It is an effective tool to reduce the intensity and severity of wildfire and a key element in responding to the increase in large, destructive wildfires. Private organizations and businesses are crucial for helping landowners use fire as a management or restoration tool. However, there is relatively little information on non-federal organizations that conduct burns. This survey was motivated by the perception that insurance, lack of trained personnel, and costs all create significant barriers to controlled burning and the desire to identify opportunities to encourage increased use of prescribed fire.

Our survey was sent to nearly 1,500 email addresses via a range of networks including: the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, the Joint Fire Science Knowledge Exchanges, and prescribed fire councils. We received nearly 93 responses from non-federal organizations conducting prescribed fire. Responses came from all regions of the county, though most were from the Southeast (20 respondents) and the fewest were from the Southwest (5). Two thirds of respondents worked for organizations with less than \$500,000 in annual revenue.

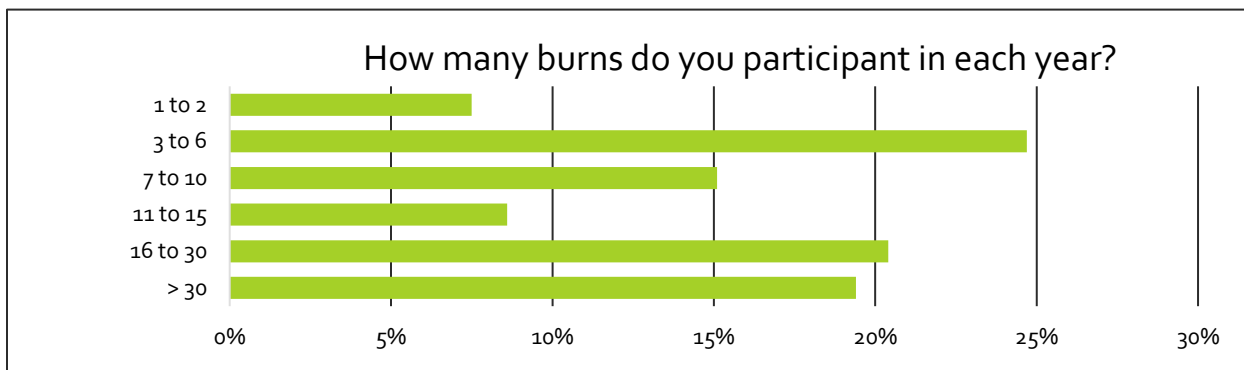


This survey illustrates how varied the organizations and implementation of prescribed fire is. Most respondents conducted burns on some type of private land, but prescribed fire is taking place on a variety of ownerships. Twenty-three percent of respondents conducted burns on federally managed lands and 46 percent conducted burns on state, county, or city property. Three quarters of respondents burned in grass dominated ecosystems and a similar percentage burned in forested ecosystems, though other ecosystem type were also common.





Most respondents (55%) burned less than 15 times per year but nearly 20% burned more than 30 times per year. Similarly, 54% of respondents burned less than 1,000 acres per year while 19% of respondents burned more than 5,000 acres per year. Forty-eight percent of respondents burned in the wildland urban interface (WUI) at least half of the time, while 12 percent never burned in the WUI. Burns in the WUI are likely to be a particular focus for liability concerns because of the significant values at risk.

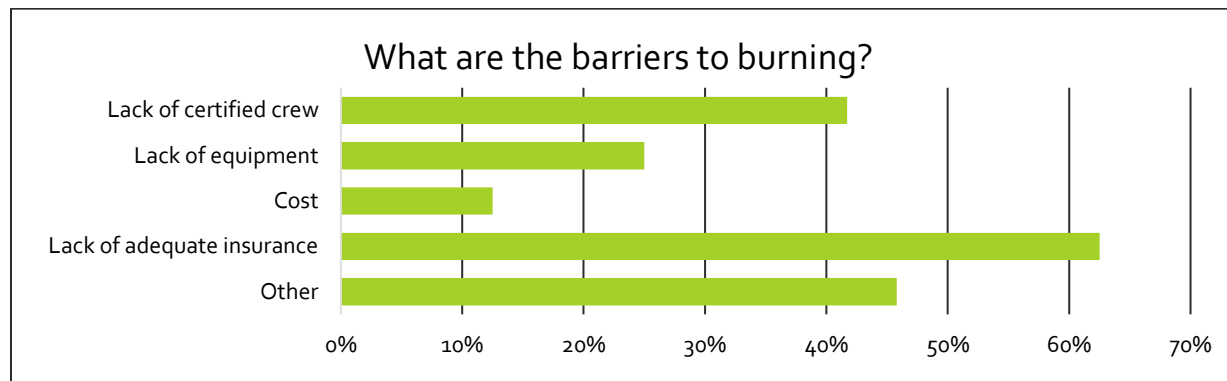


About half of respondents (52%) followed National Wildland Coordinating Group (NWCG) prescribed burn certification with a quarter of respondents following state certification. Most organizations (56%) did not have an NWCG qualified burn boss on staff. Fifty-six percent of organizations also had one or two staff members who were engaged in the prescribed fire effort, but are not certified burn bosses. Most organizations (60%) had at least five additional staff members who participated in elements of the prescribed burns, but are not leading the effort.

Forty percent of respondents were more than moderately concerned about their current insurance coverage in the event of an escape or property damage and half of respondents were very interested in finding better prescribed burn insurance. Not surprisingly, organizations burning



more acres per year were more interested in improved insurance options. For respondents, better coverage meant availability (68%), lower price (56%), and adequate levels of coverage (59%). Of those with prescribed fire insurance, prices ranged from \$2,000 or less (10%), \$2,000 to \$5,000 (18%), or more than \$5,000 (12%). Of those organizations without prescribed fire insurance, most (49%) hoped to pay \$2,000 or less per year. The lack of adequate prescribed burn insurance was the most common reason (63%) for not burning.



This survey reaffirms the idea that insurance is a significant barrier for non-federal organizations to use fire as a management tool. Responses suggest that many small organizations with limited staff capacity and budgets are nonetheless interested in conducting prescribed fire on private lands. Their work occurs across a broad range of ecosystem types and ownerships. They are interested in insurance for relatively few burns each year at a low cost. Increased access to reasonably priced insurance could open the door to more organizations conducting prescribed burns. More prescribed burning is a key part of increasing the pace and scale of fuel reduction treatments and responding to the national wildfire challenge.

