

Indigenous-Led Fire Prescription Template

Title:

[INSERT THE NAME OF YOUR INDIGENOUS-LED FIRE PRESCRIPTION]

Disclaimer: This template should not be used without first receiving competent guidance in Indigenous-led fire practices and settler and state-led fire management to see if it is suitable for any general or specific application to a site. As burning approval processes vary in every area, please contact your local Indigenous communities, local fire region and regional wildfire agencies. Overall, it is important to foster and sustain good relationships and partnerships in developing an Indigenous-led fire prescription.

Think carefully about each dimension of the Indigenous-led fire prescription, the timeline for the work, resources needed and who you need to tell about the Indigenous-led fire prescription. Be thorough.

Where possible, use local Indigenous language(s) throughout the Indigenous-led fire prescription to acknowledge and celebrate cultural revitalization of fire practices on the land.

Date:

Include the date of the Indigenous-led fire prescription.

Our team:

Here, list the person, group or community with the authority to prescribe the burn and who will submit the Indigenous-led fire prescription to the appropriate approval agency or agencies (for example, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency).

General intent of the Indigenous-led fire prescription:

Why do you need to burn this specific site/area?

Here, describe the overall vision for the Indigenous-led fire prescription, stating the holistic values.

Rationale:

The rationale is a summary statement of your purpose, aspirations and how you want to use fire on the land for community protection, ecosystem stewardship, habitat restoration, climate change adaptation planning or land management. This part should include the cultural objectives for burning.

Goals and objectives of our burn:

Goals are generally a long-term outcome for what groups and communities want to achieve with their Indigenous-led fire prescription.

Management objectives are concise time-specific statements that outline core values about uses of fire on the land. These are values defined by a group or a community and aid in determining what the Indigenous-led fire prescription is to achieve to be considered successful.

Where are we going to burn? What does it look like? What is the size of burn? (include maps):

Here, provide a description of the site(s), size and location where the Indigenous-led fire prescription will take place.

Include map(s) in the appendix of the Indigenous-led fire prescription.

What is the fire history of the site(s)?

Here, provide a description of past Indigenous-led fire practices and Settler and State-led fire management carried out on the site(s) and location(s) where the Indigenous-led fire prescription will take place.

If possible, include fire history map(s).

Inventory and sampling of flora and fauna in priority Indigenous-led fire prescription areas:

The inventory of flora and fauna identifies needs and interests for engaging in Indigenous-led fire practices or Settler and State-led fire management on site(s) and location(s) where the Indigenous-led fire prescription is to take place.

What time of the year does the fire need to happen? How long will the burn take?

Here, describe the season and duration of the Indigenous-led fire prescription.

How much will this burn cost? How will we pay for it?

Here, provide an overview of how the costs of the Indigenous-led fire prescription will be covered and by whom.

Think about partners you can reach out to for resources such as cash and in-kind contributions or donations.

Who will light the fire and how?

List the individual or group who will light the fire and determine how the fire is lit.

For example, a local trapper, a selected community member or a Traditional Ecological Knowledge Team may be the ones to determine how to light the fire and then to light it.

What is in place on the land to keep the fire under control?

Here, you might consider the land elements that may keep the fire under control, for example, natural fire breaks (water including lakes, rivers, creeks, tributaries, exposed soil or rock, previous burns, snow) or fire guards (recently burned strips, black lines).

What is our plan if the fire becomes out of control?

Indigenous-led fire practices are carried out using the best available expertise and knowledge to reduce risk, including selecting low risk times of the year to burn with appropriate fire breaks.

However, there is always a risk with fire of a burn escaping, for example, if there is an unexpected gust of wind.

Consider having resources onsite to put out any spot fires, including equipment, water and people trained in firefighting.

Do we need to consider smoke?

Indigenous-led fire practices emit much less smoke than an out-of-control wildfire. However, there will still be smoke in the air.

Some people may have sensitivities to this.

Do you need to inform neighbours that you will be burning?

Your Elders and Indigenous fire practitioners may also carry knowledge about how to reduce smoke for the type of burn you are planning.

Weather forecast and communication with the local wildfire centre can help inform these concerns, for example, expected wind direction and good venting days: smoke going vertical versus horizontal.

Location and site specific factors add to these considerations. For example, some of the muskrat burn sites will only be burned when the wind is in a certain direction to control the fire and to carry smoke away from the community.

Do we have any concerns about this burn?

This is where you identify potential risks and the conditions that would make the burn team decide that they will not burn that day.

Identify parts of the burn site(s) that may be next to fuels that could send embers over line or areas that may be challenging to keep under control.

The ways that those concerns could be reduced can be included in the next section regarding site preparations.

How does the site need to be prepared for a burn to occur?

This section includes what is in place to keep the fire under control such as black lining ahead of the main burn occurring.

Also, this section may include logistics and planning for how the site will be accessed, safety areas, emergency exit plans, and perhaps some work to reduce fuel load or increase fuel load to keep fire at a desired intensity.

Who should be involved in this burn? How will we get them involved?

For the Indigenous-led fire prescription, communicate with the local rightsholders and stakeholders in the form of information sharing/notification and consulting.

As an example, for the muskrat burns, the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) has to follow the First Nations and Métis Consultation Policy Framework and provide notification letters to First Nations and Métis communities in and around the Saskatchewan River Delta on behalf of the fur blocks.

Communications plan/notification schedule:

Describe how the Indigenous-led fire prescription will be communicated to rightsholders and stakeholders.

Think about how you will promote and share information about the Indigenous-led fire prescription with others.

Who are the people that should know about and participate in the Indigenous-led fire prescription?

Where will rightsholders and stakeholders get information about the Indigenous-led fire prescription and from whom?

Messages about the Indigenous-led fire prescription should be informative, persuasive and sincere.

Other notes and considerations:

Include any additional notes and considerations that may affect and influence the Indigenous-led fire prescription.

Names, signatures and date:

Add names, signature lines and dates for all rightsholders and stakeholders involved in the Indigenous-led fire prescription.

Appendix A: Indigenous fire-led prescription site map(s)

Include Indigenous-led fire prescription site map(s).