



Nachusa Grasslands Prescribed Fire Crew Summary Report

For fires completed from Fall 2014 through Spring 2015

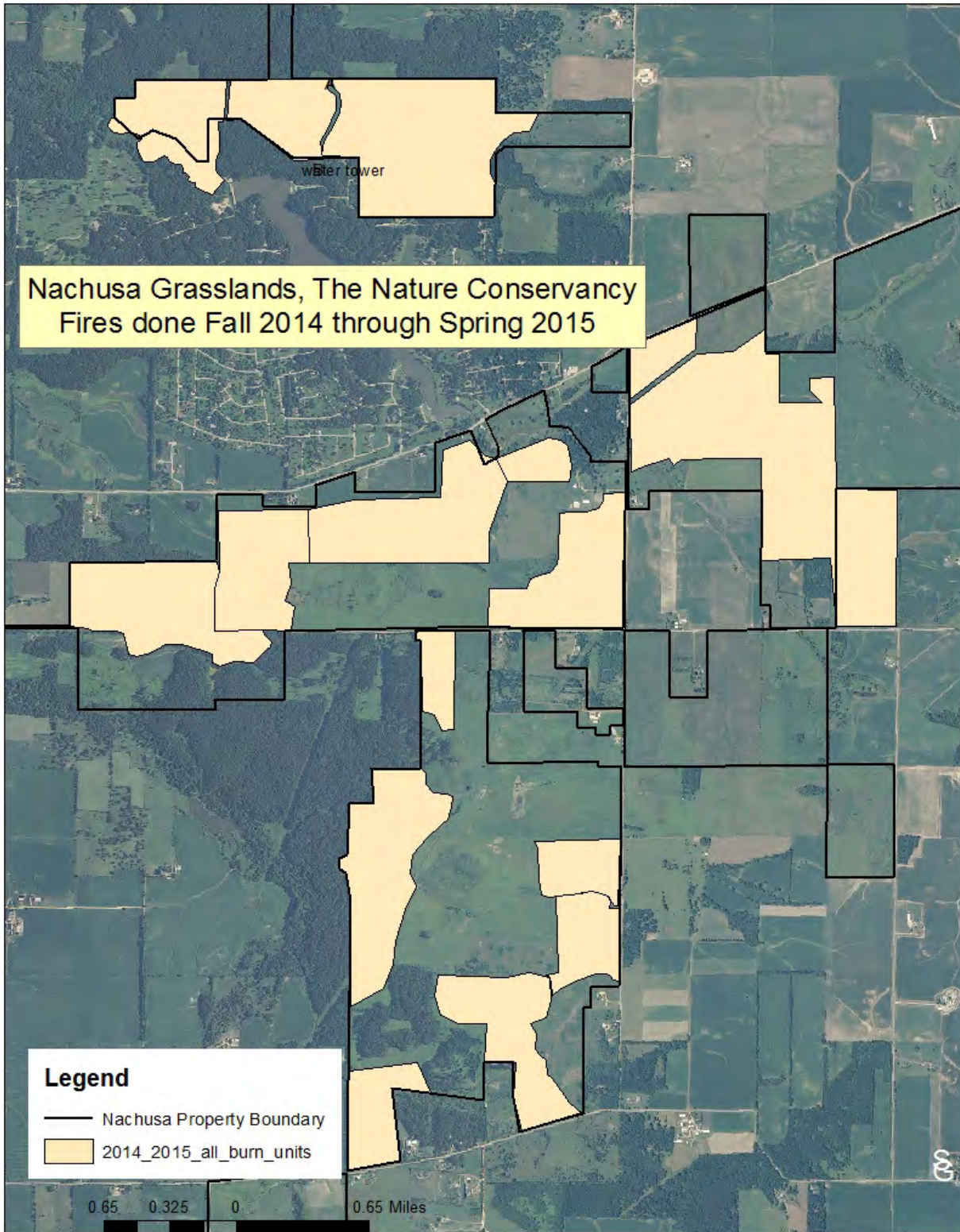
By Bill Kleiman, The Nature Conservancy

April 25, 2015

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Take a few minutes to check out our fire season. Photos, maps, and lessons learned.

- We burned all the units we aimed to do.
- We burned 1,544-acres at Nachusa with 12 burn units in 9 burn days.
- We also assisted on 1,351-acres of partner fires over six burn days.
- Our first spring 2015 fire day was March 15. Our last April 16.
- 36 people participated as fire crew.



Why we burn:

For eons, landscape fires occurred on our planet, the dried plants and our abundant planetary oxygen requiring just a spark to start a landscape fire. Plants and animals evolved to not just tolerate, but depend on, these fires. Humans have lived and used fire since our beginnings. In the Midwest, Native Americans were setting frequent landscape fires to attract game, keep woodlands and grasslands open and easy to walk through. Fire would have stimulated a rich ground cover of plants that people would have harvested. The natural landscape that we all inherited is dependent on

fire for its health. In our modern world our natural areas are fragmented and need our vigorous help to set prescribed fires.

In short, we use prescribed fire to restore and maintain the health of our prairies, woodlands and wetlands.

Fire Heroes:

The following are Nachusa Grasslands Crew who participated this year (let me know if I missed you)

First name	Last Name	# of fires	Comments
Bill	Kleiman	17	13 as bb
David	Crites	7	crew boss
Jocelyn	Frazelle	12	
Kirk	Hallowell	3	
Cody	Considine	10	cb
Susan	Kleiman	10	
Ruth	Bowers	1	
Mike	Saxton	13	cb
Mary	Vieregg	2	
Steve	Sentoff	1	
Ron	Deters	4	
Dave	Lawson	5	
John	Heneghan	12	cb
Bernie	Buchholz	8	
Jim	Vieregg	2	
Gwen	Deters	8	
Tom	Richter	2	
Eric	Bird	2	
Tony	Merisko	2	
Mike	Carr	4	
Josh	Clark	1	
Sylvia	Klyz	1	NIU trainee
Stuart	Goldman	2	
Cassie	Heredia	1	NIU trainee
Greg	Hunter	4	Also does fire w RRPFC
Travis	Kuntzelman	1	
Frank	Sprude	2	
Susan	Stillinger	2	
Jay	Stacy	3	scout
Luke	Johnson	1	trainee as asst. scout
Wes	Herwig	2	
Greg	Pipis	1	St. Charles PD
Brandie	Tibbitts	1	NIU trainee
Damian	Considine	3	Also does fire w RRPFC
Brandon	Semel	2	
Dustin	Kanas	1	trainee
Nathan	Huff	2	

Kudos to Frank Ostling – IL DNR Wildlife biologist who was burn boss on the 1,100-acre prescribed fire at Green River Conservation Area.

John Heneghan again was key to setting up our fire equipment before fire season and then coming early to every fire to help us be ready for the fire crew briefing.

David Crites is Heneghan's buddy and had a similar impact on our fire program. David missed some fires due to his new career doing data storage electrical testing.

Greg Hunter and Damian Considine were leaders with the *Rock River Prescribed Fire Crew* who were burning in the region. Way to go!



Greg Hunter of Dixon Park District and Frank Sprude at our live fire exercises.



David Crites installing the wet-line boom to the UTV.



Susan Kleiman did ten fires this year.



Mike Carr with trainee Sylvia. We buddy up trainees for mentoring and safety.



Greg Pipis of St. Charles Park District with our own Dave Lawson. David does floor coverings for a living. He does good work on fire too.



Great workers: Jocelyn Frazelle and Mike Saxton were hired guns all winter clearing fence-lines for bison fence and fire breaks. The new tracks on the “buggy” were important for about six weeks of heavy snow this winter.



I used this photo last year but it is a good photo. On the left is Brad Semel – IL DNR Heritage Biologist who was burn boss on a 900-acre fire at nearby Lowden Miller State Forest this Spring. That is a big burn unit!

On right is John Nelson – IL Nature Preserve Commission who often burns with Brad and was burn boss at nearby Pine Rock NP this spring.



Brad Semel submits this photo of John Nelson to show off his friend's keen sense of fire management.

Fires done by Nachusa Grasslands crew from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015

5/15/2015
acreage er

Latitude: 41.890836 Longitude -89.3436

Unit Name	Burn boss	Date	Acres	Acres TNC	Temp high	Humidity low	Wind high	Crew size	Comment
Naylor	BK	12/2/2014	44	44	32	62	S10 w g	8	Two trainees
Sand Farm CCK	BK	3/15/2015	308	308	63	38	SSW18	11	
Orland	BK	3/16/2015	160	160	61	60	SW14	15	two trainees
CCK north	BK	3/17/2015	31	31	44	31	NNE16	8	one trainee
Tellabs-Didier-HP	BK	3/17/2015	190	190	44	31	NNE16	15	one trainee
Orland Middle & West	BK	3/19/2015	230	230	46	41	SSE10	11	
Dot Doug	BK	3/19/2015	25	25				9	
Big Woods	BK	3/20/2015	212	212	53	62	ESE14		
Schafer	BK	3/20/2015	155	155	53	62	ESE14		
Live fire exercises	BK	3/21/2015	5	5	55	45	SE14	23	training only
Main little blue	BK	3/30/2015	55	55	43	73	W12	7	
GRCA	Frank	3/31/2015	1100	0			W10	18+	DNR
Wisconsin	Eric Mark	3/31/2015					W10		BK scouted

Dixon PD Lowell Park	Damian Considine	3/31/2015	25					W10		SK there
Naylor Rd planting again	BK	4/1/2015	44	44	77	24	S14 w g		9	
FCNA W Twist N of Creek	Brad Semel	4/4/2015	58	0	60	22	WSW 21 w g		8	Middle crev
FCNA Middle	Brad Semel	4/4/2015	98	0	60	22	WSW 21 w g		13	
Green Wing	Boh Dziadek	4/6/2015	20	0	61	54	S7		6	
HP north	BK	4/11/2015	110	110	57	41	WSW7		7	
DeKalb Cty somewhere	Josh Clark	4/12/2015	10	0						John Hene
Pine Rock NP	John Nelson	4/16/2015	40	0	59	50	4 N and W		8	
Total acres			2,920							
# fire we assisted on partner lands			1,351							
Total Nachusa land						1,569				
Total burn units			20							
Burn units at Nachusa			12							
Average burn unit size at NG			129							

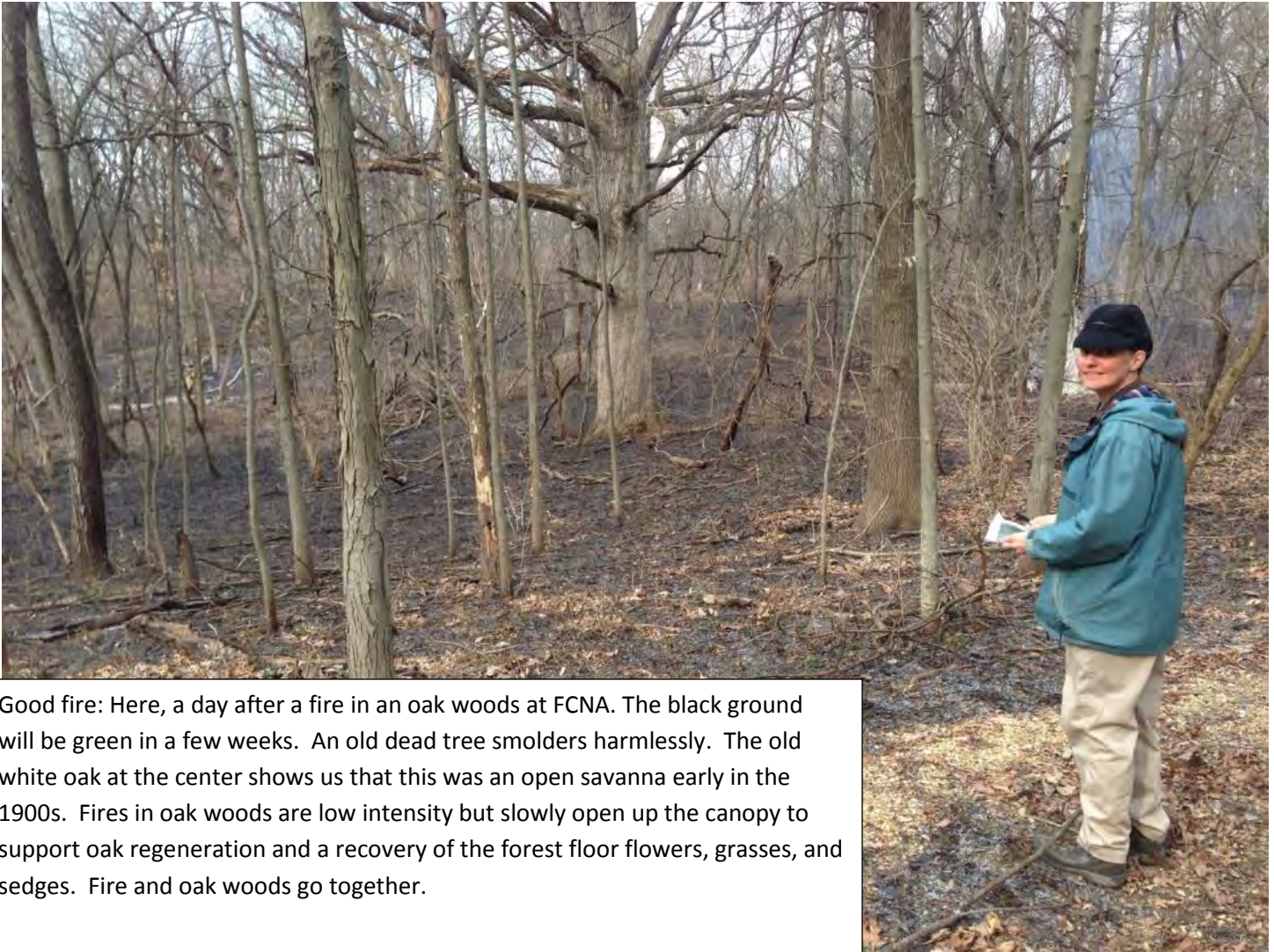


Several of us Nachusa folks attended the Midwest fire conference in DuBuque in February. Bill and Cody gave a talk to the entire conference of over 300 people. Mike Saxton helped run a session. Here, Ambassador John Heneghan, doing what he does best. Jocelyn Frazelle on left.

The Illinois Prescribed Fire Council will be holding our next symposium in Champaign on our tentative date of February 10, 2016.

Some good habits we work on continually:

- Let the weather decide the schedule. Start early in the season and seize every good fire day to get the job done, and let the hard weather days go.
- Work to have good fire breaks that can be driven by a vehicle for easy inspection.
- Fire breaks are best when almost free of flammable materials. After mowing a prairie fire break, consider hay raking and perhaps baling the prairie hay to get that heat off the break.
- Redundancy is good when it comes to fire equipment. If you are depending on a water pumper to control your line what will you do when it quits running?
- Let each line crew inspect all their line before starting the fire. This use of time will be made up as the crew will move faster and with more confidence while igniting.
- Tender water. We tow 425 gallons of water with us to most fires for refilling pumps. This tender also carries a lot of gear that would otherwise clutter our truck beds.
- Do a crew briefing before and after each fire.



Good fire: Here, a day after a fire in an oak woods at FCNA. The black ground will be green in a few weeks. An old dead tree smolders harmlessly. The old white oak at the center shows us that this was an open savanna early in the 1900s. Fires in oak woods are low intensity but slowly open up the canopy to support oak regeneration and a recovery of the forest floor flowers, grasses, and sedges. Fire and oak woods go together.



Bison and fire: We introduced bison to Nachusa last fall. We confirmed that bison do not panic at the site of fire.

Also, this spring a fire in the bison unit skipped over a half-acre grazed patch since the bison had eaten enough prairie grass so that the patch had no fuel to burn. Patchy fires are good, offering some refuge for certain insects that may be fire sensitive.



Flashback to 1996

Before pumper units and mowed fire breaks, and yellow suits. Here is the crew on top of Potawatami Ridge with a very hot head fire moving away from them. The two putting out the backing fire have their new Nomex face protectors up, squirting water. BK took the photo. We got the job done then too.

Gerald has torch. Jay in back. Maybe Mike Adolph by Jay.



The 300 on the cake my daughter made stands for the number of fires I have been burn boss.

We have lots of equipment now, nice fire breaks, and procedures...

What has not changed is our passion to bring the land's health back by getting the fire job done!

Earlier fire reports for Nachusa are here: <http://www.nachusagrasslands.org/Burns/BurnsTOC.html>

The end. Feel free to share with others.