

Nachusa Grasslands Prescribed Fire Crew

Summary Report Fall 2018 through Spring 2019



By Bill Kleiman, The Nature Conservancy April 28, 2019

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Some fire crews wear any color of helmet. At Nachusa the burn boss wears the red helmet. The photo is a new red helmet for Cody on his first official RxB2 Burn Boss led fire. After fifteen years of fire experience, over 200 prescribed fires, 5 skill task books checked off, ten fire courses, and chasing wildfires in Belize; Cody has his red helmet.

The numbers:

We broke our burn acreage record again this year with 2,730-acres at Nachusa and we had 335-acres with assists to partners. We burned two oak woodland units of 400-acres and 354-acres.

We burned 25 units and we assisted other agencies with fire on an additional 8 units.

We had 20 burn days, a medium number, where the weather was cold and often damp and windy. We were often wearing long underwear this spring. We only used an east wind once and that was to burn brush piles before a storm came through. We had 12 south wind days, 2 pure west days and 5 north burn days.



This is not Illinois, but southern Belize in Central America, where Cody and I participated in a wildland fire suppression training. This training moved Cody to the finish line of his wildfire task book. An excellent short video on that training is here: <https://vimeo.com/328829970>

Fires done by Nachusa Grasslands crew from Fall 2018 to Spring 2019

Date	Unit Name	Burn boss	Acres TNC	Acres others	Temp high	Humidity low	Wind high	Crew size	Comment
11/15/2018	Stonebarn Farm	Bill Kleiman	25		35	69	SSW5	11	
12/18/2018	CCK	Bill Kleiman	116		35	60	SSW5	8	
3/12/2019	Sand Farm	Bill Kleiman	50		46	66	S17	15	RX301 training fires
3/17/2019	Senger	Bill Kleiman	27		38	64	NW13 w g	9	
3/17/2019	CCK SW	Bill Kleiman	62		38	64	NW13 w g	9	
3/18/2019	Hahnaman	Bryon Walters		101	41	58	NNW8	9	

3/21/2019	TCP	Cody Considine	25		45	64	W12 w g	13	
3/22/2019	Main Unit N A	Cody Considine	171		48	46	N17 w G	14	
3/22/2019	Main Unit Mid B	Cody Considine	162		48	46	N17 w G	13	
3/22/2019	Pine Rock	John Nelson		45	48	46	N17 w G		Damian and Kaleb sent there
3/23/2019	Big Jump	Bill Kleiman	160		48	54	S5	14	3 trainee
3/25/2019	CCK East	Cody Considine	223		45	41	NE14	8	
3/26/2019	W Heinkel	Bill Kleiman	111		46	34	S5	9	
3/26/2019	VC & Hulbert	Bill Kleiman	3		45	30	S3	15	
3/26/2019	Dot Doug	Bill Kleiman	35		45	30	S3	15	
3/26/2019	Holland East	Cody Considine	94		45	30	S3	15	
3/27/2019	Stonebarn Savanna	Cody Considine	294		56	49	S17	14	
3/31/2019	SW Flagg Lowden	Bill Kleiman	6		37	40	N15	7	
4/1/2019	Bivins EH	Cody Considine	100		50	42	SSW 20	9	
4/1/2019	Dixon PD: Meadows	Tim Smith		50?	50	58	SSW 20	7	
4/2/2019	Soderholm	Bill Kleiman	121		47	58	SW18	12	
4/2/2019	IAS: Gremel	Bryon Walters		90	47	58	SW18		Cody, Damian, Leah, Joe, Kaleb, Gwen
4/3/2019	Naylor Rd Planting	Bill Bowes	25		55	38	SW17 w gusts	5	Bill Bowes burn boss finishes RXB2!
4/3/2019	FCNA: N of Creek, W of Twist	Bill Kleiman		55	55	38	SW17 w gusts	7	
4/3/2019	FCNA: NP Island	Bill Kleiman		20	55	38	SW17 w gusts	7	
4/6/2019	Williams	Bill Kleiman	124		60	71	S 13 w gusts	14	
4/8/2019	Orland plus neighbors	Bill Kleiman	354		73	27	SW14	9	
4/9/2019	IBP: PB3 & SD2	Dave Hodge		15	64	40	N8 w gusts	11	Assist by BK, Damian, Bill Glass

4/9/2019	Big Woods w neighbors	Cody Considine	400		67	20	NW11	12	
4/10/2019	201 pine slash burn piles	Bill Kleiman	1		40	80	E15	5	
4/13/2029	FCCA	Kaleb Baker		9	41	60	W18 w gusts	6	
4/13/2029	HP middle	Cody Considine	40		41	60	W18 w gusts	7	
4/13/2019	Reburn April April 8 Orland	Bill Kleiman	na		47	50	W13	4	
4/13/2019	N of HQ, along neighbors	Bill Kleiman	1		47	50	NW9	5	
Total acres			2,730	335			Average crew size:	10	

# fire we assisted on partner lands	8
Total TNC Nachusa land burned	2,730
Total burn units	33
Burn units at Nachusa	25
Number of burn days	20

Below: Joining us for day of fire was John Peters and Chris Zeiner of McHenry County Conservation District. MCCD has a long history of good fire.



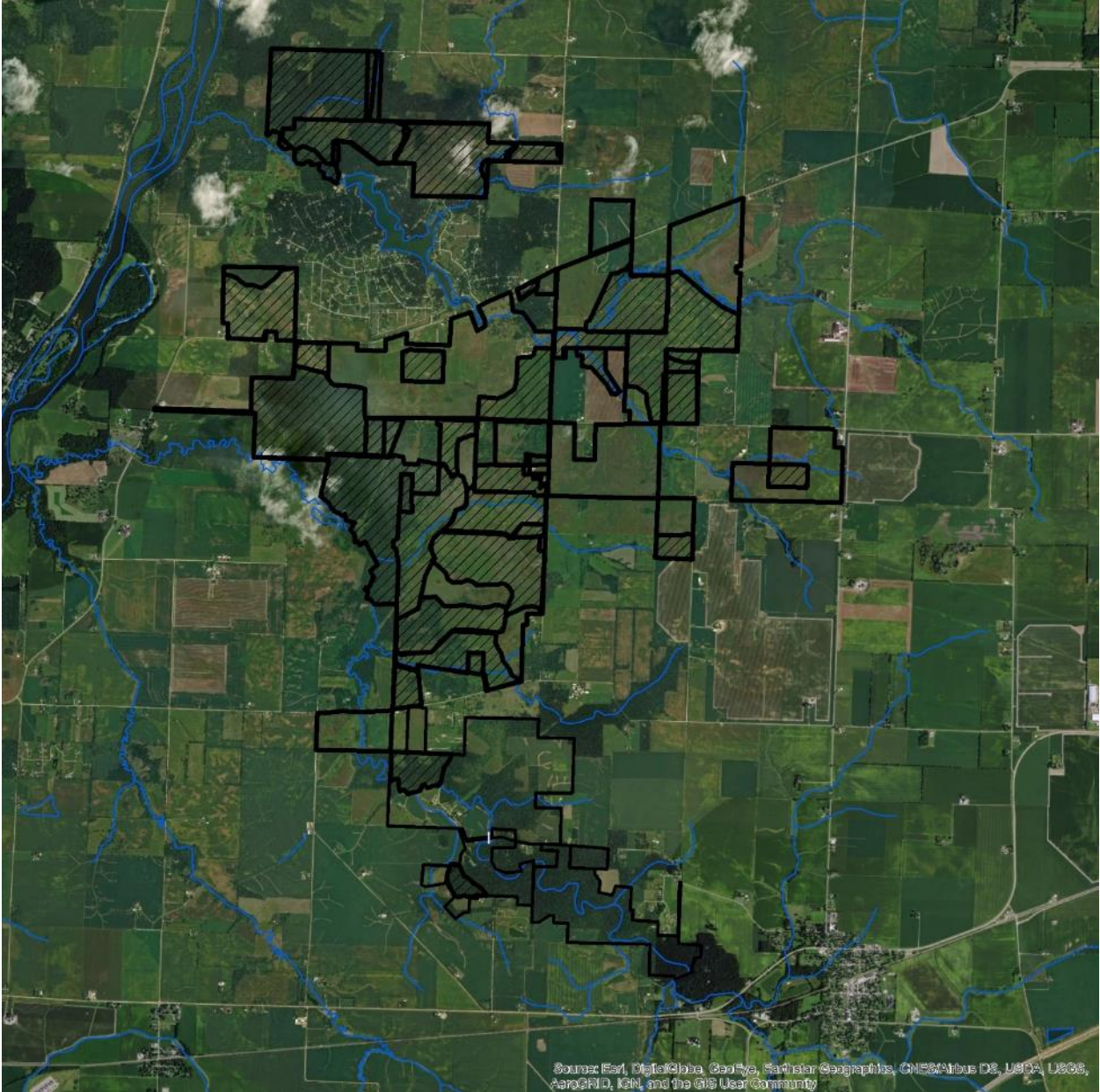
Below: We hosted an advance prescribed fire class this late winter, Rx-301. Here you see students doing a “sand table” exercise with a fire laid out and various short scenarios discussed.

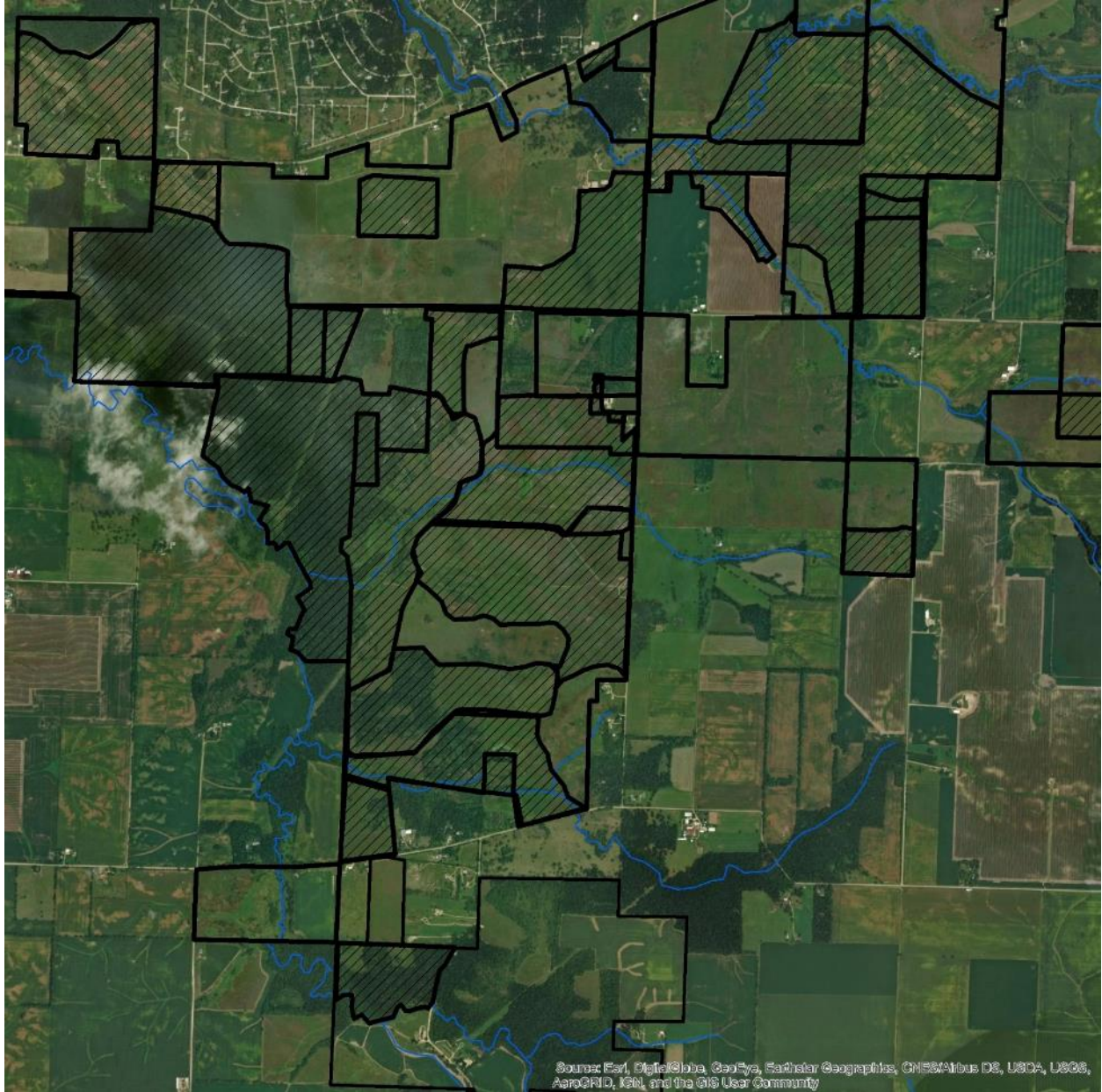


Below: Phil Nagorny kept our brush clearing projects going all winter and then helped us with a great fire season. He is off to another wildfire season with USFWS.



Maps below are the fires accomplished shown in hash marks with the second map a closer view of the first.





Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Below: Training the next generation. We work to teach and literally pass the torch.



Below: A short flame length fire slowly moves through the oak forest, the heat of the flames top kills the shrubs, briars and some small trees. Fire favors the oaks which need the extra sunlight, and readily re-sprout, as needed, after fire.



Below: This is Toren Reis from Germany who is interning with us for a year. He kept saying he was a trainee even after an entire season of fire, but I think he got it within the first fire. Behind Toren is Tyler Pellegrini, last year's student volunteer who we hired to this year's crew.



Below: I was trying to get photos of every fire crew this season but fell short. This crew burned two units for a total of about 100-acres on a day with a high temperature of 38.



Below: This wet spring was ruled by the Utility Vehicle, UTV. This UTV has some features I can point out such as it holds two drip torches, a rake handle sits angled upwards so it is not in the way, the roof has a hazard blinker, the driver can hear and transmit clearly on the radio as they wears a helmet with earmuffs and a microphone. The big logo on the side is for bling. The tow hook on rear bottom is ready to pull it out of the mud.



Below: The Soderholm fire crew of April 2.



Below: Landscape painter Phillip Juras has been out to Nachusa painting several times this year. He will have an exhibit of his works at the Chicago Botanic Gardens in May 2020. Here is a link to a short video of Phil painting a fire as it happens. <https://tnc.box.com/s/gpw8tzwwq7jmjswuugpit7kxsrcpv4nn>



Below: We have been trying out a few different hay rakes to move the mowed prairie off the fire breaks. The one on the right does a nice job but costs more. Raking makes a big difference. Here is a short video of a wheel rake <https://tnc.box.com/s/dqxzuq24gunzhhdveg051hfszu2moac>



When you rake a tallgrass prairie the windrow can be thick at times as shown in photo below. We often use a tractor mounted leaf blower to scatter the windrow as seen here:

<https://tnc.box.com/s/7loljwih0i9xr6wax63ovv37bbv1gijh>



Below: I have led 400 fires in 26 years at Nachusa. Fire continues to be an engrossing challenge. I love the team work, overcoming logistic hurdles, and the ecology of fire.



Nachusa Crew list for Fall 2018 through Spring 2019. Let me know if I missed you.

<u>First name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u># of fires</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Elizabeth	Bach	10	
Kaleb	Baker	14	Finished his MS
Hailey	Borden	2	NIU student
Bill	Bowes	7	Bill Bowes just got his RxB2. Nice work!
Ashley	Brousard	1	NIU student
Bernie	Buchholz	1	
Emily	Burdett	1	NIU student
Jeff	Cologna	4	
Cody	Considine	13	New RxB2
Damian	Considine	5	Line boss
Amanda	Contreras	18	
Gwen	Deters	7	

Ron	Deters	5	
Anna	Farrell	2	
Jessica	Fliginger	1	
Bill	Glass	1	
Elizabeth	Heck	1	NIU student
Heather	Herakovitch	1	new PhD
Phil	Juras	1	
Bill	Kleiman	26	400 fires as burn boss
Leah	Kleiman	19	Line boss
Susan	Kleiman	11	
Travis	Kuntzelman	2	visit from IBP
Matt	Leman	1	NIU student
Jim	McPherson	1	
Paul	Mellon	5	
Phil	Nagorny	24	line boss
Mellisa	Nelson	1	
Don	Panozzo	8	
Avery	Parmiter	1	
Tyler	Pelligrini	13	Line boss
John	Peters	1	visit from McHenry County Cons District
Emilie	Pfeiffer	1	visit from IBP
Toren	Reis	8	
Joe	Richardson	12	
Paul	Say	3	Line boss
Kevin	Scheiwiller	3	
Tim	Smith	3	
Paul	Soderholm	1	
Nick	Steijn	1	DNR
Paul	Swanson	1	
Bryon	Walters	2	
Austin	Webb	1	
Nathaniel	Weikert	22	Line boss
Oren	Wilder	1	
Chris	Zeiner	1	visit from McHenry County Cons District
TOTAL CREW		46	



Walk ups accepted at our Illinois Prescribed Fire Council Symposium in May 8. Find info at <https://www.illinoisprescribedfirecouncil.org/>

Below: April 3 fire crew



Below: The April 9 fire ran into the evening as the fire slowly worked its way around the interior woods.



Below: This dedicated brush mower opens to sunlight brush filled habitats which then fire can keep open and healthy. We are trying to figure out how to buy one of these. Are you able to help?



End. Share with colleagues.