

BOOK REVIEW

Conducting Prescribed Fires: A Comprehensive Manual. By **John R. Weir.** 2009. Texas A&M University Press, College Station, Texas, USA. 194 pp. Paper. US\$28.00. ISBN-13: 978-1-60344-134-6 .

With *Conducting Prescribed Fires*, John Weir makes a strong effort to fill a gap in our wildland fire management literature. With more than 700 prescribed burns over 20 years, Weir not only has experience in performing burns, but also has been able to identify what information would be most helpful to those with less experience. What I was initially expecting was a new version of the classic *A Guide for Prescribed Fire in Southern Forests* by Wade and Lunsford. What Weir has written is a more comprehensive text covering a variety of fire topics.

More than a technical manuscript, *Conducting Prescribed Fires* begins with solid chapters on the human dimensions side of prescribed burning, including the scientific and cultural reasons for performing a burn, legal and policy issues, and public relations. As our wildlands become less remote and more integrated with developed areas, these issues are vital to performing prescribed burns.

These chapters are followed by excellent coverage of fire weather, fire behavior, and fuels. It is this part of the text that really sets the stage for the meat of the book, the actual development of fire plans and the application of prescribed fire on the ground. I found the descriptions of fire equipment and ignition techniques extremely clear and informative. The final chapters of the book address the issues of smoke management, post-burn mop-up, and prescribed fire associations.

Well written with over 90 photos, *Conducting Prescribed Fires* is a great text covering all aspects of prescribed fire. This new book would be useful as a reference text in the classroom and informative to the general public.

Although it is difficult to identify any negative aspects of this well-prepared text, two items may limit its use across the country. The policy and law chapters do cover the entire US very well, but most of the examples (and photos) are from Oklahoma. While that is understandable considering where the author lives and works, more examples and photos from across the US may have provided additional value to the text. The useful historical connection of fire provided by biblical citations was discussed a number of times within the text. The continued use of biblical citations at the beginning of each chapter may be of concern to some potential users.

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