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← PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION →



California  
Department of  
Conservation





# Brittney Osborn - PBA Project Coordinator

A little bit about myself:

- Grew up in rural Nevada
- Completed BS Forest Management & Ecology, Minor in Rangeland Management in 2015
- Various work history including:
  - Post-fire vegetation monitoring with ENLC
  - Sawyer on a NCC saw crew
  - Consulting Forestry Tech (cruising/marketing/layout)
  - GBI Forestry Tech (patrol, habitat improvement, fuels reduction projects)
  - Wildland fire inmate crew supervisor with NDF
  - Air quality specialist with Washoe County AQMD
- Currently finishing the final semester for my Master's in Fire Ecology & Management
- My happy places are outside in the woods, climbing tall peaks, flyfishing remote streams, and spending time with my partner and our 3 dogs.





# WHAT IS A PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION (PBA)?

*“Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs) are community based, mutual aid networks that help private landowners put “good fire” back on the land.” - California PBA*

But... it is more than this. A PBA has the potential to rekindle community engagement and foster a collective sense of ownership of the land that we live on and the people we live near.





# WHERE ARE PBAs?

More than 100 PBAs exist in over 18 states!

The idea has been around for a while and PBAs have been active outside of the western US for quite some time. Yet, the first CA PBA was started around 2017-2018 in Humboldt County.

Each PBA is unique, as its development is guided by the needs of the community in which it is based. What a PBA can do and who is involved depends on the community and the land that is being managed.

For example, many PBAs in Texas and other midwestern states are predominantly composed of ranchers and farmers, while many PBAs in the south and west are small private forest owners.

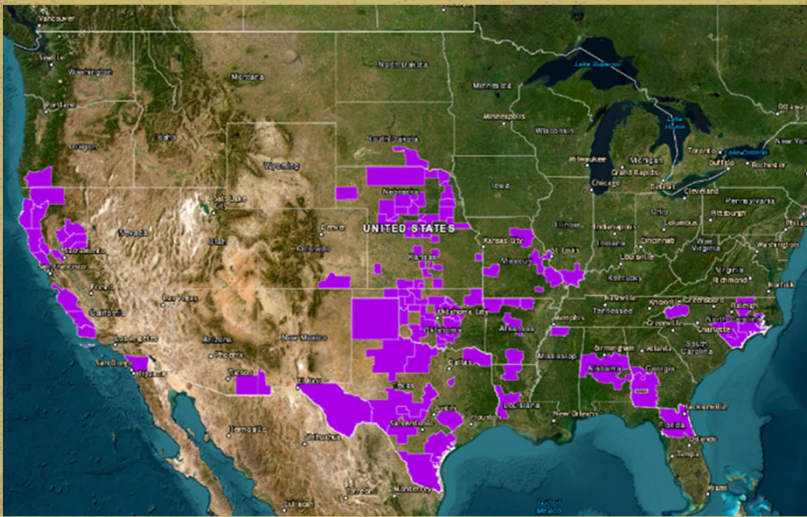


Image courtesy of: NC State University - Southeast Prescribed Fire Update



# WHO CAN BE INVOLVED IN A PBA?

## Community Members

This can be landowners or just folks who want to help. The community is the backbone of the PBA. Many hands make light work!

## Local Agencies

Local agencies can provide operational and technical support by sharing their resources and knowledge.

## Business Owners

Local business owners may own land that they want treated, or they may be great partners who can provide supplies and support.

## YOU!

Yes, you! The PBA model is built on the idea that everybody has something to contribute.





# WHY JOIN A PBA?

## Technical Assistance

- Help navigating permit process and answering liability questions
- Site assessments to determine prep needed to burn



## Tools & Supplies

- PBA can provide lended equipment for site prep and burn (hand tools, PPE, drip torches, bladder bags, etc)

## Community Support

- Neighbors help neighbors to prep and burn their land
- Team with local agencies to provide education and access to equipment for more complex projects

## Collaboration


- Greater collective knowledge of fire behavior & ecology
- Greater capacity to get work done on private lands
- Networking and new friends!





## WHY ARE PBA'S IMPORTANT IN CALIFORNIA?

Of California's 33 million acres of forested land, 40% is privately owned, with ~ 40% of privately owned land being parcel <500 acres. (Christensen et al. 2016). That's over 5 million acres, much of which is owned by individuals or families and is located in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas.

- Increasing the pace & scale of land management which increases the land's resilience to disturbance (wildfire) and overall health and function requires all property owners to play an active role.
  - State and federal agencies have an immense amount of work to do in their own jurisdictions and often do not have the staffing to do all the work that needs to be done on private lands.
  - PBA's allow for a secondary workforce that can get good fire on the ground effectively, safely, and with far less red tape than the agencies.
  - Recent fire seasons have shown us that more needs to be done to protect our communities, our livelihoods, and our forest & watershed resources.
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# WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL COSTS TO A LANDOWNER?

Table 1: Overview of private land burning options and general considerations for California.

Option	Cost to Landowner	Success Rate
CAL FIRE (VMP)	Low: Sometimes involves cost-share, but cost-share is no longer required (per SB1260)	Variable
Private contractor	High: >\$10k per day	High: Only economically feasible at large scales
Do-it-yourself	Low: Equipment, time, labor, unit preparation	High: Likely only at small scales
Cooperative burning (PBA)	Low: time, labor, unit preparation, lunch for volunteers	High

Engaging with the PBA expands the resources available to the landowner and is not cost prohibitive like some other options.

Image courtesy of Grassland, Spring 2019

- **\*PBA Membership** – a small, one-time fee to join the PBA
- **\*Per Acre Donation** – a small per acre fee
- **Permits** – cost of CalFIRE/Air Quality permits (if required)
- **Cost of fuel for drip torches/power tools** – will vary based on fuel usage
- **Donation to VFD for engine** – donation to VFD if use of an engine/hose lays are needed and requested
- **Snacks** – food and beverages for volunteers helping do prep & burn work

\*Donations to the PUC support the expansion and maintenance of the PBA's tool and supply cache (hand tools, power tools, and PPE that is available for volunteer use).



# HOW SAFE IS PRESCRIBED FIRE?



>99%

Prescribed Fires that go **as planned**, without burning out of prescription.

(Office of the Chief, 2022)



<1%

Of the <1 % of Rx burns that go out of prescription, less than 1% incur any property damage.

This is because prescribed fires are designed to occur under conditions which minimize the risk of escape by controlling FIRE BEHAVIOR. This includes:

- Site prep to ensure adequate control lines, minimization of ladder fuels, and protection of resources of value (i.e. fences, structures, big trees, etc.)
- Choosing weather conditions (temperature, wind, RH) that are conducive to low to moderate fire behavior while providing for adequate fuel consumption, and smoke dispersal
- Choosing fuel conditions (fuel moisture) that are conducive to low to moderate fire behavior
- Selecting & securing the resources needed to burn, monitor, and mop-up the site



# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PRESCRIBED FIRE?

## Ecological

Reduces fine fuel loading

Can be used to promote forage growth

Can be used to control invasive plants

Can be used to control pests (ticks/horn flies)

Can be used to control woody plant encroachment

## Economic

Reduces risk of high severity wildfire

Creates resilience communities

Creates more effective partnerships

Cheaper than mechanical fuels reduction alone

Improves forage quantity & quality





# WHAT IS THE PBA PROCESS?




- 1 Contact**  
Contact the PBA to schedule a site visit and ask questions.
- 2 Site Visit**  
PBA conducts site assessment and determines project goals and boundary with landowner. Recommendations for site prep are made; procedures and responsibilities discussed.
- 3 Burn Prep**  
Site is prepped. Permits are obtained. Burn plan is written and burn boss designated.
- 4 Pre-Burn**  
Monitor weather. Notify neighbors and agencies. Notify PBA members to get volunteers.
- 5 Burn Day**  
Complete GO/NO-GO. Get signed liability waivers. Hold briefing. BURN!
- 6 After Burn**  
Conduct After Action Review (AAR). Feed volunteers. Patrol & mop up.

The first step is to reach out to the PBA and schedule a site visit. The sooner we get started, the sooner we'll be ready to burn!





## BESIDES BURNING, THE VISION OF THE PBA IS TO:

- Develop a mailing list for a periodic newsletter that keeps everyone up to date on upcoming projects in Lassen County, training opportunities, and news related to prescribed fire.
  - Hold periodic meetings with PBA members to discuss projects and get to know each other.
  - Host webinars or in-person presentations on topics that YOU want to know more about. These could cover site prep & hazard mitigation, how to build & burn piles, basics of fire weather, tool maintenance, pest mitigation, basics of biochar...you name it and we can make it happen!
  - Have A LOT of work parties and BBQ's this summer getting site prep done for fall and spring burning!
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# QUESTIONS?

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Join our mailing list at:

<https://www.honeylakevalleyrcd.us/lassen-prescribed-burn-association-pba>



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