

# Stewarding with prescribed fire

What you need to know  
and do to prepare your  
land for good fire



**All Hands Ecology**  
FIRE FORWARD





# Stewarding with prescribed fire

What you need to know and do to prepare your land for good fire

Sasha Berleman

## Is prescribed burning right for your property?

Northern California's ecosystems have adapted over millennia to thrive with the regular interval of fire. As a land manager or landowner, you play an important role in this system.

Indigenous people used — and continue to use — fire for ecological and cultural benefit. However, the early 1900s ushered in an era of fire suppression and removal of indigenous stewardship practices that fundamentally altered the health of our forests and grasslands.

Today, recognition is growing that regular intervals of applied fire is crucial to improving the health of our landscapes and the safety of our communities.

With abundant overgrowth in many North Bay ecosystems

and extended wildfire seasons due to climate change, a growing number of landowners and land managers are choosing prescribed fire as an effective treatment that can offer a range of ecological and risk-reduction benefits.

**This guide outlines what you need to know and do** if you are interested in returning good fire to your land. It may help you to better assess your readiness in planning, preparing, and supporting a prescribed fire.

### We're in this together

Reintroducing a fire regime on your land can require significant preparation, collaboration, and commitment.

**See our 5 easy-to-follow steps on next page →**

## Stewarding with Good Fire — it takes a community

All Hands Ecology's Fire Forward program is part of an active community of private landowners, public agencies, and conservation partners who share a purpose of stewarding ecosystems, increasing biodiversity, and reducing the impact of wildfire.

Our staff provides expertise, advice, and on-site support to help you achieve your stewardship objectives. If prescribed fire is a good fit, we will connect you to the training, tools,

prescribed fire managers and practitioners to make it happen.

The Fire Forward program is made possible by funding from landowners, organizations, and agencies, who share the costs of prescribed fire and vegetation management activities. It is also underwritten by donations and grants from generous individuals, businesses, foundations, and local community groups.



# 5 steps to bringing good fire back to the land

## Step 1: Assess goals and readiness –

- Consider needed financial or labor resources
- Share information about your site and project with us (may be online survey, phone call, etc.)
- If your project is determined to be a good fit, arrange a site visit with our Fire Forward staff
- Complete all preparatory work outlined by us
- Final site visit(s) and walk through with our staff and other agencies; discuss timeline

## Step 2: Outreach – Communicate with neighbors and consult on detailed outreach plan

## Step 3: Burn plan and timing –

- You'll provide key information for incorporation in the burn plan
- We'll partner with you to ensure that proper permits are in place and an estimated time-frame will be set for burn window
- Humidity, wind, and vegetation conditions must be right for the prescribed burn. If the land is too wet, ignition will not happen. As landowner/manager, you will be the eyes on the ground and will work with us to assess

if the timing is right – this is largely accomplished through your recording and sharing of guided videos of the fuels on the landscape.

## Step 4: Ignition – You'll be present on the burn and will provide meals to crew, restroom facility, and a staging area for briefing and resources to park. Camping option may also be needed for some burns, especially in forest and woodland ecosystems that can require multiple days of patrol.

## Step 5: Securement – Monitoring/patrol of site happens for as long as the burn boss deems it necessary, typically until the fire is "out." This can last one day in grass ecosystems or up to about three weeks in heavier fuels such as redwood forests and previously logged forest areas.

Your responsibility will be to comply with patrol standards and extinguish heats until the site is deemed complete by the burn boss.

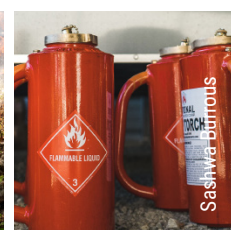
Together, we'll stay in communication about conditions on site; you can reach out to us at any hour with questions or concerns.

## Ongoing: Monitor and adapt your stewardship routine and goals.



## Committed to the kind of care that lasts for generations

Thriving landscapes aren't a quick win – they're a living, shifting collaboration between people and place. That's why we'll help you focus on adaptive practices that center your goals and are shaped by the land's response to good fire.



## Preparation, permitting, resource allocation, and liability

### What All Hands Ecology Provides:

- Skilled experience and qualifications to lead and manage prescribed burn operations, including qualified burn boss (CARX or RXB2), firing boss, and/or other qualified leadership
- Liaison with local and state agencies
- Site visit and assessment report
- Burn operations maps and media maps
- List of preparatory work required
- Permit application support
- Burn Plan and other document preparation, fire behavior modeling, and risk management planning, all in support of meeting state due diligence standards
- Coordination of trained volunteers and practitioners for prescribed burning
- Gear to outfit participants in appropriate personal protective equipment and equipment to support operations, such as Type 6 engine, UTV with slip-on tank, portable tanks, pumps, hose, etc.
- Pre- and post-burn support as well as monitoring
- Strategic public relations and robust outreach, including press release, Watch Duty report, neighbor communication, and sharable materials
- Become a party to & sign the Good Fire Alliance Agreement for Assumption of Risk, Indemnification & Release of Liability (identifies indemnifying party or parties)

### What You Provide:

- Willingness to collaborate with Fire Forward staff and local agencies
- Completion of all preparatory work including but not limited to creation or improvement of control lines, installation of shaded fuel breaks, limbing up trees around unit perimeter, and cutting access through fences, as required by All Hands Ecology and regulatory partners. (See Additional Resources on page 4 for technical assistance and funding sources for unit preparation.)
- Participation in local outreach planning and sharing materials with neighborhood groups and local forums
- Permit application involvement
- Participation in or presence on the prescribed burn
- Supporting post-ignition securement by patrolling the site and addressing concerns after the burn for three days to two weeks, or until the fire is out
- Food (morning coffee/pastries, packable lunch, and sometimes dinner) for all practitioners and volunteers during the burn, a restroom facility, and sometimes, a camping option
- An appropriate water source for burn operations and an appropriate briefing/staging area
- Become a party to & sign the Good Fire Alliance Agreement for Assumption of Risk, Indemnification & Release of Liability (identifies indemnifying party or parties)



# Ready to get started?

To inquire about hiring the Fire Forward crew for unit prep, email Paul Sokoloski at [psokoloski@allhandsecology.org](mailto:psokoloski@allhandsecology.org).

## Additional Resources

Download these and other resources at [allhandsecology.org/good-fire-on-your-land](https://allhandsecology.org/good-fire-on-your-land)

[Technical assistance & funding sources for landowners](#)

[Local businesses engaged in land stewardship/management](#)

[Good Fire Alliance Release of Liability Agreement](#)

[CA Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire](#)

[Landowner Responsibilities and Treatment of Tribal Cultural Objects or Sites](#)



Sashwa Burrous



**All Hands**  
**ECOLOGY**

PO Box 577, Stinson Beach, CA 94970  
1326 Ross Street, Suite B, Petaluma  
415-868-9244 • [allhandsecology.org](https://allhandsecology.org)

All Hands Ecology is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land-based conservation organization founded in 1962. We believe that strong ecosystems begin with empowered communities. We connect people to the land — and each other — in ways that build environmental and economic strength through field training, education programs, and local conservation jobs.

Learn more at [allhandsecology.org](https://allhandsecology.org)

This guide was initiated by and developed in collaboration with [Green Valley Farm + Mill](#) and [Regenerative Forest Solutions](#).

Printed by Almaden, February 2026