

Carefully staged “prescribed fire” can reset a rangeland’s biological clock, awaken dormant plants, and breathe new life and diversity into an ecosystem. When fire rolls over a rangeland, it gives perennial sod-forming grasses, which are good sources of forage for livestock, a better chance to take hold.

Fire in a prescribed burn scenario only, is commonly used on rangelands in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas), but it was not as readily adopted by settlers west and north of those areas.

Effects of fire

Researchers are constantly studying whether fire is useful in controlling various invasive weeds. Their partners are probing a number of issues, including which season is best for using fire. Researchers want to determine whether fire not only reduces the abundance of purple threeawn, but also creates more balanced ecosystems where desirable grasses can flourish. Their intent is to give land managers a way to keep rangelands viable so that cattle grazing on them can stay healthy and well fed.

The Texas panhandle has once again been ravaged by wild fire this past spring. Although it can be very destructive, there are benefits to the rangeland and natural “healing” that can be beneficial.

Please remember, in our area it is not a good idea to attempt to burn an area on your own unless you are trained. If you would like to burn a pasture, you can contact your local fire department for resources available to assist you with your burn.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions.

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