IMPROVING WILDLIFE HABITAT

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- The Pennsylvania Game Commission recognizes prescribed fire as a valuable wildlife habitat management tool.

- Each year, PGC personnel burn hundreds of acres of forest, shrublands and grasslands to achieve habitat goals.

- Pennsylvania's Wildlife Action Plan cites fire as important in managing forest, barrens, and grassland habitats for species of greatest conservation need.

  In 2001, Congress created the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program to support state fish and wildlife agencies in conserving low and declining populations of fish and wildlife. A significant requirement was that each state must produce a Wildlife Action Plan and submit it for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval. This document provides a blueprint for the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to pursue comprehensive fish and wildlife management.

- Many imperiled habitats cannot be sustained without periodic prescribed fire.

- Prescribed fire promotes diverse plant communities, providing improved food resources, protective cover, and nesting areas for numerous wildlife species.

- Prescribed fire helps to remove undesirable plants that are a detriment to sustainable and more natural ecosystems.

- Prescribed fire is essential to perpetuate oak forests – particularly on high quality sites. The importance of oak forests and acorns to Pennsylvania's wildlife cannot be overstated.

- Planning for prescribed fire is a comprehensive process that takes wildlife resources based goals and objectives, public safety, available staff and equipment resources, fuel loads, weather, and numerous other factors into account.

- Prescribed fire participants are trained to either a state or nationally recognized level in order to plan for, initiate and conduct prescribed burns.