



Landowner Perceptions of Fire, Grazing, and Invasive Species in a Prairie Landscape Fragmented by Cropland and Trees

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In the former tallgrass prairie region of the U.S. where most of the land has been converted to agricultural uses, the success of prairie restoration efforts will depend in part upon convincing private landowners to incorporate land management practices such as prescribed burning and grazing to control invasive species and woody encroachment. Yet private landowners have been slow to adopt these practices in Midwestern states, and the barriers to adoption of fire and grazing management are not known. The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and behaviors of private landowners towards prescribed burning and grazing as management tools for prairie restoration and the control of eastern red cedar. A mail survey was sent to landowners in the Grand River Grasslands region of southern Iowa and northern Missouri. Results show that while 68% of landowners see grazing as a legitimate land management tool, only 51% think fire is a legitimate tool for land management. Over three-quarters of respondents thought the increase in eastern red cedar and other trees in grasslands is a problem, with 44% considering it a major problem and 32% a minor problem. While 84% of landowners say they have taken action to control eastern red cedar, only 25% have ever participated in a prescribed burn on pasture or prairie. This study suggests that the adoption of prescribed burning by private landowners might be more widespread if proponents focus on the effectiveness of fire for controlling eastern red cedar, which is viewed as a problem by most landowners in the region.

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