



LEE JONES
804-731-7758

KYLE MALLAS
757-620-5429

E-MAIL: SEVAPBA@gmail.com

VA Prescribed Fire Council: <https://www.vafirecouncil.com/>



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@SEVAPBA

South East Virginia Prescribed Burn Association

The South East Virginia Prescribed Burn Association (SEVA PBA) promotes and supports the safe and responsible use of prescribed fire (Rx fire) by private landowners to meet their land management objectives.

Private landowners own 80% of the timberland in Virginia. Privately held lands present the greatest challenge to, but also the greatest opportunity for, restoring the use of Rx fire as a valuable forest management tool. Most private landowners have excluded the use of Rx fire on their land because of a number of valid concerns and risks, including: potential liability, lack of training, experience, manpower, or needed equipment. Additionally, private landowners do not feel they have support of their neighbors and community concerning prescribed fire use. Creation of a Prescribed Burn Association can help overcome these barriers.

Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs) Overview

There is growing interest by private landowners to use Rx fire on their land and have a strong interest to work cooperatively to accomplish their management goals. A PBA seeks to provide these motivated private landowners with peer-to-peer mentorship and training to gain the skills and knowledge to use Rx fire on their land. PBAs are growing in number across the Southeast. SEVA PBA is the first established in Virginia.

A PBA is an organization that provides training, equipment, and educational programs to landowners and the general public to increase the effectiveness and safety of Rx fire on private lands. The goals of a PBA are to help individuals manage their own risks by ensuring appropriate preparations are in place before each burn. These preparations include assisting landowners with creating a burn plan, adequate fire breaks, equipment, and ensuring the minimum number of people are present at each burn. Peer to peer learning and support is invaluable as members gain experience in the use of prescribed fire when fire is actually implemented on burn days.

ORGANIZATION

PBA's at their core are a very simple concept; "Neighbors helping Neighbors" conduct prescribed fire on private lands. SEVA PBA is a volunteer grass-roots association lead by private landowners, structured through a steering committee, who use, or are ready to use, Rx fire. The Virginia Prescribed Fire Council made up of relevant state and federal agencies, such as the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, VA Cooperative Extension, VA Department of Forestry, VA Department of Wildlife Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Forest Service, and private landowners, provides guidance and mentorship. SEVA PBA welcomes all landowners and private citizens who desire to learn more about managing their land with Rx fire. Engaged landowners include people who have been doing their own burns for years, landowners who are new to the Rx fire community, and people who simply want to be knowledgeable about the process.

CONCLUSION

An increase in the number of private landowners who use Rx fire multiplies local capacity to conduct burns. Building private landowners' capabilities to conduct their own prescribed burns is important due to the lack of agency and contractor capacity. SEVA PBA is a tool private landowners can use to help increase their confidence and capabilities to conduct prescribed burns and become better stewards of their lands.

"NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS"