

Air Force Wildland Fire Branch

The mission of the Air Force wildland Fire Branch is to ensure military mission capability and readiness through a strategic, cost effective, wildland fire program that provides ecosystem management, promotes long term range sustainment, leverages partnerships and provides key fire related information to decision makers.

Air Force Wildland Support Module (WSM) fire fighters have many tools to use in the control of a wildfire and prescribed (planned) fire. One of the many tools that firefighters use is called "Backfire" or "Burn out" to control the direction and intensity of a wildfire. The backfire operation is set inside a fire line to consume fuels that may be in the path of a wildfire or prescribed fire. When the main wildfire reaches this area, the lack of fuels will cause it to lose intensity, slow down, or burnout.



Prescribed burning (Rx), in conjunction with other management tools, is used to stimulate fire dependent ecosystems and rehabilitate wildlife habitat. The Air Force WSMs have the expertise and experience to accomplish these tasks. At Avon Park, a recent prescribed burn conducted early this spring in a sensitive habitat area, has already shown insects and flowers starting to come back. Along with native vegetation coming back, the entire fragile

ecosystem is reverting back to what it used to be. The prescribed burn also helped in holding back invasive species from overtaking the ecosystem.



Wildland Support Modules fire fighters are professional and qualified personnel able to conduct prescribed fire and mechanical fuel reduction activities in the most fragile environment for ecosystem management. WSM personnel also support Fire and Emergency Services (FES) when wildfires threaten their installations. Recently at Beale Air Force base, a fast moving wildfire (Intanko Fire) was approaching the base and endangering infrastructure. The WSM's actions alongside FES prevented the fire from damaging any Air Force housing. The WSM members utilized their experience and expertise to stop the wildland fire threat.