

# Michigan Prescribed Fire Council Strategic Plan

January 31, 2024

The Michigan Prescribed Fire Council (MPFC) started updating and revising its mission statement, adding a vision statement, and developing a strategic plan for the next 5+ years in the winter of 2023. An initial Strategic Planning session was held in February 2023, during the MPFC's annual Burning Issues workshop. MPFC members and partners were invited to attend and actively participated in guided breakout sessions, which were facilitated by an outside party. Participant input was collected and synthesized by MPFC.

MPFC developed a Strategic Planning sub-committee; this committee has met virtually numerous times since February 2023 sharing ideas, gaining input from members as well as outside groups. An unedited version of this draft document was shared with the MPFC leadership and members during Quarterly Steering Committee meetings held on 9/5/2023 and 12/5/2023.

A draft document was shared with all members on December 19<sup>th</sup> with comments to be provided by January 19<sup>th</sup>. Member comments were then used to update the plan to produce this final document on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Comments received included the request to consider incorporating Indigenous cultural fire more explicitly, both in practice and as an educational tool.

The committee agrees that a statement acknowledging the role native nations have in fire stewardship should be drafted in collaboration with native nations themselves; however, our timeline is too short to make that a reasonable ask. In order to avoid the pitfall of bringing tribal partners in at the last minute and putting an unreasonable burden on them, we will pursue this on an appropriate and respectful timeline.

Thus, we incorporated into our strategic plan a specific draft vision statement that we intend to cultivate relationships with native nations in our work to promote prescribed fire in Michigan.

## **MPFC Strategic Plan**

### **Who we are:**

The Michigan Prescribed Council (MPFC) was started in 1999 to protect, conserve and expand the safe use of prescribed fire on the Michigan landscape. MPFC is a voluntary collaboration of individuals interested in prescribed fire who discuss barriers and work towards solutions to increase the use of prescribed fire. The council has been a powerful tool to maintain a network of people who have consistently advocated for and maintained the relevancy of prescribed fire in Michigan's fire-adapted ecosystems.

Over the years the council has offered annual meetings to discuss techniques, safety practices, research, and state and federal legislation; created and executed crew boss academies; offered numerous introductory technical field-based training; public outreach efforts and provided fire professional speakers on the use of prescribed fire.

Below is our Vision, Mission, Objectives, Values, Tactics, and Strategies for 2024-2029.

### **Vision**

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The MPFC strives to create a culture of prescribed fire in Michigan where prescribed fire practitioners have support to manage and protect natural and created landscapes with fire safely and efficiently to achieve land management and human safety objectives.

### **Mission**

The mission of the MPFC is to protect, conserve and expand the safe use of prescribed fire on Michigan landscapes.

### **Objectives**

- a. The MPFC will support current and future prescribed fire practitioners by connecting agencies, organizations, and individuals for collaboration, education, and resource sharing to meet land management needs safely and responsibly.
- b. MPFC will promote managing for ecosystems and the reduction of hazardous fuel through the use of prescribed fire to protect people, lands, and infrastructure from increasing risks of wildfire due to climate change.
- c. Promote safe and effective use of prescribed fire.
- d. Share research, resources, and training opportunities to support prescribed fire practitioners' growth and experience in the field.

- e. Build a community and support networking groups between agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), universities, students, private landowners, volunteers, and all people interested in prescribed fire.
- f. Provide efficient public outreach about the importance of prescribed fire in the landscape historically and today.

### **Values**

- a. Safety is a priority.
- b. Prescribed fire is beneficial for long-term ecological needs and human safety.
- c. Collaboration across different groups is key to successful initiatives.
- d. Science-based research and traditional knowledge of are important components to understand the history of the landscape and making plans of land management objectives moving forward.
- e. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential for collaboration and identifying solutions and success.
- f. Empowering the next generation is essential to the future and sustainability of prescribed fire practices.
- g. MPFC understands-that fire has been part of the ecocultural landscapes commonly known today as the state of Michigan. Indigenous communities with contemporary, traditional, and ancestral connections to Michigan landscapes have been active stewards of their homelands since time immemorial, often through the intentional application of fire in specific places and specific times for community benefit. Diverse knowledge systems (Western science and Indigenous science) are important components to understanding the ecological and cultural history of places and identifying inclusive and equitable land stewardship goals moving forward.

### **5-10 year goals**

- a. MPFC will be known as the go-to organization for resources on prescribed fire in Michigan by including members from the majority of private and public prescribed fire practitioners, organizations and individuals in the state of Michigan.
- b. MPFC will grow the future of prescribed fire practitioners by offering resources, networking, discounts or financial support when possible, and working with partners to provide National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), non-NWCG and other relevant trainings to train the next generation of prescribed fire practitioners.
- c. MPFC will connect people by providing networking opportunities and funding when available for both private and professional individuals such as prescribed fire associations.
- d. MPFC will disseminate the latest research and highest standards of prescribed fire safety and implementation through website resources and social media campaigns supported by Michigan agencies and fire science professionals.

- e. MPFC will support diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization by allowing open and non-bias participation and encouraging membership regardless of race, gender, sexual identity, and income.

### **Tactics (short-term)**

- a. MPFC will provide merchandise to be sold at affordable prices and provide giveaways to promote the name and brand.
- b. MPFC will provide member organizations with MPFC brochures for distribution at request.
- c. MPFC will maintain annual and quarterly meetings for collaboration among and inclusive with organizations and individuals involved with prescribed fire from agencies to tribes to the private sector, and everyone in between and beyond.
- d. MPFC will provide letters of support and financial support, when possible, to like-minded groups to conserve, protect and implement prescribed fire.
- e. MPFC will share and support, when possible, new research, legislation and other developments related to prescribed fire when appropriate with followers via email and social media.
- f. MPFC when possible, will offer free or discounted training, memberships and annual meeting tickets for students and by request for those in financial need.

### **Strategies (long-term)**

- a. MPFC will partner with the Michigan DNR Prescribed Fire Burn Manager Certification program.
- b. MPFC will sponsor prescribed fire events and programs when financially possible.
- c. MPFC will support burn associations with information, shared equipment, training, and outreach.
- d. MPFC will form a sub-committee to compile the latest safety practices and research.
- e. MPFC website will be kept up to date with annual reviews.
- f. MPFC will widen outreach to groups that have been missed in order to increase diversity within the Council.
- g. MPFC will where possible raise funds via donors and grants to support training for individuals and young adults with financial need.
- h. MPFC will partake in policy governance, reviewing a portion of the bylaws at each quarterly meeting and revising as necessary.
- i. MPFC will pursue opportunities to expand and stabilize the financial and professional staff capacity of the organization.