



*"Where People and Land are One"*

**P.O. Box 787  
Wood Lake, NE 69221**

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*Jim Van Winkle, Wood Lake  
Coordinator*

**Attention-Sandhills VFD Chief:**

**Subject: Recognition Award to Sandhill VFDs**

The Sandhills Task Force has been supporting private profitable ranching in all twenty Sandhills counties for the past fifteen years. We work on only privately owned land and use a variety of solutions to support our mission. Our methods may include providing technical assistance, supporting sustainable grazing systems, hydrology restoration and generally helping landowners manage their natural resources from a long term profitable perspective.

As invasive plants continue to rob productivity and disrupt native plants and animals, more landowners are considering using fire as a tool to restore native grasslands. Many do not have the expertise, personnel or equipment to safely conduct prescribed fire on their properties. The Sandhills Task Force supports landowners who use prescribed burns performed by trained professionals and with the necessary burn permits from local fire departments. Some departments are receiving more requests to provide support to these landowners.

The Sandhills Task Force has adopted a new program to reward VFD's that choose to take an active role in assisting private landowners with prescribed fire efforts. We will provide a "Recognition Award" to VFDs based on \$15 per acre burned. The maximum award amount will be \$6,000 per prescribed fire. In an effort to spread these awards across the Sandhills, a maximum of \$6,000 per department will be awarded. The award may be split among VFDs, if more than one assists with a burn. Assisting is defined as having at least one VFD engine and two trained personnel on a prescribed fire; and, the VFD is not compensated or under contract by the person or company conducting the burn.

Funding for this Award program for the 2012 calendar year is limited to \$30,000.00 so be sure to submit your award requests in a timely fashion. This award will exclude VFD's that are working under contract and will not be available to VFD's burning on public lands and lands under NRCS contract with WRP or CRP.

We encourage your department to discuss its interest in assisting landowners with prescribed burns. Any questions you may have can be directed to our Projects Coordinator, Jim Van Winkle Box 787 Wood Lake NE 69221. He can be reached at 402-967-3055 or emailed at [vanwinkle@gpcom.net](mailto:vanwinkle@gpcom.net)

Feel free to make copies of the enclosed recognition award poster and to post it on your members' board.



## SANDHILLS TASK FORCE

The Sandhills Task Force has developed a **Recognition Award** for all Sandhills-based Volunteer Fire Departments for the 2012 upcoming prescribed fire season. VFD's who assist private landowners with prescribed fire to control invasive plants species, primarily eastern redcedar are eligible.

Reimbursement will be at the rate of \$15 per burned acre, with a maximum payment of \$6,000 per prescribed fire. A \$6,000 maximum per VFD is established to spread the awards geographically. More than one VFD may split the award. Participation is defined as providing at least one truck and two trained personnel on a prescribed fire. Personnel need to be actively involved. The Sandhills Task Force is aware that some landowners feel prescribed fire is the best way to control invasive plant species but feel they do not have the necessary protection to assure the fire does not escape. Some landowners are forming burn associations in an effort to bring more people and safety for the use of prescribed fire. Local VFD's are staffed by busy volunteers that donate large amounts of personal time in service to their communities. VFD budgets are very tight and put a burden on tax payers to simply fund an adequate wild fire response. The Sandhills Task Force board would like to recognize those VFDs who do assist in controlling tree invasion by the use of prescribed fire.

The form at the bottom of this page needs to be filled out and signed by the VFD Chief within 30 days of the prescribed burn. Please submit a copy of the approved burn plan with payment request. WRP and CRP lands are not eligible. Private lands only. Submit early as funds are limited.

### RECOGNITION AWARD REQUEST

VFD \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

LANDOWNER'S NAME ASSISTED \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Burn Plan Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION(S) \_\_\_\_\_ TWSHP \_\_\_\_\_ RANGE \_\_\_\_\_ ACRES BURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF ASSISTANCE \_\_\_\_\_ CHIEF'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Mail the completed form to:

Jim Van Winkle

Sandhills Task Force Projects Coordinator

Box 787, Wood Lake, NE 69221

Phone 402-967-3055

Email: vanwinkle@gpcom.net