



Wildland Fire Management

Scouts BSA · Nature

Name

Started

Completed

Wildland Fire Management is about understanding how wildfires behave and how people manage and prevent them. You will learn how fire shapes the land, how firefighters work, and what you can do to help prevent fires. It's important work that protects communities and forests.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/wildland-fire-management/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

- ☐ **1** Research the history of wildland fire in the United States, including how it has been suppressed, prevented, and managed, and discuss it with your counselor

Tip: Read about how people have thought about wildfire over time and how management has changed.

- ☐ **2** Research the damage wildfire does in the United States, including acres burned each year for the past 3 years, and discuss with your counselor its harm to each of the following

Tip: Look up recent wildfires and the damage they caused to homes, land, and wildlife.

- ☐ **2a** Commercial forest products

- ☐ **2b** Fish and wildlife habitat

- ☐ **2c** Soil and water

- ☐ **2d** Recreation and public use

- ☐ **2e** Homes, communities, and human resources

- ☐ **2f** Air quality and public health

- ☐ **3** Discuss with your counselor how land managers use prescribed fire for each of these goals

Tip: Talk about why land managers sometimes use planned, controlled fire on purpose.

Example: Explain why a land manager might burn a forest on purpose: to clear out dead brush that would fuel a bigger fire, help certain plants and animals that need fire, or restore a prairie. Describe how crews plan for safe weather and wind before lighting it.

- ☐ **3a** Reducing fuel

- ☐ **3b** Improving fish and wildlife habitat

- ☐ **3c** Restoring ecosystems

- ☐ **3d** Regenerating forests

- ☐ **3e** Controlling insects and disease

4 Wildfire prevention and mitigation

Tips for this section: Look at your home or campsite and talk about ways to reduce fire risk.

Example for this section: Talk about what you'd do at home and at camp: clear dead leaves from gutters, keep a space around buildings free of brush, use established fire rings, and never leave a campfire unattended.

4a Wildfire prevention

- ☐ **4a1** Discuss with your counselor the leading causes of wildfires across the United States

- ☐ **4a2** Discuss with your counselor ways to keep people from starting wildfires in your community and on unit outings

4b Wildfire mitigation

- ☐ **4b1** Discuss with your counselor what the wildland-urban interface is

- ☐ **4b2** Discuss with your counselor defensible space and ways to protect wildland-urban interface homes and communities from wildfire

5 Fire behavior

Tips for this section: Learn how fuel, weather, and land shape fire, and draw a simple diagram of a wildfire.

Example for this section: Explain the fire triangle (heat, fuel, oxygen) and how fuel, weather, and terrain change fire behavior. Draw a wildfire and label its head, flanks, heel, and spot fires, and show which way the wind is pushing it.

- ☐ **5a** Discuss with your counselor how the fire environment shapes wildland fire behavior, with examples of how weather, topography, and fuel each play a part

- ☐ **5b** Explain how removing heat, fuel, or oxygen can put out a wildfire

- ☐ **5c** Draw a diagram showing the parts of a wildfire

6 Firefighter safety

Tips for this section: Ask a firefighter about their gear and how they stay safe on the fire line.

- ☐ **6a** Discuss with your counselor the personal protective equipment wildland firefighters wear and how it's used

- ☐ **6b** Discuss with your counselor each of these and why it matters for personal safety and situational awareness on a wildland fire

- ☐ **6b1** The 10 Standard Firefighting Orders

- ☐ **6b2** The 18 Watch Out Situations

- ☐ **6b3** Lookouts, Communication, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES)

7 Suppression tactics

Tips for this section: Learn how firefighters control fires and draw a chart of how their team is organized.

Example for this section: Draw an Incident Command System chart for a wildfire, with an incident commander at the top and sections for operations, planning, logistics, and finance. Then explain how crews build a fire line by removing fuel down to bare soil.

- ☐ **7a** On your diagram from requirement 5c or a wildfire map, use tokens for firefighting resources to demonstrate these tactics, alone or with a small team, and explain when each would be used

☐ **7a1** Direct attack

☐ **7a2** Indirect attack

☐ **7a3** Minimum impact suppression tactics

☐ **7a4** Using hand crews, machinery, and aircraft

☐ **7a5** Mop-up

☐ **7a6** Repair and restoration

☐ **7b** Diagram the Incident Command System, then explain, alone or with your team, what the Command and General Staff positions do on a wildfire

8 Suppression tools

Tips for this section: Ask a firefighter or ranger to show you hand tools and how each is used.

- ☐ **8a** Demonstrate 3 hand tools made for wildland firefighting, and use one of them to show how a fireline is built

- ☐ **8b** Discuss 7 other tools, pieces of equipment, or apparatus made for wildland firefighting and explain how each is used

9 Taking action: Choose 1 of 5

Tips for this section: Help with a Firewise or fire prevention project in your community.

Example for this section: Pick one option, like doing a Firewise assessment of a camp building with local fire staff, then with your counselor's OK clearing brush around it and writing a short report, or meeting a fire prevention specialist and creating a skit or billboard idea about campfire safety to share with your troop.

- ☐ **9a** Create a wildland fire readiness plan for an area you know: map its resources, water sources, natural and human-made barriers, and access, and cover fuel loads, fire apparatus, structure protection, medical and evacuation needs, values at risk, and likely tactics

- ☐ **9b** Meet with your local fire warden or a state or federal forestry official to discuss local wildfire causes and types, fire seasons, and which agency fights wildfires in your area; share what you learned with your counselor

- ☐ **9c** Do a Firewise assessment of a home or building (a Scout camp building counts) in the wildland-urban interface and find its fire risks; with counselor approval, do a project to lower the risk, then write a short report on it

- ☐ **9d** Meet a Fire Prevention Specialist or local fire official about community fire prevention, then make a prevention message (skit, video, or billboard idea) and share it with your counselor and troop or another approved group

- ☐ **9e** Meet a meteorologist or fire weather expert to discuss local fire weather concerns, fire seasons, and what triggers a Fire Weather Watch or Red Flag Warning, then share what you learned with your counselor

- ☐ **10** Research a historic catastrophic U.S. wildland fire and discuss with your counselor and/or troop or approved group what caused it, how it was managed, how it could have been prevented, the lessons learned, and how it changed suppression policy or tactics

Tip: Choose a famous wildfire and learn what happened and what people learned from it.

- ☐ **11** Explore careers related to this badge and research one (training and education, costs, job outlook, pay, duties, advancement) using sources your parent or guardian approves; discuss your findings and why it might interest you with your counselor

Tip: Ask a firefighter or forester how they got into the field.