

## WILDLIFE

# Management associations support regional improvement

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**A management** association is comprised of a group of people with common interests and the desire to work together to effect change related

to those interests on their properties and/or in their region. Such associations commonly emphasize prescribed fire or white-tailed deer. In fact, the most common management associations in Oklahoma are prescribed burn associations (Figure 1). Currently, 17 associations exist in Oklahoma for prescribed burning, and more will be formed with assistance from the Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association. Many of these Oklahoma prescribed burn associations are very active and are making a significant difference on their properties. The object of forming prescribed burn associations is to provide education, training, equipment and manpower to landowners so they can achieve their resource management goals. These associations are also extremely beneficial to the broader community through reductions in allergenic Eastern red-cedar populations and dangerous fuel load accumulations responsible for increasing the incidence of wildfire.



White-tailed deer management associations are becoming more commonplace in Oklahoma as well. Organizations like the Noble Foundation, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Quality Deer Management Association are working to help landowners join their lands, resources and talents to improve white-tailed deer populations. The Walnut Bayou Deer Management Association in Love County, Okla., was formed in 1996 and is still very active and a shining example of a successful management association.

Most people involved with prescribed burn associations want to use fire to help them accomplish specific goals, such as controlling or reducing woody plants to increase grazeable acres for cattle; improving forage quality; or improving habitat for white-tailed deer, lesser prairie-chicken, wild turkey or northern bobwhite. People involved with white-tailed deer associations are usually focused on improving the quality of their local deer herd and habitat, and can benefit from using prescribed fire and proper grazing management. ►

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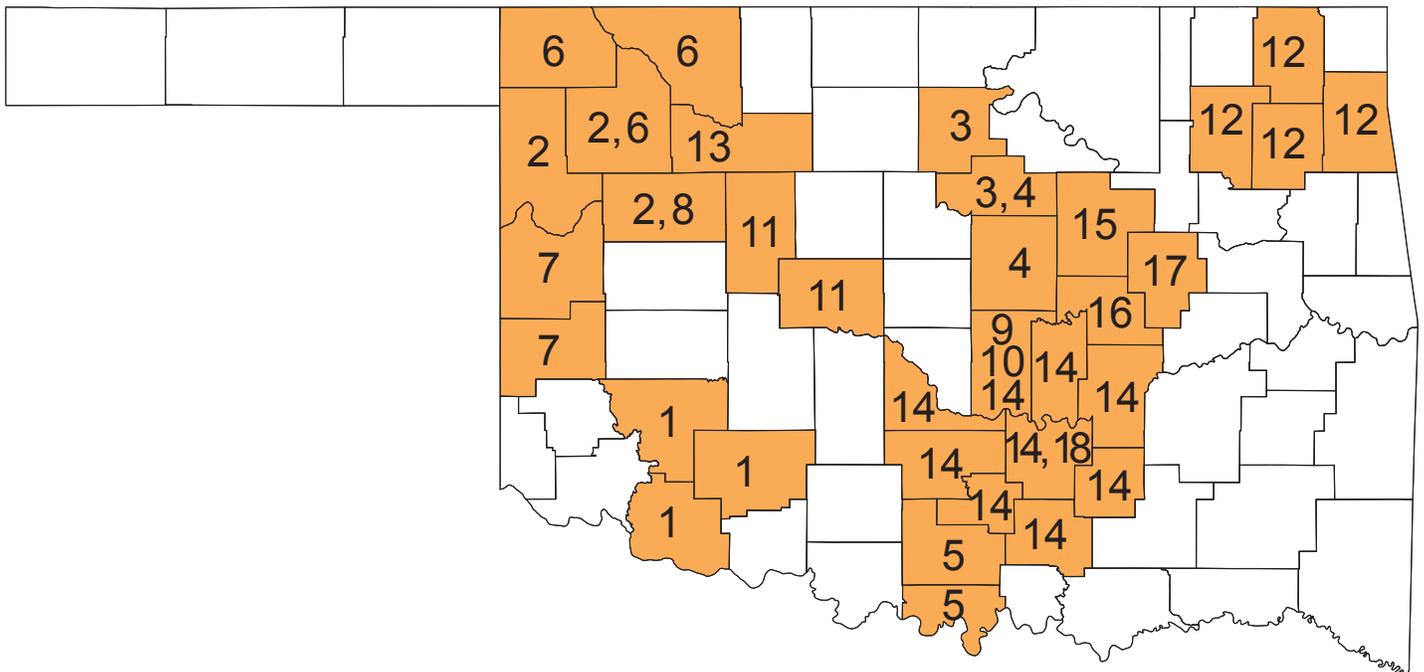
So let's think about putting two and two (or more) together and consider how important it is for management associations to multitask. As beneficial and valuable as these subject specific associations are to landowners and communities, they can be even more beneficial when they work together. The newly formed Limestone Game and Range Management Association near Fitzhugh, Okla., is a prime example. Rather than being strictly focused on managing white-tailed deer, they are thinking

in broader terms by including neighbors primarily interested in beef cattle management so they all can benefit from the collective effort. Efforts like this appeal to landowners interested in wildlife management, forage-based beef cattle production, wild turkeys and timber management, just to name a few possibilities. The diverse membership creates more opportunities and collaboration for everyone. Other benefits accrue to the community, including healthier rangelands for people, wildlife and livestock;

reduction of fuel loads that contribute to uncontrollable wildfires; and community awareness and involvement such as educational events, fundraisers and creation of more hunting opportunities for youth and adults.

The benefits of management associations are nearly endless and almost as diverse as people. If you want to know more about management associations or would like to know how to start one in your community, please call. ■

**Figure 1. Oklahoma's Local Prescribed Burn Associations. Includes active and inactive associations.**



*Courtesy of John Weir, Oklahoma State Natural Resources and Ecology Department*

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| 1. Big Pasture Prescribed Burning Assn.        | 10. Northern Pottawatomie County Prescribed Burn Assn. |
| 2. Northwest Range Fire Management Assn., Inc. | 11. Canadian Rivers Prescribed Burn Assn.              |
| 3. North Central Range Improvement Assn.       | 12. Indian Territory Burn Assn.                        |
| 4. Cross Timbers Prescribed Burn Assn.         | 13. Pontotoc Ridge Prescribed Burn Assn.               |
| 5. Arbuckle Restoration Assn.                  | 14. Gloss Mountain Prescribed Burn Assn.               |
| 6. Cimarron Range Preservation Assn.           | 15. Creek County Prescribed Burn Assn.                 |
| 7. Roger Mills Prescribed Burn Assn.           | 16. Twin Rivers Prescribed Burn Assn.                  |
| 8. South Canadian Prescribed Burn Assn.        | 17. Okmulgee Prescribed Burn Assn.                     |
| 9. Salt Creek Prescribed Burn Assn.            | 18. Limestone Game & Range Management Assn.            |