



## National Fire Plan

### **Wildfire Suppressed Thanks to Rx Burn Program**

On March 14, 2006, the Birthday Fire started alongside FM Road 1869 in the vicinity of the community of Hopewell Cemetery. Possibly started by a cigarette, a northeast wind pushed the fire quickly through one foot tall grass and grew to 22 acres within 30 minutes. Despite extreme burning conditions, fire staff at the Balcones National Wildlife Refuge in Texas was able to stop the fire at 22 acres when it reached one of the areas treated under the Refuge's maintenance prescribed burn plan.

According to Carl Schwope, Fire Management Officer, the successful operation was due to the area having been maintained with a prescribed burn every 3-4 years over the last ten years. So when the wildfire took off under extreme burning conditions and spread into the lighter ground fuels, it became easier to suppress.

The prescribed burns took place under set conditions during cooler times of the year. Suppression of the burn was an interagency affair with response by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Fire Chiefs from Burnett and Williamson County. Local law enforcement blocked the road for firefighter and public safety. Wesley Evans, USF&WS, was our Agency representative and acted as liaison between the Refuge and the other agencies involved.