The Fire Prescription Planner, probably our most used tool for prescribed burning, can be accessed easily via the link in the left menu section. When you first come to the page (Step 1), you will see a list of variables with blank fields for “Lower” and “Upper” Limits (you can fill in whichever fields you wish) and a 16-sector wind direction compass (you can select which sectors to include in your prescription).

To fill in any field, just click on the open box of the variable field you wish and type in a number.

For “Dispersion Conditions” click on the pull down menu and select the dispersion category you wish for your lower limit (or upper):
For wind direction click on the sector(s) you wish to prescribe. The selected sectors will show up in brighter orange colors. To delete the chosen sector(s), just click on them again.

At the top of the table, there are two elements of interest. One is “Use Conditions for Beginning Burners” (enclosed in orange). Clicking this will fill in the table with values we deem are safe for those with little experience in prescribed burning.

The second is “Reset Values” (enclosed in blue above). Hitting it will delete ALL of the entered fields resulting in blank boxes and no selected wind direction sectors.
At the bottom of this table are other useful features. You can select a different station than the PRIMARY one (from the home page) by clicking on the Mesonet station name on the leftmost side of the black bar. The next field “Show” allows you to specify over what length of the forecast (84 hours max) you wish to have your prescription searched. The default is “Next 84 Hours”.

Following that are two boxes which can be checked or unchecked. The topmost one, “Show Prescribed Variables Only” allows the user to specify whether he/she wants ALL variables in the table above shown in the final resulting forecast table or just the PRESCRIBED variables ONLY. The next box allows the user to SAVE the prescription (“Settings”) for future use. If this box is left unchecked and the browser closed, the next time the user enters the Fire Prescription Planner, the prescription table and wind direction compass will be empty (same thing that happens when “Reset Values” is clicked).

Another feature, before we move to the final prescription forecast table, should be noted. The variable names in the initial table are actually links to pop-up boxes that describe that variable:
When you have entered the prescription you want, click “Get Data” to get to the final forecast table.

The table begins with the first full hour after the current time and goes in hourly increments through as many hours of the forecast you have specified. It shows the values of the variables and has color shadings associated with the prescribed variables. If the criteria for a prescribed variable are met for any hour, that cell is shaded GREEN; if the criteria are not met for that hour, that cell is shaded RED.

The most important column is the second one, “Criteria Met?”. If ALL your prescribed variables meet your criteria for a given hour, that cell under “Criteria Met?” is shaded BRIGHT GREEN. If one or more of your prescribed variables do NOT meet the criteria for a given hour, that cell under “Criteria Met?” is shaded BRIGHT RED. Thus, you can scroll down through the forecast table to see periods of possible opportunity for your prescribed burn (looking for a continuous grouping of “green hours” of sufficient length for your burn).
Please note that this forecast is based solely on the NAM forecast (so it may not always be that accurate, especially the further out in the forecast period you go) and that the NAM forecast updates occur every 6 hours. The current forecast being used and expected update time are shown near the top of this final forecast table (see area enclosed in orange):

To go back to change your prescription or even select a different Mesonet site, you can click on “Change Prescription or Site” (enclosed in blue) or just use your browser back button.