Several agencies collaborated in 2012 to conduct a prescribed burn at Government Canyon State Natural Area in northwest Bexar County.

“Prescribed burns are used as a management tool in natural areas and state parks to improve wildlife habitat by restoring woodlands and savannas that were historically maintained by fire,” said Natural Area Superintendent Chris Holm. “They also are conducted to reduce the amount of available fuels, such as leaf litter, fallen branches, understory growth and dead trees. By decreasing the amount of available fuels, prescribed burns reduce the chance for a potentially destructive wildfire to occur.”

A total of 394 acres were burned on three different areas within the park.

Participating agencies included Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas A&M Forest Service, San Antonio and Helotes fire departments, Bexar County Emergency Services District 7 and Bexar County Fire Marshal’s office.

Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas A&M Forest Service conducted the first prescribed burns on the site in 2007.

“This year’s burn continued toward the objective of restoring ecosystem functions and reducing fuel loads to communities adjacent to the park,” said TFS Program Coordinator Rich Gray. “It was another great opportunity for land managers and area responders to reduce fuel and gain the added benefit of working together prior to a wildland urban interface incident.”