People should not be alarmed if they see billowing smoke coming from the southern part of the Oakland University campus on Saturday, April 17.

OU professor of Biological Sciences Scott Tiegs, Ph.D., will lead the university’s planned prescribed burn at the Biological Preserve on campus. Dr. Tiegs and team have hired PlantWise, LLC, an experienced company from Ann Arbor that has done more than 1,000 prescribed burns, to perform the work at around 12:30 p.m., weather permitting.

In addition, area first responders, including the Auburn Hills Fire Department, are aware of the plan and will be monitoring the area, so there is no need for citizens to call 911, or area police or fire agencies.

“Ten acres of wetlands has been identified for the burn which will begin late in the morning and run for two to three hours,” said Tiegs. “Then, there will be several hours of mop up work to extinguish any lingering fires.”
Tiegs added that there will also be five control plots to compare and learn from during the burn. He said this burn will give OU students the opportunity to do research and study the effects of a restorative burn now and into the future.

The benefits of a prescribed burn are several-fold. It can prevent future wildfires and promote growth of native plant species, while clearing the area of invasive species.

Tiegs said the biological preserves on campus serve as an ideal lab for ecological research and are some his favorite “classrooms” on campus. He added, “The habitat will become much healthier following the prescribed burn.”

The burn is sponsored by the Campus Alliance for Sustainability and the Environment, the College of Arts and Sciences and the Oakland University Department of Biological Sciences.

Read more about prescribed burns at the U.S. Forest Service website: https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/prescribed-fire

Info also available at the State of Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources website: https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79237_81031-55955-,00.html