



# St. Charles County Government

Department of Parks and Recreation  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 2, 2009**

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## **PARKS DEPARTMENT'S PRESCRIBED BURNS PROMOTE GROWTH, RESTORE NATURAL HABITAT**

*St. Charles County Parks Department* – To enhance natural environments and eliminate non-native plant species inside park boundaries, the St. Charles County Parks Department's Forestry staff will work with Missouri Master Naturalists, trained volunteers, and local Fire Protection Districts to conduct prescribed burns during optimal weather conditions from November to April. These burns will occur on the parks' prairies, glades, savannas, woodlands, forests, and wetlands areas in small portions under the careful guidance of experienced naturalists and fire management services.

Through the burning of these selected patches, the Forestry staff will enhance these areas by providing a better opportunity for the growth of seeds and root stocks of wildflowers and grass species native to Missouri. This natural process will remove the existing litter layer and non-native vegetation to allow additional sunlight to reach the forest floor and promote growth by a variety of native plants during the coming seasons. This will also result in parks that are less vulnerable to the devastation of an uncontrolled wildfire.

The use of prescribed fire, in addition to other ongoing land-management practices, allows the Parks Department to promote a diversity of natural vegetation that supports a wide variety of wildlife in our parks. Among the creatures found in County parks are deer, squirrels, and other mammals; songbirds, waterfowl, and other birds; reptiles; and native amphibians. These management activities will foster the restoration of natural communities that were once prevalent within our region.

The Forestry staff will take all necessary precautions to ensure that burns are conducted in a safe and efficient manner, when ideal weather conditions present themselves. Depending on the direction of the wind, neighbors and visitors to the park may witness smoke rising from these burn areas. Prior to the scheduled burns, staff will contact the St. Charles County Dispatch to eliminate any false notification and alert local Fire Protection Districts.

Formed in 1997 by the citizens of St. Charles County to conserve the region's environmental and historical heritage while nurturing healthy lifestyles, the Parks Department currently operates eight parks within its system — with several additional properties under development and expected to open to the public in the coming years. Located throughout St. Charles County, these parks offer open natural areas, picnic shelters, camping sites, special events facilities, fishing lakes, and much more. For information on the St. Charles County Parks Department, please call (636) 949-7535 or visit [www.stccparks.org](http://www.stccparks.org).

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