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Annual Prescribed Burns Promote Growth In St. Charles County Parks

St. Charles County, Missouri – The St. Charles County Parks Department is getting ready to conduct its annual round of prescribed burns throughout its regional parks system. Beginning in October 2013 and continuing through April 2014, it's anticipated that nearly 600 acres of park property will be burned. Weather permitting, these controlled fires are expected to take place in park forests, woodlands, savannas, prairies and wetlands and are essential to the growth of the natural habitat within the St. Charles County Parks system. On the day of a prescribed burn, a park sign will be placed at the entrance of the park to alert the community of the necessary burn.

“These essential burns promote the growth of many grass, sedge and wildflower species that have become suppressed in the dense shade of the overstory canopy and are extremely important for wildlife survival,” said Parks Director Bettie Yahn-Kramer. “The controlled fires also help to eliminate invasive and undesirable species, such as Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) on park property.”

All necessary precautions are made before prescribed burns are conducted. Personnel from the Parks Department work closely with St. Louis National Weather Service to ensure the annual burns are safe and efficient. On a daily basis, Meteorologists with the National Weather Service provide Ben Grossman, Parks Natural Resource Supervisor, with weather forecast data to determine if conditions are adequate for a park burn. Emergency workers with the St. Charles County Sheriff's Department are also notified prior to any ignition.

“The humidity and wind have to be perfect for our Natural Resource staff to even consider burning,” said Parks Director Bettie Yahn-Kramer. “Most of these park burns take place mid-morning through late afternoon.”

Anyone with questions about park prescribed burn activities should contact Ben Grossman at (636) 949-7900 x1931. For more information about St. Charles County Parks, programs and events, visit www.stccparks.org.

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