

## Are prescribed burns legal?

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is required to obtain permits from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minneapolis Fire Department. Notification is also given to police and fire departments as well as adjoining neighbors.

## What are the effects of prescribed burns on animals?

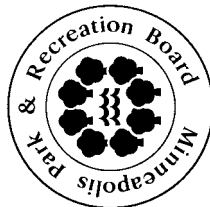
Usually only a portion of the restoration site is burned at a time, allowing safe areas for animals to move into. During prescribed burns, animals find cover by retreating into burrows, flying away or moving into adjoining areas. Prescribed burns increase the diversity of plants in restoration areas, which improves habitat for many animal species.

To learn more about our natural areas and their management, see the "Caring for our Parks" section on our website:

[www.minneapolisparks.org](http://www.minneapolisparks.org)



Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board  
Environmental Operations  
3800 Bryant Ave S  
Minneapolis MN, 55409



Environmental Operations  
[www.minneapolisparks.org](http://www.minneapolisparks.org)

(612) 230-6400

# Prescribed Burns

## Using Fire to Manage Minneapolis' Natural Areas



*Prescribed burn in progress along the Mississippi River*

**Prior to European settlement woodlands, oak savannas, prairies and wetlands dominated Minneapolis' landscape.**

Prairies, plant communities dominated by grasses and wildflowers, occurred where there was less precipitation and better drained soils. Oak savannas, the transitional plant communities that grew between open prairies and hardwood forests, consisted of scattered drought-resistant oaks and prairie grasses.

Prairie and oak savanna plant communities evolved to depend on fire for their survival. Early explorers and settlers documented that fires occurred frequently, sometimes on an annual basis. These fires were often started by lightning strikes and Native Americans as they managed game.



In the 1990's the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board began efforts to re-introduce and restore some of these



*Prescribed burn in progress*

native plant communities. The purpose of these efforts is to add variety to the landscape, create habitat for native plant and wildlife species and to provide natural spaces to recreate.

**Why is fire used to restore natural areas?**

Today prescribed burns are used as a management tool to maintain the health of native plant communities. When fire is suppressed other trees and shrubs can invade prairies and oak savannas, shading out wildflowers and grasses. Without fire these unique plant communities will eventually turn into woodlands.

Prairies in the Minneapolis Park system are generally burned every two to three years, depending on management needs and weather conditions.

**What are the benefits of prescribed burning?**

When used as a management tool, fire kills certain weeds and invading woody plants, releases dormant seeds lying in the soil and adds nutrients to the soil.

**Does prescribed burning cause pollution?**

High temperatures and the even distribution of burnable plant materials on the ground causes combustion to be quick and clean. Additionally, prescribed burns are typically done in the spring and fall when air pollution levels are normally low.

**Are prescribed burns safe?**

Park Board staff trained in wildfire management conduct the prescribed burns in natural areas throughout Minneapolis' parks. The burn crews follow an approved plan that specifies the minimum number of people on the burn crew, the safety equipment that must be on hand and the appropriate weather conditions to safely conduct a burn. Weather conditions such as temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction are taken into consideration before starting a prescribed burn.