



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Prescribed Burns for Parks' Properties**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**DES MOINES, IOWA –October 29, 2008-** Weather permitting, the Des Moines Park and Recreation Department will conduct several controlled burns over the next few months (November, December and January) at MacRae Park, Ewing Park, Gray's Lake Park, Grandview Golf Course, Grandview Park, Greenwood Park, Pioneer Park, and Tonawanda Ravine. Prescribed burning is a controlled application of fire used as a natural management tool in the parks. Weather conditions such as precipitation and wind direction will determine at which day the burns will take place. The media will be informed when the controlled burns are specifically scheduled. Maps are now available online of the park areas scheduled to be burned in the 2008-2009 season. Parks and Recreation staff asks the public to stay away from the parks during the burns. Staff would also like to assure the public that there is no reason to be alarmed when they see or smell smoke in the park burn area.

#### **Why do a prescribed burn?**

In nature, fire is essential to maintain the integrity of the native prairie and woodland plant species located in our parks. Fire is a natural occurrence that helps the plant and animal communities in a park and controlled burning offers a safer way to use

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fire in a helpful manner. The benefits of prescribed burns include:

Aid in reducing the undesirable plants from invading our prairie and woodlands

- Help maintain a rich diversity of wildflowers and grasses
- Encourage oak and other native trees to naturally regenerate in our woodlands
- Decrease threat of a wildfire by decreasing the accumulation of combustibles
- Benefit water quality by aiding in the establishment of deep-rooted natives
- Improve the natural beauty and enjoyment of our parks

#### **Who conducts the burn?**

Experienced park staff conducts the Prescribed Burns. The Parks Burn Crew has been certified in accordance with a nationally standardized testing program for professionals participating in wild-land burns. Park staff members have studied fire behavior and fire control techniques to ensure the safety of the burn crew, residents and private property.

For more information on prescribed burns in our parks, please contact the Park and Recreation Department Director, Mr. Donald M. Tripp