

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information contact:

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### **Annual Prescribed Burns in Beloit Parks**

**March 30, 2015 – Beloit, WI:** The City of Beloit Parks & Leisure Services Division will conduct their annual Prescribed Burn program in designated park sites during the two (2) weeks of April 1 - 15, 2015, depending upon weather conditions.

Historically, natural wildfires played a very important role in shaping the natural prairie grassland that once covered over two million acres of Wisconsin. Today, less than 12,000 scattered acres still exist, and the use of Prescribed Burning Programs helps protect and maintain these natural prairie grassland areas.

The purpose of prescribed burns is multi-faceted and provides the following benefits:

- Reduces the amount of dead and dying plant material that hinders new plant growth in the spring.
- Recycles nutrients from old plant growth for use by growing plants.
- Promotes germination, growth, and flowering of native plants.
- Increases the diversity of native plant life.
- Controls encroachment of woody brush and trees into grasslands, including invasive species such as garlic mustard.

Prescribed Burn areas are generally conducted in the spring after snow melt and/or in the fall after leaf fall has concluded. These designated sites are typically burned on a 2-5 year interval, and in some cases annually to prevent overgrowth of a defined area.

This year, the Parks Division will only conduct prescribed burns in the following designated locations:

- Harper's Prairie (aka West Side Detention Pond), located at 2201 Whipple Street.
- Stateline Restoration Prairie, located at 540 Colby Street.
- Big Hill Park, located at 1101 Big Hill Road.
- Various areas in Riverside Park, located at 1160 Riverside Drive
- Water Tower Park, located at 1002 White Avenue

Consistent with practices as developed and conducted by the Wisconsin DNR and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, each park site is appropriately supervised and monitored by trained staff or volunteers from the City's Parks Division. These prescribed burns will only be conducted under the appropriate weather conditions, as safety is the top concern in implementation of this practiced program. If weather conditions are not

appropriate for these prescribed burns, they will be postponed until a later date when the weather conditions are considered acceptable for this practice.

Additional information regarding these prescribed burns may be obtained by calling the Parks & Leisure Services Administrative Office at (608) 364-2929.

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