



Lindberg Park – Prairie Trial Gardens Prescribed Burn Fact Sheet

An Initiative of the Park District of Oak Park's Greening Advisory Committee

Project Summary

In the late winter/early spring (February - April) The Park District of Oak Park will conduct a prescribed burn of the prairie trial gardens for the purpose of improving the health of the plantings and educating the community about the role fire plays in maintaining the health of native plant communities such as prairie, savanna, and woodland.

The prescribed burn will be conducted by certified staff and volunteers with the Oak Park Fire Department on site for the duration of the burn. The areas immediately surrounding the trial gardens will be closed to the public, however the public is invited to observe from a safe distance. The Park District anticipates the closure from approximately 9 AM till 3 PM however, it will open immediately upon the cessation of the prescribed burn.

Conducting a prescribed burn is weather dependent and will only occur within the parameters for wind speed, wind direction, and relative humidity. Snow or ice cover and moisture level of the dead vegetation are also considered.

Required permits from the IL Environmental Protection Agency and Cook County Department of Environmental Control will be obtained. These permits require public notification. In addition, the Park District hosted a community meeting.

The introduction of prescribed fire into the Prairie Gardens is the first step in improving the health and beauty of this prairie reconstruction.

Fire & Native Plant Communities

All native plant communities of northeastern Illinois - wetland, woodland, savanna, and prairie - require regular fire to remain healthy. Historically these ecosystems burned due to anthropogenic (human caused) and natural (lightning) reasons. In the absence of fire, these communities lose their balance and become unhealthy. Coupled with the introduction of non-native plant species, native plant communities, along with the birds and butterflies that depend on them, are lost.

Many non-native species did not evolve with regular fire. As a result, prescribed fire is one tool for controlling the spread of them. After outright destruction to roads, buildings, farms, etc. the invasion by non-native species is the greatest threat to native plant communities.

The Lindberg Prairie Trial Gardens constitute a prairie reconstruction and therefore requires occasional fire to succeed. Many non-native plant species are present. It has never been burned.

How Do You Control a Burn?

The ground surrounding the trial gardens is either inflammable sidewalk or green grass. Burn crew members will be stationed along a perimeter with water tanks and flappers in the event fire creeps outward from the burn unit.

For Further Information

On Wednesday, January 20, 2010 a community information meeting was held regarding the Lindberg Park Prescribed Burn. Doug Chien, a member of the Park District Greening Advisory Committee who is certified as a Prescribed Burn Manager, presented information and answered questions regarding the Lindberg Park Prescribed Burn. To review this presentation visit oakparkparks.com, select About Us, then select Green Initiatives.

Greening Advisory Committee

This project is an initiative of the Park District of Oak Park's Greening Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of citizen volunteers and Park District staff members who monitor and contribute to the Park District's environmental activities and oversee the implementation of the PDOP's Environmental Policy. For more information on this committee, contact Henrietta Yardley at (708) 725-2450 or henriettay@oakparkparks.com

Timeline

Prescribed Burn Permit Application	December, 2009
Community Information Meeting	January 20, 2010
Secure Burn Permit	early February, 2010
Prescribed Burn	Sometime between mid-February and the end of April, depending on weather conditions