

News Release

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Prescribed burns planned in Toronto's High Park and Lambton Park this spring to sustain threatened habitat

The City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation division will conduct prescribed (controlled) burns in High Park and Lambton Park in early to mid April as part of a long-term management plan to protect and sustain Toronto's rare black oak savannahs.

Urban Forestry staff will monitor weather conditions and set the date for the burns when ideal weather conditions are expected. Staff will announce the exact date and time at least 24 hours before the burn.

A prescribed burn is a deliberately set and carefully controlled fire that burns low to the ground and consumes dried leaves, small twigs and grass stems, but does not harm larger trees. Urban Forestry has been safely executing prescribed burns in Toronto parks for more than a decade. Prescribed burns are part of the City's long-term management plan to protect and sustain Toronto's rare black oak woodlands and savannahs in High Park, Lambton Park and South Humber Park. These rare vegetation communities are at risk of extinction not only in Toronto but throughout North America.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation hired a Fire Boss with extensive prescribed burning experience to create the 2017 burn plans and implement them with assistance from City staff. Toronto Fire Services and the police have been notified and will assist if required.

In the months following the burn, City staff, scientists, naturalists and volunteers from the community will monitor and analyze the beneficial effects of the burn and implement additional forest management techniques as required. The techniques may include measures such as invasive species control, planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses, and ongoing site maintenance.

Under ideal weather conditions, the smoke from the prescribed burns will lift and not affect surrounding neighbourhoods. It is possible, however, that some smoke will reach residential areas near the parks. Individuals with asthma and those who are highly sensitive to poison ivy should limit their exposure to the smoke by staying inside and keeping windows closed. Some people may choose to leave the general area of the park on the day of the burn if concerned about the smoke.

For safety reasons, park users with dogs should keep them on-leash even in off-leash areas near burn zones. The public will be restricted from entering areas that are being burned. Park users should expect limited access along some of the dogs-off-leash trails on the day of the burn. Residents and visitors should anticipate some temporary road closures in High Park and reduced parking spaces at both locations. Urban Forestry

staff will place notices at entrances to both parks and in the surrounding community to notify users when the burn will take place.

More information is available at <http://www.toronto.ca/trees>.

Toronto is Canada's largest city, the fourth largest in North America, and home to a diverse population of about 2.8 million people. It is a global centre for business, finance, arts and culture and is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities. In 2017, Toronto will honour Canada's 150th birthday with "TO Canada with Love," a year-long program of celebrations, commemorations and exhibitions. For information on non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can visit <http://www.toronto.ca>, call 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/TorontoComms> and on Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/cityofto>.

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