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## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HOUSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT TO MANAGE PRAIRIE HABITAT AT SYLVAN RODRIGUEZ PARK WITH PRESCRIBED BURN**

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) is collaborating with the Houston Fire Department (HFD) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to conduct a prescribed fire within a portion of the restored prairie at Sylvan Rodriguez Park.

In 2019, HPARD began habitat restoration within a 70-acre section of Sylvan Rodriguez Park, clearing the invasive Chinese tallow trees and replacing them with over 14,000 native prairie grasses and wildflowers that have been grown in the HPARD greenhouse.

Prescribed fire is a useful tool in managing prairie habitat. It reduces undesirable woody plants and supports the growth of native vegetation. The prescribed fire will aid in reducing potential fire threats from accumulating vegetation and will reduce the wildland fire threat to the surrounding residential community.

**The prescribed fire is scheduled between February 13-March 10, weather permitting.**

HFD's wildland firefighters will be performing and overseeing the entire prescribed fire to establish continuity and the swift mitigation of potential life safety hazards. HFD will also be coordinating with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Houston Health Department to establish clean air (atmospheric) monitoring during the prescribed fire.

"Prescribed fire is a useful tool to help our department manage the over 17,000 acres of natural habitat in our park system. Our partnership with HFD and TPWD helps us to meet our habitat goals, while keeping our adjacent residents safe," said Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

During the burn period, individuals may see smoke in their area or on nearby roads. HFD is requesting citizens near the burn site to refrain from calling 911. HFD cautions drivers to reduce their speed, use headlights when smoke is present, and always pay attention to posted reduced speed limits. Nearby roadways and trails may be posted with signs indicating, "prescribed fire ahead."

For more information and updates about the HFD's and HPARD's controlled burn please visit:

<https://houstontx.gov/parks/naturalresources.html>.

For information on Wildland Fire Management and prescribed fire please visit:

[https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/wildland\\_fire\\_management/](https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/wildland_fire_management/).

**About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department**

*The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages 382 parks and over 39,501 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).*