

Prescribed Fire Helps Preserve Earthen Fort Stones River National Battlefield, Tennessee National Fire Plan - Rehabilitation

Stones River National Battlefield employees, along with wildland firefighters from Natchez Trace Parkway, conducted a prescribed burn at Fortress Rosecrans at Old Fort Park in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on Tuesday April 5, 2005. The project was a success, due to the cooperation of the National Park Service and local community agencies. City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County firefighters assisted with several fire engines. Representatives from the National Weather Service out of Nashville also participated in an effort to learn about the weather needs of fire personnel. The burn produced significant challenges for everyone involved since the project was centered in the wildland-urban interface.



Igniting the Fortress Rosecrans Prescribed Fire.

In order to facilitate the ongoing prairie restoration work at Stones River, the Fortress Rosecrans burn was conducted to promote the growth of native grasses planted at the earthworks. These grass species help stabilize the earthen fort that was built in 1863 following the battle of Stones River. The grasses have deep root systems that hold the soil in place and reduce erosion. Fire also helps reduce encroachment by woody plants and some invasive exotic plants. Fire effects monitoring plots installed in the burn unit will allow managers to determine the success of fire in facilitating the restoration process.

Fortress Rosecrans was one of the largest earthen forts constructed during the Civil War. It served as a supply depot for the Union Army as it moved south to Chattanooga and Atlanta. The fort originally covered about 200 acres; about 30 acres remain, including the area at Old Fort Park, one remnant along the Lytle Creek Greenway, Redoubt Brannan on West College Street, and a segment along Manson Pike.

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