

mately 1,000 acres or more) prescribed burns on the state's diverse Ozarks terrain of forest, hills, valleys and glades.

On this recent, much larger scale burn, all three agencies joined to manage approximately 11 miles of fireline. Eight miles of fireline were within the boundaries of Peck Ranch CA, causing a temporary closure of the burn area to the public during these activities.

Aerial ignition burning was used, according to Mabry, because it allowed area managers to safely light the fire from above and spread it over a larger area. Staff on the ground managed firelines that encompassed the area of the burn.

"These firelines are prepped manually with chainsaws, blowers and hand crews with the objective to move any large fuel away from the firelines," said Mabry. "Removing standing dead trees close to the fireline helps keep the fire within our prescribed boundaries."

According to Director of Fire Management Blane Heuman with TNC, approximately 105 acres of the Conservancy's Thorny Mountain nature preserve were included in the prescribed burn. An additional 895 acres of TNC and MDC lands adjacent to the larger 4,000-acre burn were already successfully burned over the winter months. That burn on the southwest face of

Thorny Mountain was completed under the direction of a TNC "Burn Boss" and staffed with experienced teams from TNC's fire program in Arkansas, from MDC and from the NPS.

"This area of black, already burned leaf litter and grass fuels served as the northeast boundary of the larger planned burn on Monday, improving the safety of the larger fire operation," Heuman said.

According to Acting Superintendent of ONSR Bill Black, maintaining healthy fire-dependent glades and woodlands is essential for stabilizing wildlife populations that depend on these habitats, and will improve the public's opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of wildlife.

"The NPS is proud to work in cooperation with Missouri Department of Conservation and The Nature Conservancy in order to maximize safety and ef-

ficiency while accomplishing a project of this magnitude," said Black. "In addition, prescribed burning will help reduce the accumulation of hazardous fuels and therefore reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire in the future."

## Waterfowl say it's spring as they head north

A bonanza for wildlife watchers is at hand as hundreds of thousands of snow geese and other waterfowl are stopping at wetlands and lakes as they head north to summer breeding grounds.

"We're right in the peak of the snow goose migration," said Andy Raedeke, a waterfowl biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC).

Snow goose numbers at the Squaw Creek National Wildlife



"Courtesy Missouri Department of Conservation"