

# Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan Fact Sheet

December 16, 2010

During recent years, prairie burning in the Flint Hills of Kansas has caused exceedances of the federal air quality standard for ozone in Kansas City and Wichita. Exceedances of the ozone standard may cause those areas to be designated nonattainment (not meeting air quality standards). In addition to the health concerns associated with the elevated ozone concentrations, such a designation can result in new regulations and can be harmful to economic development. To address these concerns, KDHE met with interested and affected parties to draft a Smoke Management Plan (SMP) to reduce the air pollution impacts from spring prairie burning.

Three public meetings and additional work group meetings in 2010 resulted in preparation of the Plan. Stakeholders included ranchers, K-State faculty and staff, KSU Extension Agents, agricultural and environmental organizations, local and state fire officials, academics and researchers, as well as state and federal environmental officials.

Key elements of the Smoke Management Plan include

- Voluntary measures to reduce emissions from prescribed burning of rangeland in the Flint Hills counties.
- A website with:
  - a predictive, decision-making tool for producers and local fire officials. The tool will assist in predicting smoke plume movement and impacts.
  - fire management practices including:
    - techniques for smoke management based on burn timing, transport winds, mixing height, dispersion;
    - proper evaluation of humidity, fuel and soil moisture, temperature;
    - and practical and current information about ignition and burn techniques.
- A comprehensive fire data collection effort to characterize prairie burning including ambient air monitoring, use of satellite imagery, and a post burn season survey.
- Restrictions on open burning during April in the Flint Hills plus Wyandotte, Johnson and Sedgwick Counties, while still allowing for prairie or Conservation Reserve Program burning. Case-by-case exceptions may also be granted by local fire officials or KDHE.
- Extensive outreach and education efforts, including a web site, fire training programs, booklets, and media exposure.

KDHE encourages ranchers and interested parties to participate in implementing the Smoke Management Plan in several different ways. There will be opportunities to:

- participate in developing a regulation restricting non-prairie burning during April in certain counties;
- attend a prescribed fire training program;
- pass on information to friends, neighbors and local officials;
- provide input and feedback on the web site, tools and fire management practices; and
- supply burn information to your local fire official for the data collection effort.

In addition, a Pilot Project will be undertaken during the Spring of 2011 in Greenwood and Chase counties in order to see if the predictive computer modeling tool and fire management practices contained in the SMP are useful to Flint Hills land managers.