

## Frequently Asked Questions About the Application of Prescribed Fire



- **Why is prescribed fire being utilized?**  
*Occasional fires are an important tool to help maintain the health of the prairie plantings.*
- **How does fire help the natural vegetation? Fire helps to:**
  - *Recycle the nutrients stored in dead plant stems and leaves;*
  - *Stimulate growth of new shoots on existing plants*
  - *Increase flowering*
  - *Stimulate germination of prairie seeds in the soil;*
  - *Assist with control undesirable plants; and*
  - *Improve wildlife habitat.*
- **Will the fire harm wildlife?**  
*Wildlife will move from the site or find areas such as burrows to hide from the fire. It is true that in rare instances an animal is overrun by the fire before it can find safe haven: this is the rare exception rather than a common occurrence. Biologists plan the timing and type of fires to minimize risks wildlife, or their nests. For the long-term, fire benefits animals by maintaining or improving the overall wildlife habitat. On the day of the burn, there will be a lot of human activity in the area. This will encourage animals to leave temporarily, and find a hiding place in adjacent habitats.*
- **Are there alternatives to using fire?**  
*There are some other vegetation management tools that are often integrated with prescribed fire. Because prairie is adapted to fire, the use of fire is important to provide a full range of benefits to vegetation. The most common tools integrated with fire are mowing, interseeding, and the spot application of herbicides. Because fire provides unique benefits to native plants, it is applied with specific goals in mind for each managed site.*
- **How will smoke from the fire be managed?**  
*When getting ready for the burn, biologists create a plan that outlines what conditions must be present to manage smoke. Through proper planning and selection of wind direction, efforts are made to plan for smoke rising away from homes, roads, and other sensitive areas.*
- **Who will conduct the prescribed burn?**  
*Prescribed fires are planned by experienced professionals who identify ahead of time the conditions necessary to safely conduct a prescribed fire. These include environmental factors such as air temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction. Other important aspects of planning include the number of people and types of equipment that will be on-hand at the burn, as well as what order the events will take place in.*
- **What will we see after the burn is completed? How fast will the area green up again?**  
*Immediately after the burn, the ground will be black. With adequate moisture, there is generally new plant growth within one to two weeks. In some instances, supplemental seeding is performed at this time to improve vegetation quality, increase the amount of flowers, and the long-term stability of an area.*