



## **Kansas Forest Service**

2610 Claflin Rd.  
Manhattan, KS 66502-2798  
(785) 532-3300  
fax: (785) 532-3305  
[kfs@k-state.edu](mailto:kfs@k-state.edu)  
[www.kansasforests.org](http://www.kansasforests.org)

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### **Kansas Forest Service to conduct planned burn March 20-26 in Hutchinson**

MANHATTAN, Kan. – The Kansas Forest Service fire staff will conduct planned burns March 20-26 as part of its 12th annual Hazardous Fuels Mitigation Project. In this case, the fuel is accumulated brush in the Hutchinson, Kansas area. This is the second year in a row this project has been located in Hutchinson.

The burns are planned for Sand Hills State Park, Prairie Dunes Country Club, and Dillon Nature Center. The purpose of the project is fuel reduction on public lands where adjacent life or property could be harmed in the event of a wildfire.

The Hutchinson area was chosen because of its susceptibility to wildfire.

“The area has had some of the largest and most destructive wildfires in Kansas,” said Eric Ward, fire planning specialist with the Kansas Forest Service. “However, this area’s natural prairie habitat is fire dependent.”

“By using prescribed fire as a tool under predetermined weather and fuel conditions, fire officials will be able to burn hazardous fuels that have accumulated,” said Ward, who is serving as the incident commander for the project. “This will also reduce the threat of unplanned or escaped fire during high fire danger times.”

The project will be managed by nationally-certified wildland firefighters from Kansas and surrounding states. Hutchinson Community College fire science students will also participate to further their classroom training by preparing and participating in an actual fire situation.

Run like a national wildfire incident with the Incident Management System in place, this event has attracted qualified firefighters from four states and 18 different agencies. This interagency and interstate collaboration will help the firefighters further their skills and prepare the HCC students for wildland fire positions after graduation.

Community officials, public safety officials and media are invited to take part in a VIP day on March 23. The day will begin with a briefing at the Hutchinson Community College Fire Science building at 10 a.m., followed by a tour of project work areas.

To view updates throughout the week, check the Kansas Forest Service website:  
[http://www.kansasforests.org/fire\\_management/mitigation.html](http://www.kansasforests.org/fire_management/mitigation.html).

The fuels mitigation project is funded by the Kansas Forest Service fire program. The Kansas Forest Service receives its funding in the form of grants from the United States Forest Service.

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