

Landowners participating in this initiative will be asked to sign a “Wildlife Habitat Agreement,” designating acres and location of treatment. The work may be accomplished by the landowner, or payment can be made directly to an approved contractor. KDWP will pay for 100 percent of approved tree removal. The landowner must agree to maintain the initiative for a period of five years by conducting at least two prescribed burns and using prescribed grazing techniques developed by NRCS, KDWP, or other entity agreed to by both KDWP and the landowner. Treatment acres may not exceed 5 percent tree canopy coverage. Payment is limited to \$4,000 per landowner.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks  
Regional Offices:

### **KDWP**

6232 E 29th St. North  
Wichita, KS 67220  
(316) 683-8069

### **KDWP**

1500 W 7th, PO Box 777  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 431-0380

# Prairie Chicken Initiative



## Improving Kansas Prairie Chicken Habitat

A cooperative program by the  
Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks.



Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave. Suite 200, Topeka, KS 66612-1327 02/08

The distribution and numbers of prairie chickens in the Kansas Flint Hills have declined over the last 25 years. In some areas, declines have exceeded 80 percent. The Prairie Chicken Initiative is a Kansas Wildlife and Parks Program that will address this issue by providing specific funds and technical assistance to private landowners to improve habitat for this prairie bird. This Initiative will also partner with other agencies and programs, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners For Wildlife Program, both of which provide federal funds for private land.

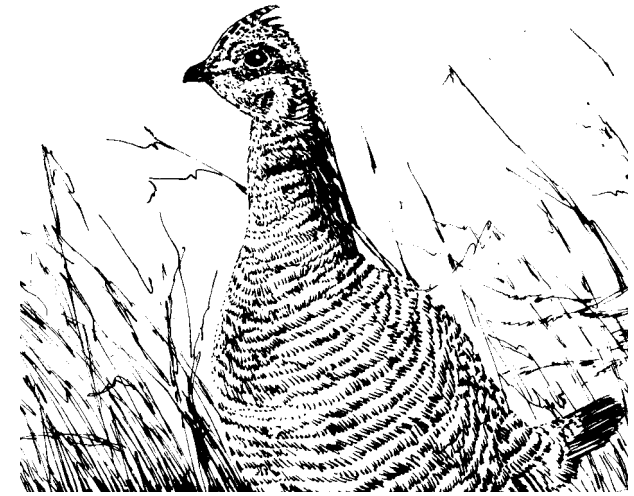
The greater prairie chicken is a native bird linked to the tallgrass prairie found in eastern and central Kansas. The Flint Hills and Smoky Hills areas remain strongholds for this bird. Conservationists view the prairie chicken as a "keystone" species of the prairie ecosystem. As habitat improves for the prairie chicken, many other important but less recognized species of birds and wildlife will benefit.

## THE ISSUES

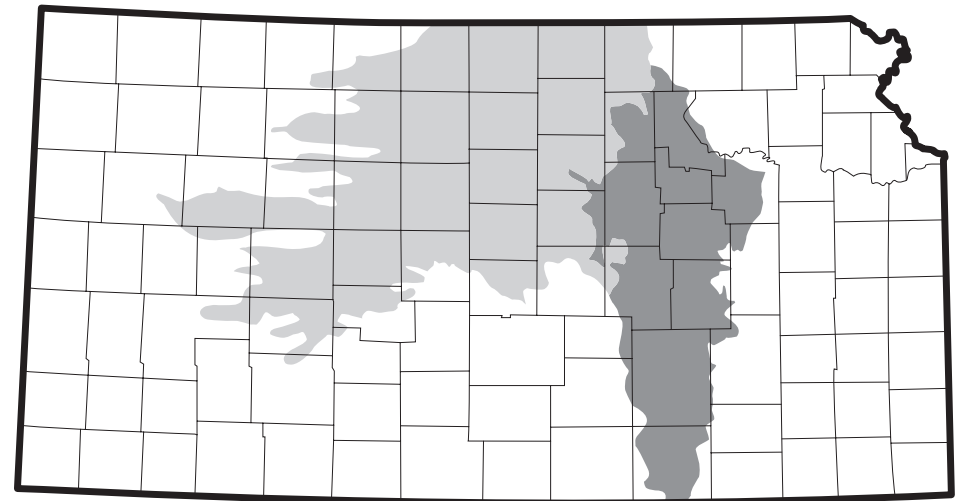
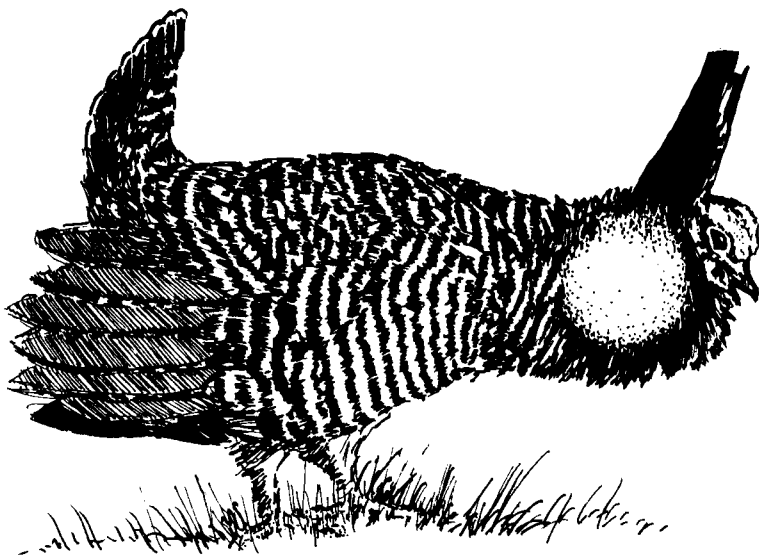
Several factors influence prairie chicken habitat and populations. A major negative factor is widespread annual burning and intensive early stocking of livestock. This range management practice removes all residual grass cover just prior to nesting. The lack of good nesting cover makes it difficult for a prairie chicken to successfully hatch and rear young.

On the other end of the spectrum, lack of fire can result in woody species invading native grasslands. Tree invasion into the prairie is an obvious blight, and the eradication of trees is costly. Trees provide habitat for numerous predators so their presence in a grassland landscape can increase predation of prairie chicken nests, young, and adults. Research has shown that vertical structures reduce prairie chicken use of the surrounding grassland for up to a mile in some cases. Just a few trees spread over the landscape can greatly influence prairie chicken use of an area.

Because trees are so detrimental to prairie chickens, the Prairie Chicken Initiative will pay



for the removal of trees on private land. To be eligible for the program, the property must lie within the established prairie chicken range in southeastern and south central Kansas. Priority will be given to prairies near active booming grounds or "leks".



■ Smoky Hills ■ Flint Hills