

## Overview

- The primary regional objective is to develop local fire-grazing partnerships and assess alternatives to creating a social infrastructure that supports prescribed burning. In general, landscapes are overwhelmingly privately owned grasslands used for livestock production. Although the region is culturally very anti-fire, altered fire regimens have allowed an increase in woody species, primarily eastern redcedar, which reduces forage production. There is wide concern about this problem, and growing willingness to consider “fire as a tool” to address it.
- There are two anchor sites, the Iowa Loess Hills and Nebraska Middle Niobrara-Sandhills, dating to 2002. Eight other landscapes currently are engaged.

## Partners

The major federal FLN partners have a small presence on the Great Plains, because more than 95% of the area is privately owned. Therefore, each site has assembled a unique group of local partners, always including landowners, who in most cases are livestock grazers primarily interested in maintaining or improving rangeland productivity.

In addition to landowners, local non-TNC partners include volunteer fire departments, state game agencies, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, prescribed-burning cooperatives, state universities and their cooperative extension arms, and other conservation-minded non-profits.

The inclusion of willing local partners is especially important in the region because at most sites the culture is extremely anti-fire, an attitude that developed out of experience with wildfires during frontier times. Thus, a major hurdle at most sites is simply getting people to consider fire as a constructive tool to maintain ecological and economic values. Once that barrier is overcome and local people see the benefits of prescribed fire, interest has been seen to rapidly grow.

## Products

- FRCC models for grass- and woodland vegetation types
- Fire Management Plans
- Fire crews to assist private-land burning
- Implementation and management plans
- Research on fire effects and frequency
- Loess Hills grassbank pilot project
- Patch-burn/grazing models for Flint Hills

## Education & Outreach

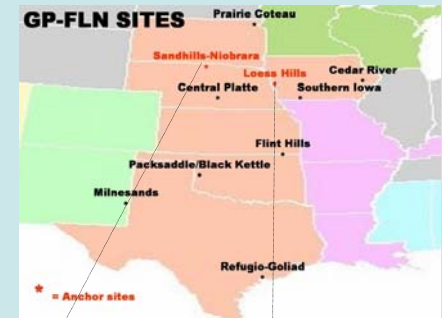
- “Fire as a Tool” video showing collaborative approach to private-lands fire
- Brochures
- Demo burns and field days
- Training opportunities
- Equipment caches
- Farm show displays
- Partner outreach to willing landowners
- Demonstration of “patch burning/grazing” model



## Regional Fire Learning Network

### Member Sites – Acres in Millions

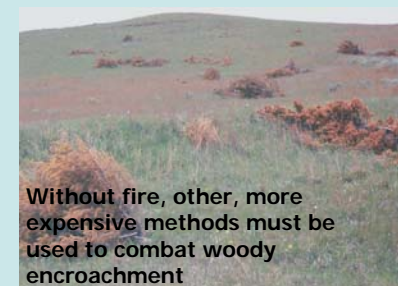
- The Greater Flint Hills – 4.90
- The Central Platte River – 2.10
- The Prairie Coteau Partnership – 1.00
- Milnesands – 0.20
- The Lower Cedar River – 0.23
- Packsaddle/Black Kettle – 0.35
- Refugio-Goliad – 0.30
- Southern Iowa Oak Savanna - new!
- The Iowa Loess Hills - 0.65
- The Middle Niobrara-Sandhills – 13.00



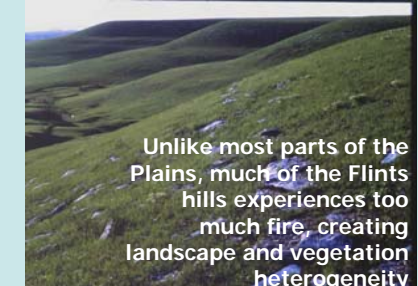
Ponderosa pine and eastern redcedar encroachment on Sandhills prairie



Prescribed burning to maintain upland prairies in the Loess Hills



Without fire, other, more expensive methods must be used to combat woody encroachment



Unlike most parts of the Plains, much of the Flints hills experiences too much fire, creating landscape and vegetation heterogeneity

## Restoring Fire Adapted Ecosystems

A collaborative project designed to strengthen partnerships across the landscape, accelerate ecosystem restoration at high-priority fire-adapted landscapes, and to transfer lessons learned at the landscape scale.

