

National Fire Plan

Small Diameter Utilization



Kansas - The National Fire Plan through Community Assistance and State and Private Forestry contributed nearly \$100,000 in funding to the Kansas State Forest Service to build Utilization and Marketing partnerships with the Kansas State Cooperative extension service, eight Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils in Kansas, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Currently, there is an overabundance of small diameter trees and dense thickets of vegetation, which create staggered levels of flammable material in the forest called fuel ladders. These conditions can lead to severe wildland fires. By removing the small diameter trees and thickets, the risk of wildland fire is reduced and overall forest health improves. The small diameter trees are chipped and used for fuel for electrical generation. Sawmills can also use those small diameter trees, which benefits the local economy.

In the Kansas, the focus will be placed on eastern red cedar and Osage orange, both of which are currently viewed by most residents and landowners as "weed trees." An increase in both species warrants serious market consideration. In many cases, landowners are paying to have these species removed to reduce hazardous fuels and wildland fire risk without generating a positive cash flow or recovering the costs. These new partnerships will create markets for small diameter trees so that both the landowner and the forests benefit.

Kansas also received an additional \$80,000 of funding in 2001 from the National Fire Plan to provide financial and technical assistance to rural homeowners and landowners, and to rural fire departments and fire districts (RFD's). Assistance consists of equipping and training RFD's to provide effective initial attack on wildland fires that threaten lives, property, and other resources in the rural areas of Kansas. The funds are also being used to adapt FIREWISE principles for Kansas' residents.

For additional information on the National Fire Plan, visit www.fireplan.gov