

## Frequently Asked Questions about the application of prescribed fire



### ❑ Why is Ashton Pointe planning a prescribed fire?

*Prairies like this were native to the area at the time of settlement over 100 years ago. Occasional fires are necessary to maintain the health of the prairie plantings.*

*Native plants and prairie are adapted to periodic fire. For some communities such as prairies and oak savannas, fire is essential to maintaining the health of the plant community. When the original prairie vegetation covered much of the Midwest, fires were started by lightning, and more commonly by Native Americans.*

### ❑ 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;*
- *Control undesirable plants; and*
- *Improve wildlife habitat.*

### ❑ Will the fire harm wildlife?

*Wildlife can either move from the site or find areas such as burrows to hide from the fire. Biologists plan the timing and type of fires to minimize the chance of harming 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 prairie. This will encourage animals to leave temporarily, and find a hiding place in adjacent habitats.*

### ❑ Are there alternatives to using fire?

*There are some alternatives to the application of prescribed fire. The two most commonly used practices are mowing and the application of herbicides. Mowing achieves some results similar to fire but not all, and is less effective than fire for seeding preparation and invasive brush management. Herbicide application could be used to spot control some weeds, but this does not provide the benefits that prescribed fire does over the whole area.*

### ❑ How will smoke from the fire be managed?

*Biologists that plan the prescribed burn plan to minimize the risk of smoke impacting homes, street traffic and businesses. Because the prairie area at Ashton Pointe is in such close proximity to homes, there may be some smoke from the fire that reaches neighborhoods. The contractor will manage the fire in the best manner practicable to minimize the amount of smoke reaching the neighborhood. We recommend that you keep windows closed during daytime hours on the day that the prescribed burn is planned. **If you would like to be notified the day before the prescribed burn, please provide your email address and request for notification to our property manager via her email address: [cyndy.rath@knappproperties.com](mailto:cyndy.rath@knappproperties.com).***

### ❑ How much planning goes into conducting a prescribed prairie burn?

*Prescribed fires are planned by experienced professional staff. They prescribe conditions necessary to safely conduct a prescribed fire, including 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. A prescribed burn plan is prepared that summarizes these conditions, and is submitted to reviewing public agency staff, where required to obtain a permit.*

### **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. Within five to ten days, you should see new plant growth. Prescribed fire rejuvenates prairie plants and typically results in increased flowering and color for 2-4 years after a burn is conducted.*