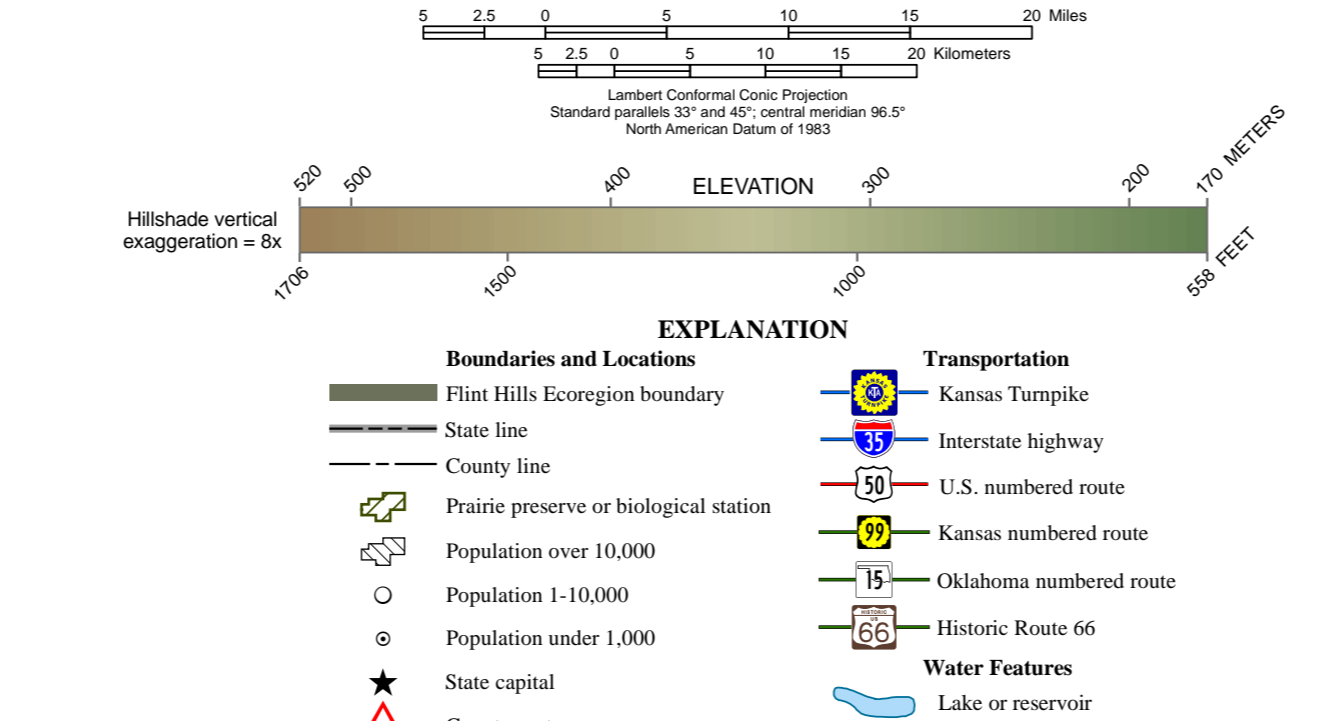


Map produced by the Kansas Geological Survey's Cartographic Services unit. Map data from the Kansas Data Access and Support Center (KDASC), the Oklahoma Center for Geospatial Information, and the Oklahoma Center for Spatial Analysis, and KGS.

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BACKGROUND

The following discussion is summarized from Chapman et al. (2001).

The Flint Hills Ecoregion, the largest remaining intact tallgrass prairie in the Great Plains and the western edge of the Permian shale and cherty limestone, and rocky soils. Climate is marked by humid, wet summers and average annual precipitation of 28 to 35 inches. Erosion of the softer limestones has left the more resistant chert (flint) on the surface, producing the area's coarse soils. This rocky surface, with its steep slopes, is difficult to plow; consequently, the region has historically supported very little cropland agriculture (Chapman et al., 2001). The natural tallgrass prairie is still intact in most of the ecoregion and is used for range and pasture land. However, some cropland agriculture has been implemented in river valleys and along the periphery of the Flint Hills, especially in the northwest corner where the topography is more level.

Ecoregions are areas that are similar in ecosystems and environmental resources; they are a way of mapping, studying, assessing, managing, and monitoring ecosystems and ecosystem components in a given area (Chapman et al., 2001). The Flint Hills Ecoregion boundary is based on the premise that ecological regions can be identified through the analysis of the patterns that reflect differences in ecosystem quality and integrity, including geology, physiography, vegetation, climate, soils, land use, wildlife, and hydrology (Wilken, 1986; Omernik, 1987, 1995).

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