



1320 Research Park Drive  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

## **MINUTES OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. The State Conservation Commission meeting was called to order by Rod Vorhees, Chairman and Area V Commissioner at 10:25 a.m., Monday, August 10, 2015, at the Sleep Inn, 201 E Holme St., Norton, Kansas.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

**Elected Commissioners:**

Ted Nighswonger, Area I Commissioner  
Brad Shogren, Area III Commissioner  
John Wunder, Area IV Commissioner  
Rod Vorhees, Area V Commissioner

**Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:**

Eric Banks, State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Peter Tomlinson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Specialist for Environmental Quality Agronomy Department, Kansas State University (KSU)  
Terry Medley, P.E., Water Structures Program Manager, Kansas Department of Agriculture

**Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:**

Greg Foley, Executive Director  
Scott Carlson, Assistant Director  
Don Jones, Water Quality Program Manager  
Steve Frost, Administrative Manager

**Guests:**

Herb Graves, Executive Director, State Association of Kansas Watersheds (SAKW)

## **SCC MEETING MINUTES**

**August 10, 2015**

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### **3. ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

#### **ADDITIONS:**

- 7. b. Conservation District Program Coordinator
- c. Invitation to Governor's Luncheon at the State Fair Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 8. d. Conservation Reserve Program – Grasslands Initiative.

**Motion by Ted Nighswonger to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Brad Shogren. Motion carried.**

### **4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:**

**Motion by Brad Shogren to approve the May 12, 2015 minutes, as mailed. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.**

### **5. COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:**

- a. Herb Graves. – Herb discussed the recent legislation pertaining to Watershed Districts mitigation requirement and conservation easements.

### **6. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

- a. FY 2015 quarterly financial report. See Attachment A. – Steve Frost.

### **7. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a. Administrative Specialist position – Greg Foley.
- b. Conservation District Program Coordinator position – Greg Foley.
- c. Invitation to Governor's Luncheon at the State Fair Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> – Greg Foley.

### **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. Discussion on the next regular Commission meeting scheduled on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 9:00 am at the Pride of Kansas Building, Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson, KS – Greg Foley.
- b. Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas update – Greg Foley.
- c. Update on Division of Conservation Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). See Attachment B. – staff.

## SCC MEETING MINUTES

August 10, 2015

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- d. Conservation District Financial Management – Scott Carlson.

### 9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion on budget guidance and direction for FY 2017 and Kansas Water Authority Recommendations – Greg Foley.
- b. Discuss options to assist Kansas Watershed Districts with conservation easement requirements under 404 permitting – Greg Foley.
- c. Discuss local property taxation limitations beginning in 2018 and other legislative updates. See Attachment C. – Greg Foley.
- d. Review the new USDA Grasslands Initiative and approve adding state cost-share incentives to increase participation – See Attachment D. – Don Jones.
- e. Approve Commissioner and staff travel – Rod Vorhees.
  - i. Approve staff attendance at the 2015 National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) annual meeting in Corpus Christ, TX, September 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. See handout.

**Motion by Brad Shogren to approve staff attendance at the 2015 National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) annual meeting in Corpus Christi, TX on September 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.**

- f. Review allocation plan/strategy of FY 2015 carry forward funds to FY 2016 – Don Jones.
  - i. Water Resources

**Motion by Ted Nighswonger to reallocate \$148,102 of Water Resources carry-forward funds to Conservation Districts based on the District Needs Allocation formula. Seconded by John Wunder. Motion carried.**

- ii. Non-Point Source

**Motion by Ted Nighswonger to reallocate \$321,083 of Non-Point Source carry-forward funds to fund stream bank projects in the Cottonwood Watershed. These projects have already been designed. Second by Brad Shogren. Motion carried.**

### 10. REPORTS:

- a. Agency Reports:
  - i. NRCS – Eric Banks. - See Attachment E.

## SCC MEETING MINUTES

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- ii. K-State Agronomy – Peter Tomlinson. See Attachment F.
  - iii. Kansas Department of Agriculture, Water Structures Program Manager – Terry Medley – Introduced himself as the new Water Structures Program Manager and gave an update on the status of the HUD NDRC grant application as well as that they are advertising for two dam safety engineers.
- b. Staff reports:
- i. Greg Foley reported on Vision planning process wrapping up.
  - ii. Scott Carlson reported on Agriland and the Leopold Award. See Attachment G.
  - iii. Don Jones reported on Streambank work group recommendations – See Attachment H.
- c. Commissioner Reports:
- i. Area I – Ted Nighswonger. Reported appreciation for everyone who attended the SCC/KACD Joint meeting and the help from the Graham County Conservation District, NRCS Staff and his wife.
  - ii. Area III – Brad Shogren. Reported on the innovative streambank projects along the Smoky Hill which are now being completed and showing promise.
  - iii. Area IV – John Wunder. Reported appreciation of cards and donations of his father who recently passed away.
  - iv. Area V – Rod Vorhees. Reported that maintaining continuity between the SCC and the KACD is very important in regard to the Spring Workshops and Fall Meetings. Input could be collected in the upcoming meetings about maintaining the current regimen of Spring and Fall meetings. He also reported on the recent meeting of the KACD Endowment Committee.

## 11. ADJOURN:

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2015 at 9:00 am at the Pride of Kansas Building, Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson, KS.

**Motion by Ted Nighswonger to adjourn. Seconded by Brad Shogren. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.**



Greg A. Foley  
Executive Director

**DIVISION OF CONSERVATION, KDA - FY 2015 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**JANUARY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015**

1

	PROGRAM/FUND	INDEX	Appropriation/ Allocation	Total Expenditures	% of Funds Expended	Funds	UNCOMMITTED BALANCE
						Committed/	
						Encumbered-Contingent	
1.	STATE GENERAL FUND - 1000						
	a. Office Operations	0053	484,447.00	484,447.00	100.0%	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL - STATE GENERAL FUND		\$484,447.00	\$484,447.00	100.0%	\$0.00	\$0.00
2.	STATE WATER PLAN FUND - 1800						
	a. Water Resources Cost-Share						
	(1) Office Operations-OOE		140,510.00	121,625.34	86.6%	5,109.00	13,775.66
	(2) Programming Services - CSIMS Task Order 2015-1008		25,000.00	24,137.50	96.6%	862.50	0.00
	(3) Claims - CSIMS WR Cost-Share Assistance		2,176,319.00	1,450,056.08	66.6%	581,027.56	145,235.36
	WR - TOTAL	1205	2,341,829.00	1,595,818.92	68.1%	586,999.06	159,011.02
	b. Non Point Source Pollution Control						
	(1) Office Operations - OOE		3,000.00	12,568.00	418.9%	13,235.00	(22,803.00)
	(2) Capital Outlay - CSIMS Oracle Database Processor		63,745.00	63,745.00	100.0%	0.00	0.00
	(3) Programming Services - CSIMS Task Order 2015-1008		25,000.00	24,137.50	96.6%	862.50	0.00
	(4) Professional Services - Conservation Technician Positions		200,000.00	146,596.86	73.3%	0.00	53,403.14
	(5) Fees - Training & Workshop No-Till Registration		22,500.00	15,225.00	67.7%	0.00	7,275.00
	(6) Professional Services - No-Till I&E Funds / Cover Crop Council		20,000.00	20,246.26	101.2%	0.00	(246.26)
	(7) Engineering Services - TWI - Cottonwood River		8,985.46	0.00	0.0%	8,985.46	0.00
	(8) Claims - CSIMS NPS Cost-Share Assistance		1,884,706.99	1,156,353.10	61.4%	452,328.64	276,025.25
	NPS - TOTAL	1210	2,227,937.45	1,438,871.72	64.6%	475,411.60	313,654.13
	c. Aid to Conservation Districts		2,096,093.47	2,087,382.00	99.6%	0.00	8,711.47
	Aid to CD - TOTAL	1220	2,096,093.47	2,087,382.00	99.6%	0.00	8,711.47
	d. CREP/WTAP						
	(1) Office Operations - OOE		92,465.00	92,820.58	100.4%	0.00	(355.58)
	(2) Claims - CSIMS CREP Cost-Share Assistance		424,777.21	192,671.80	45.4%	0.00	232,105.41
	(3) Claims - WTAP Projects		38,000.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00	38,000.00
	CREP/WTAP - TOTAL	1225	555,242.21	285,492.38	51.4%	0.00	269,749.83
	e. Watershed Dam Construction						
	(1) Claims - Watershed Dam Cost-Share Assistance		99,025.00	0.00	0.0%	99,025.00	0.00
	(2) Claims - Watershed Dam Rehabilitation		484,220.00	220,299.98	45.5%	220,889.54	43,030.48
	WATERSHED PROGRAM - TOTAL	1240	583,245.00	220,299.98	37.8%	319,914.54	43,030.48
	f. KS Water Quality Buffer Initiative						
	(1) Claims - CSIMS Buffer Cost-Share Assistance		290,691.68	231,955.81	79.8%	0.00	58,735.87
	BUF - TOTAL	1250	290,691.68	231,955.81	79.8%	0.00	58,735.87
	g. Riparian and Wetland Protection						
	(1) Office Operations - OOE		300.00	1,038.78	346.3%	0.00	(738.78)
	(2) Claims - CSIMS RW Cost-Share Assistance		47,626.20	5,786.89	12.2%	32,480.80	9,358.51
	(3) Professional Services - KSU Riparian Forest Buffer Restoration		105,713.36	0.00	0.0%	105,713.36	0.00
	RW - TOTAL	1260	153,639.56	6,825.67	4.4%	138,194.16	8,619.73
	h. Streambank Stabilization						
	(1) Office Operations - OOE		300.00	84.00	28.0%	0.00	216.00
	(2) Claims - CSIMS SS Cost-Share Assistance		525,000.00	0.00	0.0%	525,000.00	0.00
	(3) Engineering Services - TWI - Delaware River Phase III & 4		224,700.00	0.00	0.0%	224,700.00	0.00
	SS - TOTAL	1290	750,000.00	84.00	0.0%	749,700.00	216.00
	i. Lake Restoration - Water Supply Restoration	1275	258,156.00	258,156.00	100.0%	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL - STATE WATER PLAN FUND		\$9,256,834.37	\$6,124,886.48	66.2%	\$2,270,219.36	\$861,728.53

**DIVISION OF CONSERVATION, KDA - FY 2015 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**JANUARY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015**

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FEE FUND PROGRAMS		Budget Unit	Fee Deposit Accounts	Total Expenditures	% of Funds Expended	Funds	Cash Flow
						Committed/	
						Encumbered-Contingent	
1. AG Lime Program - 2118		1200	71,635.00	15,489.00	21.6%	83.00	56,063.00
2. KDWP&T - Conservation Technicians - 2517		2510	75,000.00	67,500.00	90.0%	0.00	7,500.00
3. KDHE - Conservation Technicians - 2517		2510	350,000.00	77,804.00	22.2%	0.00	272,196.00
4. LAND RECLAMATION FEE FUND - 2542		2090	214,524.00	141,580.00	66.0%	51,400.00	21,544.00
5. KDHE/EPA - FEDERAL INDIRECT FUNDS - 3889		(ON THIS ACCOUNT-MONEY IS DEPOSITED AS REPORTS ARE SUBMITTED TO KDHE)				REMAINING BAL TO REQUEST	
	a. KDHE/Buffer Indirect Funds	3880	17,133.05	17,133.05	100.0%	0.00	0.00
	b. KDHE/NPS Indirect Funds	3880	4,500.00	4,500.00	0.0%	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL KDHE-INDIRECT FUNDS - 3889		21,633.05	21,633.05	100.0%	0.00	0.00
6. NRCS CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS - 3917		(ON THIS ACCOUNT-MONEY IS DEPOSITED AS REQUESTED FROM NRCS)				REMAINING BAL TO REQUEST	
	a. NRCS/NPS Conservation Tech	3825	230,713.00	163,228.00	70.7%	0.00	67,485.00
	TOTAL NRCS-TA/ENGINEERING - 3825		230,713.00	163,228.00	70.7%	0.00	67,485.00
	b. NRCS/WQ Indirect Funds	3800	11,731.40	11,731.40	100.0%	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL NRCS-INDIRECT FUNDS - 3800		11,731.40	11,731.40	100.0%	0.00	0.00
TOTAL- NRCS FUNDS - 3917			242,444.40	174,959.40	72.2%	0.00	67,485.00
			Deposits	Total Expenditures	Funds Expended	Total Encumbered	Cash Flow Balance
FEE FUNDS GRAND TOTAL			\$975,236.45	\$498,965.45	51.2%	\$0.00	\$424,788.00
1.	*HOSPITALITY FUND - 1000	0054	1,380.84	1,380.84	0.0%	0.00	0.00

\*Paid under KDA Budget

# DOC State Water Plan Funds

FY2015 Actual / FY2016 Available

Programs	Available FY2015	Committed FY2015	Carryover to FY2016	Budgeted FY2016	Available FY2016
Water Resources Cost-Share	2,341,829	2,182,818	159,011	<b>1,948,289</b>	2,107,300
Non-Point Source Pollution Cost-Share	2,227,937	1,914,283	313,654	<b>1,858,350</b>	2,172,004
Aid to Conservation Districts	2,096,093	2,087,382	8,711	<b>2,092,637</b>	2,101,348
Watershed Dam Construction	583,245	540,214	43,031	<b>576,434</b>	619,465
Water Supply Restoration – Multipurpose Small Lakes	258,156	258,156	0	<b>258,156</b>	258,156
Water Quality Buffer Initiative	290,691	231,956	58,735	<b>249,792</b>	308,527
Riparian and Wetland Program	153,639	145,020	8,619	<b>152,651</b>	161,270
Water Right Retirement CREP / WTAP	555,242	285,492	269,749	<b>446,040</b>	715,789
Streambank Stabilization (2015 Leg. \$\$)	750,000	749,784	216	<b>0</b>	0
<b>TOTAL</b> (in \$\$ dollars)	<b>9,256,832</b>	<b>8,395,105</b>	<b>861,726</b>	<b>7,582,349</b>	<b>8,443,859</b>



## Middle and Lower Neosho River Basin

### Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Project

This is a joint project between Oklahoma and Kansas to address water quality concerns in the Neosho River Basin that ultimately impacts Grand Lake in Oklahoma. The targeted watersheds in Kansas include 6 HUC 12's in Labette Creek in Neosho and Labette counties and 1 HUC 12 in Tar Creek and 1 HUC 12 in Elm Creek in Cherokee county. See the map below.

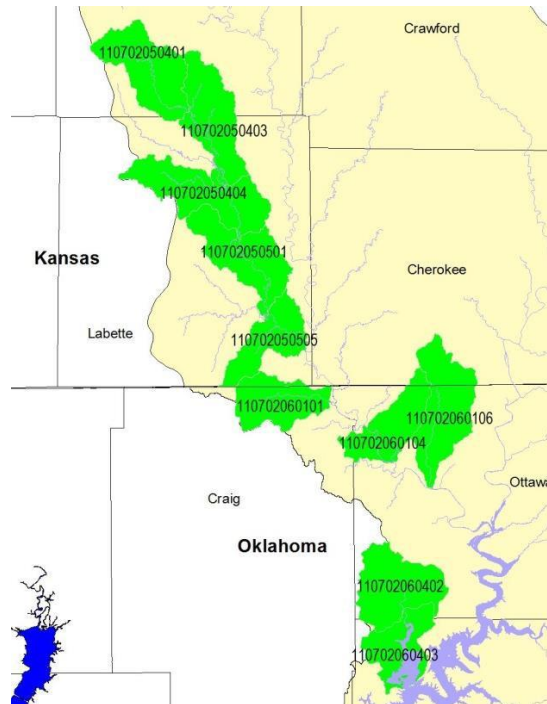
The RCPP program requires a one to one match of state or local funds to the federal NRCS EQIP funds. The WRAPS EPA-319 funds and DOC funds will be used as a match for the project in the Labette Creek HUC 12's. The Tar Creek and Elm Creek watersheds in Cherokee county are not high priority TMDL watersheds in Kansas therefore WRAPS and DOC funds will not be used in those watersheds.

Timeframe: FFY2015 thru FFY2019

Total EQIP funds available: \$3,225,000

EQIP funds available in Kansas : \$1,612,500

Kansas Match: Financial Assistance: \$575,000 - DOC WR and NPS TMDL funds and KDHE EPA-319 funds





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Jackie McClaskey, Secretary

Goven10r Sam Brownback

## **2015 Legislative Summary, by Category**

### **Water and Conservation Legislation Adopted**

#### **SB 52:**

Augmentation: Chief Engineer may authorize water augmentation to satisfy a senior water right within Rattlesnake Creek Sub Basin, if such replacement is available and offered voluntary.

Multi-Year Flex Accounts (MYFA): Allows up to 1 year's base average water use to rollover into a new MYFA. Also allows water right owners to make small (less of 10 acres or 10% of authorized) adjustment in their place of use while enrolled in a MYFA.

Conservation: Requires the Chief Engineer to give due consideration to water users that have previously implemented voluntary conservation measures when evaluating a Local Enhanced Management Area or Water Conservation Area.

Small Lake Project: Calculation of interest on state's cost in providing storage (Alma City Lake).

#### **SB 156**

Water Conservation Areas (WCA): Allows a group of water right owners of any size to form a WCA to enter into voluntary water use reductions, requires 100% consensus. This is similar to a LEMA, but allows for varying sizes.

Ag Liming: Cleanup language, removes language requiring calcium carbonate equivalents to be prescribed by "Association of Official Analytical Chemists".

Arkansas River Gaging: allows expenditure for groundwater gage sites at the state line in the Arkansas River Basin to monitor quantity and quality of groundwater.

#### **HB 2061**

Conservation Easements: allows the Division of Conservation to hold third party easements for Watershed Districts to satisfy US Army Corp of Engineer 404 permitting process for construction of watershed dams.

#### **SB 36**

Conservation Lending Program: allows the Secretary of KDHE to establish and administer the conservation lending program to facilitate loans by eligible financial institutions for the construction of eligible conservation practices.

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Jackie McClaskey, Secretary

Governor Sam Brownback

### **Animal Health Related Legislation**

#### **58 46**

Identification of Domestic Deer: Allows owners of domestic deer herds to tag animal with identification when leaving their property (either dead or alive), as opposed to requiring owners to tag live animals.

#### **SB 189**

Creating an Institutional License to Practice Veterinary Medicine: Creates an institutional license category for veterinarians employed at Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Rural Veterinary Training Program: Remove the sunset on the Rural Veterinary Training Program that assists with student loan payments for veterinarians practicing in qualified rural areas.

Euthanasia: Requires the Animal Health Commissioners to promulgate rules and regulations by December 31, 2015 regarding acceptable forms of euthanasia. These standards may be stricter than those set by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

### **Alcohol Related Legislation-**

#### **HB2331**

This bill contains a wide array of alcohol legislation, pertinent to KDA is that farm wineries are now allowed to sell their wine at more than one farmer's market. Another item of interest is authorizing additional temporary alcohol permits at the State Fair. Other items include: allowing alcohol consumption in the Capital building at official events, self-serve wine machines, and rules on bring your own alcohol at art galleries/studios.

### **Human Resources Related Legislation**

#### **HB 2391**

Revision to the Kansas Civil Service Act: Any new employee, employee who is rehired into a position, employee who voluntarily transfers, or is voluntarily promoted or demoted, shall be unclassified.

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Jackie Iltis, Secretary

Governor Sam Brownback

### **Tax Related Legislation**

#### **HB2109 and 88270**

**Sales Tax:** Sales tax rate increases to 6.5% on July 1, 2015. (So, on a \$100 purchase, sales tax will increase by 35 cents.)

**Cigarette Tax:** State cigarette tax increases by \$0.50 per pack, to \$1.29 on July 1, 2014. Cigarette retailers must pay a tax of \$0.50 per pack for cigarettes on hand on July 1, 2015.

**E-Cigarette Tax:** Electronic cigarette tax of \$0.20 per milliliter of consumable material.

**Amnesty:** Creates a tax amnesty program September 1-October 15, 2015 that allows taxpayers to pay back taxes without penalty.

**Itemized Deductions:** Starting in 2015, itemized deductions (except for charitable contributions) are 50% deductible. In 2014, itemized deductions were 70% deductible. (i.e. If you pay \$5,000 per year in interest on your mortgage, \$3,500 was deductible in 2014, \$2,500 is deductible in 2015.)

**Rate Freeze:** Individual income tax rate reductions frozen at 2.7% or 4.6% (2.7% for under \$15,000, 4.6% for over \$15,000) until 2018, when the lower rate drops to 2.6%.

**Guaranteed Payments:** Require guaranteed payments received by businesses to count as income.

**Rate Reduction Formula Modification:** Beginning in 2019, if state general fund (SGF) tax sources increase year over year by greater than 3%, allows for a rate reduction.

**Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ) Program:** Extended to 2022.

**Christmas Tree Net Gain:** Creates a subtraction modification from federal income in calculating state adjusted gross income for the net gain from the sale of Christmas trees.

**Social Security Number Requirement:** Any individual claiming tax credit must have a valid Social Security number for the entire year in which claiming the credit.

**Motor Vehicle Registration:** Requires the Department of Revenue to mail a statement of all taxes owed to vehicle owners.

**Property Tax Lid:** Prohibit cities and counties from raising property taxes by greater than the rate of inflation except under certain circumstances without being approved by a general election.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

# CONSERVATION

## FACT SHEET

July 2015

### Conservation Reserve Program - Grasslands

#### OVERVIEW

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands is part of the CRP program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits.

Participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion and improve water quality. In return, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

CRP Grasslands helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

CRP Grasslands is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the program on behalf of the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

#### BENEFITS

Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations and improves environmental quality.

#### HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant

decline or those that are protected under federal or state law), conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences.

#### RANKING LAND OFFERED FOR CRP GRASSLANDS

Interested participants may file applications with FSA at any time. These applications will be batched and reviewed several times a year to determine which applications can be approved.

Applications for CRP Grassland will be ranked after each batching period using Grassland Ranking Factors. FSA collects data for each of the ranking factors based on the relative benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from that ranking.

FSA uses the following ranking factors, including:

- Existence of expiring CRP or Grassland Reserve Program land;
- Existing grassland;
- Multi-species cover existence and predominance of native species;
- Livestock grazing operation;
- State priority enrollment criteria (non-land based) and State Focus Area (land-based) determined in consultation with State Technical Committee;
- Whether the applicant is an eligible beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher and;
- Other factors as determined by the Deputy Administrator.

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## **ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS**

A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to close of the CRP enrollment period, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law or;
- The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

## **ELIGIBLE LAND**

Land currently must be planted to a grass cover.

## **RENTAL PAYMENTS**

In return for following an approved CRP conservation plan, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value of the land covered by the agreement as determined by FSA for the life of the agreement.

## **COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE**

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved practices on eligible land in an amount that is not more than 50 percent of the participants' costs in establishing approved practices.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other restrictions may apply. To find more information about CRP-Grasslands, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp). For more details on FSA conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation) or contact your local FSA office. To locate the nearest FSA office or USDA Service Center visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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**NRCS HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES  
for the  
KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS  
and the  
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
NORTON, KANSAS  
August 9-10, 2015**

**PERSONNEL**

New Hires:           Lawrence (Larry) J. Schieferecke, Civil Engineer, Engineering Staff, Salina State Office  
                          Mitchell (Mitch) L. Thierry, Public Affairs Specialist, Management and Strategy Staff, Salina State Office

Reassignments  
and/or Promotions: Karl M. Anderson, District Conservationist, Brownsville, Tennessee, to Resource Conservationist, Programs Staff, Salina State Office (duty station: Hutchinson Area Office)  
                          Marie S. Faatuala, Soil Conservationist, Hays, to Soil Conservation Aide, Honolulu, Hawaii  
                          Kristen J. Kuntz, Soil Conservationist, Washington, to District Conservationist, Salina  
                          Myra N. Richardson, Soil Conservationist, Westmoreland, to Resource Conservationist, Ainsworth, Nebraska  
                          Dustin D. Schwandt, Soil Conservationist, Marysville, to Rangeland Management Specialist, Holton  
                          Shawn T. Sherraden, Agricultural Engineer, Torrington, Connecticut, to Agricultural Engineer, Engineering Staff, Salina State Office  
                          Kevin A. Vaughn, Soil Conservationist, Effingham, to District Conservationist, Bastrop, Louisiana  
                          Bruce K. Wells, Area Resource Conservationist, Emporia Area Office, to Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources, Salina State Office  
                          Joel A. Willhoft, Area Resource Conservationist, Hays Area Office, to Resource Conservationist, Programs Staff, Salina State Office  
                          Tamara R. Yost, Fiscal Technician, Financial Management Staff, Salina State Office, to Business Services Specialist, Management and Strategy Staff, Salina State Office

Resignations:       Stephanie M. Burkhardt, Soil Conservation Technician, WaKeeney

Retirements: Rodney K. Bollinger, Soil Conservation Technician, Mound City  
John T. Conway, Area Resource Conservationist, Emporia Area Office  
Arthur A. Hastert, Soil Conservationist, Lyndon  
Brian D. Lang, Construction Engineer, Salina State Office

## **MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGY**

- The State Resource Assessment for Kansas, a 3-year budget request for each of our programs, was recently completed.
- Administrative Transformation:
  - Employees will soon be matched with positions on national teams.
  - Reassignment of employees is scheduled for the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2016.
  - National teams will then handle most procurement, human resources, and accounting activities for the agency.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**

The deadline for proposal submission to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was August 7, 2015.

### **Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)**

- 109 applications for the 2015 Conservation Stewardship Program are preapproved.
- \$3,000,000 will be obligated for a total of 252,000 acres.

### **Easement Programs**

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)**

ACEP-WRE FY2014 offers continue to move towards final acceptance. A high priority workload exists in this area for the Waters Resources (WR) Staff to complete the newly implemented internal control (IC) reviews mandated by National Headquarters (NHQ) for applications set for closing.

ACEP-ALE FY2015 offers are being evaluated for all easement programs. WR staff is working through the applications including IC for the pre-obligation phase of WRE applications. Site visits and information gathering continues.

- **Easement Monitoring**

Kansas currently has approximately 330 easements. FY2015 annual easement monitoring reports for these easements were received and evaluated by the State Office WR staff as required.

- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

Six construction contract packages were sent to National Contracting for development of federal construction contracts for wetland restoration projects covering 15 separate landowners. Other landowner construction contracts for wetland restoration continue to be developed at the NRCS area and field office level as well as designs prepared at the state office level.

**Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)**

NRCS received a verbal request from the city of Sedgwick for a potential non-exigency EWP project. It was for streambank stabilization and debris removal due to a flash flooding event in May. NRCS staffs are working with the sponsor to obtain estimates and official request if they choose to proceed.

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

- FY2015 EQIP funding decisions are nearly complete. Current total FY2015 EQIP allocation for Kansas is \$20,716,684. We do not expect any reallocation of funds from NHQ this year. Here is a brief and preliminary rundown of the funding decisions made for applications received this year.

General EQIP—Total Allocation: \$17,744,410

Ranking Category Funding Decisions:

- Forestland Health—\$229,447
- Grazing Lands Health—\$4,757,015
- Livestock Waste—\$2,691,194
- Sedimentation Above Federal Reservoirs—\$972,248
- Soil Health—\$1,653,802
- Tribal—\$171,174
- Water Quality—\$5,106,269
- Water Quantity—\$1,807,728
- Wildlife Habitat—\$355,543

- EQIP Landscape Initiatives—Total Allocation: \$2,448,500

Funding Decisions:

Lesser Prairie Chicken—\$405,891

National Water Quality Initiative (Big Creek and Grasshopper Creek Watersheds)—\$533,991

Ogallala Aquifer

- Funds Allocated are \$1,200,000
- Funding decisions for applications received are currently being made

- National EQIP Initiatives—Total Allocation: \$380,323

Funding Decisions:

Certified Organic—\$505

Organic Transition—\$53,410

On-Farm Energy—\$23,933

Seasonal High Tunnels—\$302,475

### **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

- The following 2015 Kansas RCPP Agreements have been approved and signed. Partners and NRCS are currently developing program funding streams for these projects. We expect program announcements to be made later this fall.
  - Improving Water Quality through the Implementation of Forestry Practices and the Assessment of Riparian Systems in Kansas Priority Watersheds
  - Kansas Pheasant Initiative
  - Advanced Irrigation Water Management on the High Plains Aquifer in Kansas
- The following 2015 Multi-State RCPP Agreements involving Kansas have been approved and signed. Partners and NRCS are currently developing program funding streams for these projects. We expect program announcements to be made later this fall.
  - Regional Grassland Bird and Grazing Lands Enhancement Initiative
  - Middle and Lower Neosho River Basin Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Project.
- 2016 RCPP pre-proposals were due July 8, 2015, to NHQ.
- The ranking period for pre-proposals was July 13-24, 2015. States rank and provide feedback on each pre-proposal and send the results to NHQ.
- Based on the ranking score, only two RCPP proposals will be selected per state to move onto the full proposal phase after NHQ review.

### **Watershed Rehabilitation Program Activities**

- The NRCS State Office Engineering Staff is close to completing Whitewater River Watershed Dam No. 19 Dam Assessment in Harvey County.
- Rehabilitation planning for five watershed dams in Kansas is well under way. Planning is being done through two separate contracts with two architect and engineering firms. One contract is for Upper Walnut Sites #6 and #21 in Butler County. The other contract is for Rock Creek Site #2, Little Walnut Hickory Site #18, and Muddy Creek Site #4-6 all in Butler County.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Engineering**

- NRCS participated in a two-day meeting on May 2015 with GMD#3 to begin discussion on implementation of the GMD #3 RCPP project. The engineering staff will begin developing guidance for documenting the installation of irrigation related equipment that will provide producers and crop consultants with telemetry-enabled soil moisture probes, water metering, and evapotranspiration measurement for near real-time monitoring.
- Repair plans are being finalized by NRCS engineering staff for principal spillway pipe replacements on two watershed structures.
- Larry Schieferecke, Civil Engineer, has joined the Engineering Staff in the State Office. Larry has both private consulting engineering experience and NRCS experience and will be a valuable asset to the engineering program in Kansas.

### **Resources**

- NRCS is in the process of updating to a new version of Customer Service Toolkit. Statewide training is planned for August.
- The Manhattan Plant Materials Center continues to plan and establish foundation seed and cover crop studies.
- Staff provided assistance to multiple grazing groups across the state and region providing technical information. Staff also provided oversight and data collection for the 2015 National Resources Inventory.
- Staff has been working with state and federal agencies developing guidance for delivering conservation for Northern long-eared bat, lesser prairie-chicken, and pollinators.
- Staff continue to provide leadership regionally delivering soil health workshops and information as interest continues to grow.
- The Farm Service Agency recently announced the Biomass Crop Assistance Program signup. NRCS is providing planning and technical assistance to clients for strategies to remove and supply biomass in five southwest counties.

### **Watershed Activities**

DamWatch is now being deployed by NRCS in Kansas. DamWatch is a Web-based dam monitoring tool developed for NRCS by US Engineering Solutions (USES). It provides real-time monitoring of potential threats to dams such as rainfall events and seismic activity. It also provides access to important information about dams including as-built plans, operation and maintenance agreements, emergency action plans, inspection reports, photos, videos, and assessment reports. The deployment of DamWatch was very timely as over 1,400 alerts on the DamWatch system were received with all the rainfall in the Central States over the last two months. The alerts have prompted NRCS and sponsor site visits to check the integrity of dams receiving the alerts.



# Kansas Agricultural Watershed Field Laboratory

## About the Project

The Kansas Agricultural Watershed (KAW) field laboratory was established in 2014 to study the effects of agricultural management practices on water, sediment, nutrient, and chemical losses. The KAW field lab consists of 18 small watersheds ranging from 1.2 to 1.6 ac in size (study map on reverse side). Each watershed is instrumented with a 1.5 ft H-flume and automated equipment to measure runoff from natural rainfall and collect samples for water quality analysis. The site is also equipped with four automated rain gauges. The predominant soil type on the site is Smolan silty clay loam with an average slope of 6 to 8%.

## Goal

The goal of the KAW field lab is to develop sustainable conservation practices that protect water quality and maximize yield and profitability while simultaneously providing producers with flexible nutrient management and cropping system options.

## Current Research

The KAW field lab is currently being used to study the effects of cover crops and phosphorus (P) fertilizer management on water quality and crop growth in corn-soybean rotations. Six management systems were implemented during fall 2014, including fall broadcast P fertilizer, spring injected P fertilizer, and a no P fertilizer control. Each fertilizer treatment will be studied with and without the use of a cover crop. Runoff from natural rainfall from all plots will be measured, including sediment and nutrient losses. This project will increase our understanding of the impact of cover crops and fertilizer management on crop yield, water quality, and farm income.

## Salient Issues

Phosphorus inputs to surface waters promote algae growth, which can decrease dissolved oxygen, trigger fish kills, and increase drinking water treatment costs. Therefore, it is important that we develop agricultural best management practices (BMP) that minimize P loss to surface water.

## Current Study Objectives

The overall objective of the current research project is to determine how interactions between cover crops and P fertilizer management impact P loss and efficiency, crop yield, and net return. Specific research questions that we will answer include the following:

- How does P loss from fall surface-applied P fertilizer compare to P loss from spring injected P fertilizer, the currently recommended BMP?
- Will cover crops reduce P losses and does this depend on the method and timing of P fertilizer application?
- What are the agronomic, environmental, and economic effects of winter cover crops in corn-soybean rotations?

**Research  
Fund**

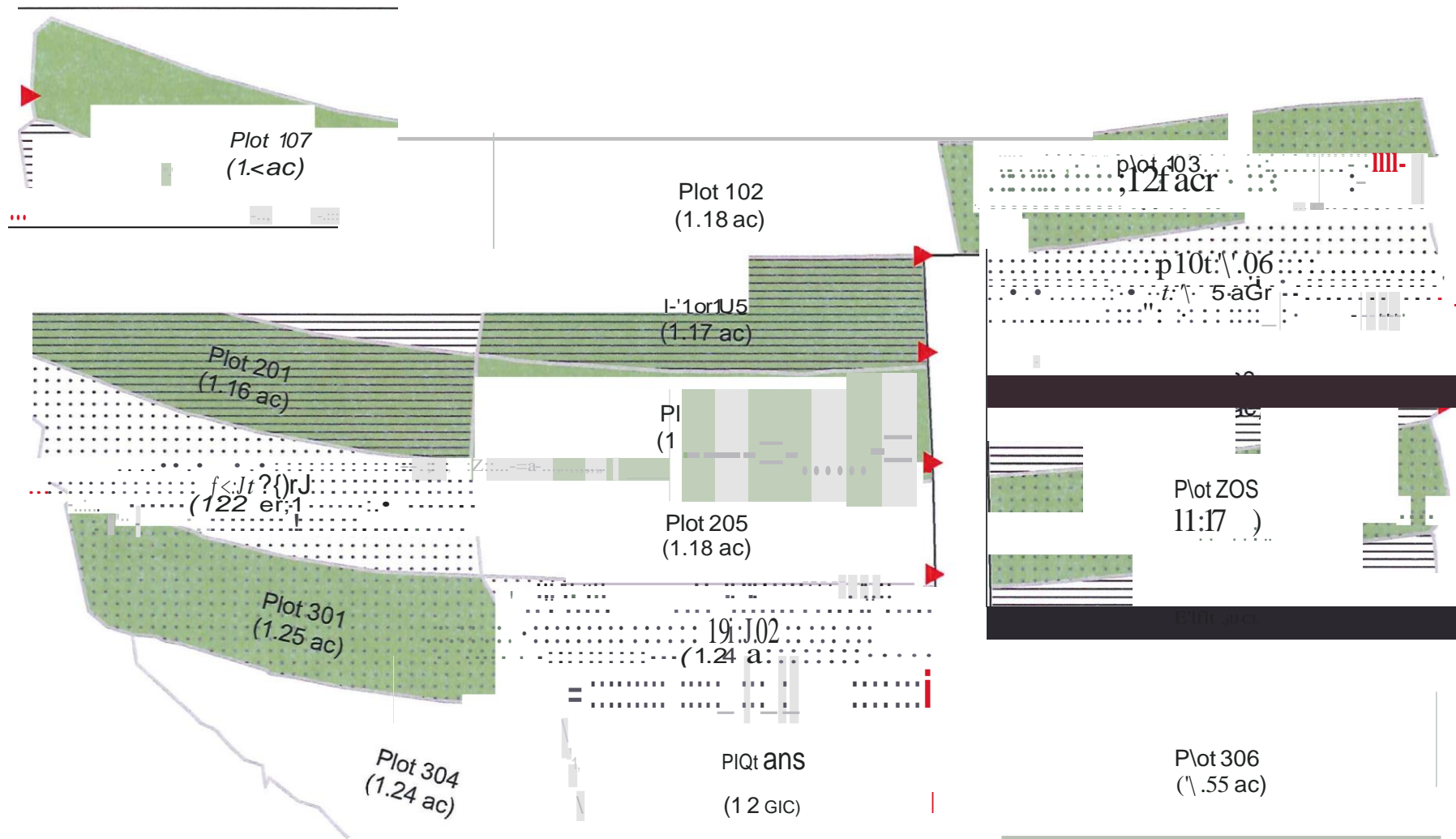


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COMMISSION

## Contact Information

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**.A.** Watershed Outlets

### Treatment

- Fall broadcast P fertilizer, no cover crop
- Fall broadcast P fertilizer, with cover crop
- No P fertilizer applied, no cover crop
- No P fertilizer applied, with cover crop
- Spring injected P fertilizer, no cover crop
- Spring injected P fertilizer, with cover crop



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WHAT IS

# GREAT PLAINS GRAZING

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Great Plains Grazing is a group of

**67** RESEARCH SCIENTISTS,  
EXTENSION SPECIALISTS  
6 CONSUMER EXPERTS

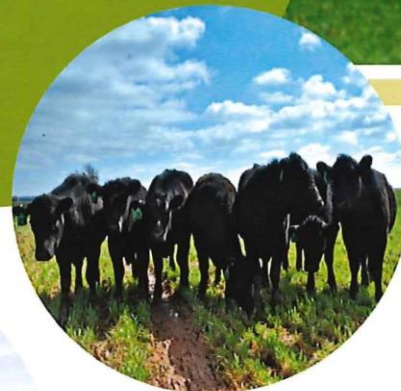
working together to improve and promote regional beef cattle production while mitigating its environmental footprint.

A significant portion of the nation's red meat is produced on pasture and rangeland forages and dual-purpose winter wheat in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Beef cattle production constitutes the largest land use in the region and is subject to a widely variable climate.

Members of our team have interviewed consumers about their interest in the sustainability of beef cattle production and are developing materials to

## EDUCATE CONSUMERS

about the impact of climate on the availability, cost, and quality of beef.



We are conducting research and delivering Extension programming about impacts of weather, climate variability, and climate change on beef cattle production and providing information on management options and decision support tools to

## ENSURE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY.

Project activities include field research, on-farm trials, citizen science, and extension programming.



KANSAS STATE  
UNIVERSITY



USDA  
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THE SAMUEL ROBERTS  
NOBLE  
FOUNDATION

This project was supported by Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant no. 2012-02355 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Learn more about the project at  
**GREATPLAINSGRAZING.ORG**

### Principal Investigators:

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# YEAR 2 TOP 10 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1. Two years of carbon, nitrogen, and water data collected across the research network.** Researchers completed baseline and Year Two measurements on soil-plant-beef cattle systems including collecting agronomic, soil, enteric methane, and water data in Southern Great Plains environments.
- 2. Intensive field campaign** Forty-one team members participated in understanding the carbon, nitrogen, water, and energy balance of a native prairie system pasture and an Old World bluestem pasture. The work completed during the intensive field campaign will advance the scientific understanding of complex soil-plant-beef cattle systems in the Southern Great Plains and contribute to validation of models used in the footprint analyses and life cycle analyses and will provide new information about impacts of feed/forage quality on enteric methane emissions from livestock in grazing environments.
- 3. Climate and agricultural models calibrated and integrated** Soil, water, systems and farm level economic models including APEX, DNDC, NTT, and FEM were calibrated and integrated to enable research that can capture and address production and ecological footprints of beef grazing systems in the Southern Great Plains.
- 4. 233 presentations, field days, Extension fact sheets, newsletters, blog posts, videos and refereed journal articles** Team members communicated grazing and range management, agronomic, soil, water, and greenhouse gas information to farmers, agribusiness, and scientists on adapting management practice related to climate extremes.
- 5. Teachers and high school students engaged in experiential learning and applications of science.** Students in six secondary schools from across Oklahoma will benefit from teacher learning and lessons developed through the Authentic Research Experience for Teachers workshop held in June 2014 where they learned about nitrogen cycling, climate science, and the relationship between agricultural practices and climate variability.
- 6. Leveraged financial resources to accomplish more** Project team members reached out to key partners and researchers in the Great Plains and leveraged the USDA investment to apply for an additional \$5.2 million for project activities in year two.
- 7. Reviewed regional Extension materials** Collaborators compared existing outreach materials to the current state of the science and producer needs for information to determine key gaps in the resources available to the public. Gaps related to enterprise flexibility, weather and climate basics, carbon and greenhouse gases, and forage resource management will be addressed in Year 3.
- 8. Surveyed Extension professionals to determine knowledge, attitudes, and needs about climate variability and change** The majority of Extension professionals who participated in the survey (67%) believe that climate is changing and most (64%) feel they have a low capacity to adequately answer constituent questions about climate change. They expressed a need for reliable resources addressing unseasonable weather (58%), high temperatures (63%), drought uncharacteristic of historic norms (72%), and management practices to cope with these issues (75%).
- 9. Extension Educators trained in using weather related tools.** Project collaborators held the first two-day Weather and Climate: Agriculture Weather Tools In-service for Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service county educators. The in-service was an interactive format where all participants could utilize a computer to access weather tools being discussed held at the National Weather Center in Norman, OK.
- 10. Team members formed integrated working groups to enable research and extension collaboration.** Interdisciplinary working groups on cattle methane emissions, nitrogen, soil management, climate variability, and consumer choices were formed to identify points of connectivity and increase working knowledge across the project.



12 June 2015

Steve Frost  
Kansas Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Conservation  
1320 Research Park Way  
Manhattan, KS 66502

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your organization's generous contribution of \$1,000.00 in support of the Kansas Leopold Conservation Award. Your gift enables the continuation of the Leopold Conservation Award, an award that sheds light on the conservation efforts across the great state of Kansas and on a national level.

We recognize the confidence that your gift represents, and we pledge to work to merit your continued trust.

Very Sincerely,  
SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

Kevin McAleese  
Executive Vice-President

*PS: For your IRS records, we acknowledge that we have provided you services and goods of only nominal value in recognition of your gift.*



**Streambank Work Group Recommendations / Roles and Responsibilities**

- Provide 100% cost-share to landowners with priority projects in priority watersheds.
- Require installation of riparian forest buffer above streambank projects.
- Select up to three priority watersheds and rotate as needed.
  - Proposed priority watersheds: Cottonwood receive annual allocation, whereas Delaware and Tuttle would rotate every other year with an allocation.
- Consider adding DOC staff if program demands exceed staff capacity
  - \$2 Million – 20 projects per year, 60 projects on-line at one time
- DOC would provide the following:
  - NPS cost-share funds for streambank projects.
  - Manage on-call engineering contracts.
  - Manage on-call construction contracts.
  - Continue contract with Kansas Forest Service to provide on-call riparian forest buffer installation and three years of maintenance.
  - One-time buffer incentive payment to landowners with streambank projects.
  - Staff time for NRCS field office, WRAPS SLT and district board meetings, once per year update
- KWO would provide the following:
  - Cost-share funds from Water Marketing Program for streambank projects.
  - Planning and assessment T/A for potential priority watersheds.
  - Other T/A when needed. Reports, etc.
  - Recommendations on priority projects in priority watersheds for streambank implementation.
    - T/A for individual priority project site assessments.
  - Maintain Streambank GIS Database including receipt of as-built designs.
- KDHE would provide the following:
  - WRAPS cost-share funds for streambank projects and administrative funds for on a negotiated basis.
  - Engineer review of plans and specifications.
  - Water monitoring data from priority watersheds.
  - Calculate load reductions from streambank projects, if needed.
  - Construction completion checkout as needed and coordinated with TSP.
  - Recommendations on future priority watersheds for streambank implementation.
  - TA with implementation of reconnaissance as needed.
  - Local staff to work with landowners on streambank projects in priority watersheds.

- Recommend that the streambank work group meet on a quarterly basis for the first year or two.

Estimated Annual Budget:

DOC – NPS	\$300,000
KWO – Water Marketing Fund	\$150,000
KDHE – 319 Funds	\$200,000
Total	\$650,000

\*excludes \$400,000 SWP KCC allocation to Tuttle

\*\*excludes potential growth in KWO Water Marketing Fund

Estimated Timeline:

SFY	July 1	October 1	January 1	April 1
16		Design Contracts awarded (Tuttle) -TWI revisit Cottonwood Designs	Interagency transfer funds / grant	On-call construction contracts awarded – Cottonwood / Tuttle
17		Design Contracts awarded (Cottonwood / Delaware)	Interagency transfer funds / grant	On-call construction contracts awarded – Cottonwood / Delaware
17		Construction initiated (Cottonwood and Tuttle SFY 16 projects)		
18		Design Contracts awarded (Cottonwood / Tuttle)	Interagency transfer funds / grant	On-call construction contracts awarded – Cottonwood / Tuttle
18		Construction initiated (Cottonwood and Delaware SFY 17 Projects)		(repeated each SFY)