District Funds still available for Conservation Practices

With the recent heavy rains, you may be noticing the need for conservation practices such as waterways and/or terraces. At this time, there is financial assistance to help with getting these practices on your land.

Depending upon your cropping rotation, you could receive the assistance now and have the project done before it is time to plant the spring crops. If you are planting your field(s) to wheat this fall, you could apply for March funding and complete the project right after wheat harvest.

Whatever your cropping rotation is, now is the time to get your application made. All applications will be evaluated and ranked based on several environmental factors as related to cropland, rangeland, and windbreaks in order to assure the funds are being used where they will provide the most environmental benefits. Eligible requests with the highest rankings will be funded first.

Conservation practices considered for cost share assistance include terraces, terrace rebuilds, diversions, waterways, critical area seedings, grass seedings, pipelines, tanks, spring developments and windbreaks.

**Cost share can not be issued for practices started or completed prior to having a signed contract.** Check with the conservation office prior to starting work on your project to see if there is cost share assistance available. Requests for cost share assistance can be made at the conservation office at 2715 Canterbury Drive, Hays, KS.

ADDRESSING EROSION

Need terraces and/or waterways? If your field is experiencing erosion, you may need a terrace system installed to control the problem.

Fields that have been terraced in the past may not function properly anymore, and can cause erosion concerns.

For more information or questions, please contact your local NRCS office.
Conservation Update

No-Till on the Plains Scholarships Available for First Time Attendees

Funds have been made available through the Division of Conservation to sponsor first time attendee landowners/operators to attend the beginning no-till producer workshop held on January 23rd 2016 and/or No-Till on the Plains Winter Conference held on January 24-25th 2016.

Landowners or operators must be first time attendees to the No-Till on the Plains Winter Conference or the beginning no-till producer workshop to be eligible for payment of their registration fees to the conference and/or the workshop. Contact the Ellis County Conservation District for an scholarship application form. Applications will be taken on a first-come first-served basis until the funds are expended. Please see [http://notill.org/events/2017-beginning-no-till-producers-workshop](http://notill.org/events/2017-beginning-no-till-producers-workshop) for more information about the beginning no-till producer workshop.

All applications need to be received by the conservation district no later than close of business Friday November 18th 2016.

COST SHARE FROM WRAPS PROJECT

Cost share is available NOW to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Ellis County for landowner/tenants living in the Town of Munjor or Hays Consolidated Watersheds. BMPs include terraces, grassed waterways, cover crops, pasture and rangeland range improvements including alternative water supplies, etc. For more information or to see if you are eligible, contact Stacie Minson, KSU Watershed Specialist at 785-769-3297 or sedgett@ksu.edu.

Email or Mail

Due to the rising costs of printing and postage for the newsletter, we are asking if you would like to receive the newsletter electronically rather than by mail. If so, please submit your email address to the Ellis County Conservation District, 785-623-4888 ext 3 or email to Sandi Scott at sandi.scott@ks.nacdnet.net.

Thank you for your patience and support as we make this change over.

About the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

“Black Sunday” on April 14, 1935, is known as the worst dust storm in American history. After moving across Kansas, the dust cloud reached Washington, D.C. the next day. Congress took action. President Roosevelt signed the bill creating the Soil Conservation Service on April 27, 1935. Now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we have a deeply held vision of a nation where use of resources is guided by a widely shared and heartfelt stewardship ethic. Our approach starts with talking one-on-one with the landowner to understand their goals and then applying science-based conservation practices to create a plan to fix problems such as soil health, grazing capacity, water and wind erosion, wildlife preservation, or wetland management. NRCS is here to help people help the land to sustain their livelihood now and for the future.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT SERVICES

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Kansas NRCS Announces Deadline for EQIP Funding

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced November 18, 2016, as the first cut-off date to apply for fiscal year 2017 funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

“EQIP provides Kansas agricultural producers a wide range of opportunities to improve the quality of natural resources on their land,” State Conservationist Eric B. Banks said.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers. Through EQIP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat.

The November 18 application deadline also applies to the following initiatives:

- **High Tunnel System Initiative:** NRCS will help producers implement high tunnels that extend growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.
- **Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative:** NRCS will assist producers to implement conservation practices specifically targeted to improve the lesser prairie-chicken habitat while promoting the overall health of grazing lands.
- **Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Project:** NRCS will assist landowners to establish milkweed and other plants critical to the iconic Monarch Butterfly.
- **Ogallala Aquifer Initiative:** NRCS will assist producers to reduce aquifer water use, improve water quality, and enhance the economic viability of croplands and rangelands.
- **On-Farm Energy Initiative:** Producers work with an NRCS-approved Technical Service Provider to develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an agricultural operation.
- **Organic Initiative:** NRCS will assist producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural operations related to organic production. Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or producers who are exempt based on the National Organic Program will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns.

**National Water Quality Initiative:** Application cutoff date will be established at a later time.

NRCS accepts applications for all of its programs on a continuous basis, but applications must be filed for these programs by November 18 to be eligible for the next round of funding. Producers interested in EQIP should submit a signed application to the local NRCS field office.

EQIP also helps address the unique circumstances of socially disadvantaged, veteran, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers, who have natural resource concerns that need to be addressed on their land,” said Banks. Qualifying Kansas producers compete separately and receive higher payment rates.

For more information visit the Kansas NRCS Web site www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, check on the Internet at offices.usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
Top Three Time-Saving Advantages Using NRCS' Conservation Client Gateway

Farmers put in long days. Driving to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office every time paperwork needs to be signed is not always productive. With Conservation Client Gateway, a producer can do most of their business with NRCS online. Farmers using Conservation Client Gateway find these three things to be the most advantageous for them.

**Advantage 1—Sign documents electronically.** It is a secure way to sign contracts online. Viewing and printing documents at the farmer’s convenience saves time. Plus, everything is logically organized and easy to find. For many farmers that have a long drive to the USDA office, or have multiple projects going on with no time to spare, this feature is a tremendous time saver.

**Advantage 2—Keep track of payments.** Everyone wants to know when they are getting paid. With Conservation Client Gateway, you can get payment status online without the need for a phone call or waiting for a call back.

**Advantage 3—Request conservation practice certification or technical assistance.** Submitting certification online speeds up the process—no need for a special trip to the USDA Service Center. And by asking technical questions online, NRCS is better able to reply with more detailed information that can be read online and available to go back to anytime.

“Many farmers in the surrounding states have really appreciated its time-saving features – use is growing in Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and Texas. Over 1,700 farmers are using this nationwide. We’d like to see Kansas farmers adopt this to help them get more time back in their day,” says Eric B. Banks, Kansas NRCS State Conservationist. We have new initiatives underway to get the word out and show how easy Conservation Client Gateway is to use. Farmers can expect to see more demonstrations at partner events and field demonstrations this year. Saving time, being more productive, and most of all convenience–we hope our farmers and ranchers explore the possibilities with this application.

Learn more about NRCS or find your local field office by visiting the Kansas NRCS Web site ([www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov)). Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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**COST SHARE FUNDS AVAILABLE MARCH 1ST**

The next cutoff date for requesting cost share assistance will be June 1 with funds available July 1. Applications for all conservation practices listed above will be considered. Livestock waste systems, failed on-site waste systems and plugging abandoned wells will also be considered for cost share assistance through the Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program. Approved contracts must be completed within 180 days.

**LIVESTOCK WATER SOURCES**

Needing an adequate, reliable source of water for livestock?

Clean, reliable water is the key-stone piece of any grazing system. For more information and technical assistance please contact your local NRCS office.
New Student Trainee in Hays Field Office

Lody Black is the student trainee in the Hays field office. Lody started working in the Hays office in May and plans to work through the school year. He is from Clay Center, KS and is currently a junior at Fort Hays State University. Lody transferred from Hutchinson Community College where he graduated with his associate of Science degree in agriculture. He first found an interest in Natural Resource Conservation Service in high school at the state FFA convention. The district conservationist from Clay Center spoke with him there.

Lody took a work study course his senior year of high school where he volunteered nearly 260 hours with NRCS in Clay Center. He enjoys hunting and also fishing. In the spring and summer he umpires all ages of baseball.

Now Available: 2016 Ellis County Plat Books

Who owns Ellis County? Thousands of people have a piece of it, and they are listed in the new plat book published by the Ellis County Conservation District with Mapping Solutions. The 2016 book is available for purchase for $30.00 at the Conservation District Office located at 2715 Canterbury Drive in Hays. Premium wall maps are also available. For more information contact their office at (785) 623-4888 extension 3.

This book includes aerial view maps opposite the landownership map pages. The 74-page spiral-bound book features township and range maps of Ellis County. These maps include the property boundaries for all rural parcels within the township, the name of the owner and the number of acres owned. Also, there is a handy landowner index for easy cross referencing.

In this new edition you will find information regarding the Ellis County Conservation District and a current County Government Directory. There is a County Road Map and Road Index for your convenience included as well as an Index of the Initialed Parcels for your reference. And, as an added bonus there is an explanation of the public land survey system. Mapping Solutions is the publisher.

This information is valuable to anyone with a need to know who owns land in Ellis County. Prospective or adjoining property owners, hunters, foresters, timber and petroleum industry personnel, emergency services and many others would be interested in having a copy.

Now available….2 digital versions of the Ellis County landowner maps.

SmartMap for your smart phone or tablet. A SmartMap allows you to view your location on the map and track real-time movement with the device GPS, you can measure distances and areas as well as add points of interest, photos, position and label names to the map and much more.

eBook for your tablet, laptop or PC. This is a digital version of the plat book.

Visit mappingsolutionsGIS.com for these products.
FOR RENT
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NO-TILL DRILL

20 Foot John Deere
1590 No-Till Drill
$7.50/acre
Has dry fertilizer capability

Contact:
Ellis County Conservation District
2715 Canterbury Dr, Hays, KS 785-623-4888 ext 3

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Mary Pfeifer, Treasurer
Allen P Roth, Supervisor
Sara Pfannenstiel, Supervisor

District Employees
Sandi Scott, District Manager
Landon Leiker, District Technician
Brad Befort, District Driller

NRCS Employees
Steve Sprick, Acting Supervisory District Conservationist
Zach Roth, Soil Conservationist
Lody Black, Soil Conservationist Trainee
Barbara Coonrod, Ultima Employee

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

The Ellis County Conservation District Board of Supervisors meet for regular board meetings on the second Wednesday of every month.
Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. at the USDA Building, 2715 Canterbury Dr, Hays, KS.