

CONSERVATION CONNECTIONS

a quarterly publication of the Dickinson County Conservation District



USDA Service Center
 328 NE 14th Street
 Abilene, KS 67410

Conservation District/NRCS—785-263-2787
FSA—785-263-1351

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- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USDA Service Center in Abilene is open for business by appointment only. While our staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our agricultural producers by phone and using email and online tools whenever possible. Field work, including conservation planning assistance, will continue with appropriate social distancing.
- State cost-share sign up runs from April 15 to May 15, 2021. Please see page 2 for more details. Application and required W9 form available on our website.
www.dkcoconservation.com
- The Dickinson County Conservation District is offering a full sponsorship to the 2021 Range Youth Camp. For details, see page 6 or contact Cindy Montgomery at 785-263-2787 extension 3. Deadline to apply for sponsorship is May 7, 2021.



Funding for some programs provided by the Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund.

The Dickinson County Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

State Cost– Share Sign Up April 15 to May 15

The Dickinson County Conservation District is conducting a state cost-share sign-up April 15, 2021 through May 15, 2021 to accept requests for state financial assistance to install enduring conservation practices. The conservation district administers state cost-share programs locally to improve water quality and reduce soil erosion. Funding is provided by the Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture (DOC) through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund.

Landowners with natural resource concerns on their property are encouraged to visit the USDA Service Center in Abilene or the Dickinson County Conservation District website to apply for state cost-share assistance. Funding is provided through cost-share payments to landowners for eligible practices such as terraces, grassed waterways, field windbreaks, grass plantings, livestock water supplies, cross fencing, on-site waste systems, and abandoned well plugging. Application does not guarantee approval of cost-share financial assistance. **Projects started or completed prior to being approved and signing a contract for funding are not eligible for cost-share funds.**

Following the sign-up deadline, each request is carefully reviewed to ensure eligibility. The proposed project is ranked according to a system developed by the DOC and Dickinson County Conservation District. The ranking system ensures fairness to landowners and ensures cost-share funds are used to meet local conservation priorities. Landowners approved for the program are notified of the practice(s) approved and the estimated amount of cost-share that will be provided. Before implementation begins, the contract must be approved by the DOC and must be signed by the landowners and returned to the Dickinson County Conservation District.

The Conservation District works closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to protect and conserve natural resources, primarily soil and water. Conservation practices funded with state cost-share funds must be installed and maintained according to NRCS and DOC specifications. Landowners must work closely with NRCS in the planning stage to ensure practices are applied correctly. Technical assistance for these practices is provided free of charge by NRCS.

All programs of the Dickinson County Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

For more information concerning state cost-share programs and other available services, please contact Cindy Montgomery, District Manager, Dickinson County Conservation Service, 785-263-2787 extension 332.

Dickinson County Cost Share Funding History

The following represents actual dollars of cost-share funding paid to landowners from 2015 to present day

Water Resources		Non Point Source Pollution Control	
2015	\$ 18,780	2015	\$ 12,684
2016	\$ 16,106	2016	\$ 11,973
2017	\$ 16,160	2017	\$ 15,300
2018	\$ 14,321	2018	\$ 11,610
2019	\$ 16,289	2019	\$ 11,010
2020	\$ 18,374	2020	\$15,758

The Nature Conservancy and NRCS Announce Cooperative Agreement

SALINA, KANSAS, April 7, 2021—The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announce the two organizations have entered into a five-year cooperative agreement to increase private land conservation in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

The two organizations have a mutual interest in successfully implementing the conservation programs authorized by federal legislation known as the Farm Bill, which is updated approximately every five years. The most recent Farm Bill passed with strong bipartisan support and was signed into law in late 2018.

Through this new agreement, TNC and NRCS will prioritize the geographies and natural resource issues where the two organizations can work together to have more impact delivering conservation assistance across the Great Plains.

“This will be a new way of looking at conservation impacts across the entire landscape, not just individual places,” says Monty R. Breneman, Acting State Conservationist.

NRCS is a Federal agency that provides planning, technical, and financial assistance to landowners to conserve the natural resources on their land through programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

“This agreement opens more opportunity for collaboration that crosses state lines much in the way nature is not confined by geo-political boundaries,” says Rob Manes, Kansas State Director for TNC. “We’re looking forward to leveraging the staff and expertise of both organizations and ultimately get more conservation directly on the ground.”

NRCS programs are used by Kansas farmers and ranchers in places like the Flint Hills where voluntary conservation easements on private land protect some of the last tallgrass prairie in the world and in western Kansas where land enrolled in CRP provides critical nesting habitat for grassland birds.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world’s toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We are tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. Working in 72 countries, we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. To learn more, visit www.nature.org or follow @nature_press on Twitter.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business are required to call their local Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at Farmers.gov/coronavirus.



NRCS Celebrates 5 Million Acres Enrolled in Conservation Easements

SALINA, KANSAS, April 12, 2021—U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and private landowners have partnered to protect more than 5 million acres of wetlands, grasslands, and prime farmlands (an area the size of New Jersey). In Kansas, NRCS enrolled 162,520 acres, helping achieve this important conservation milestone.

“The Nation’s farmers, ranchers, and private landowners are critical to conserving our Nation’s natural resources for future generations,” said Monty R. Breneman, Acting State Conservationist. “We want to celebrate their efforts in helping us protect sensitive lands, support wildlife, and confront challenges like climate change.” NRCS has offered voluntary conservation easements through the Farm Bill for 28 years, through programs like Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements. These programs benefit participants and the American public by creating cleaner air, water, and open spaces.

Wetland Easements

Wetland easements totaling over 2.8 million acres nationwide and 31,293 acres in Kansas—improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reducing flooding, recharging groundwater, protecting biological diversity, and providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and limited recreational activities.

Agricultural Land Easements

Agricultural land easements protect the long-term viability of the Nation’s food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses. These easements have been crucial to protecting rangelands and farmsteads from urban encroachment, ensuring the most productive lands remain working lands. Easements also can be used to protect floodplains, grasslands, and forests, providing public benefits, including carbon sequestration, water quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat and protection of open space. Agricultural land easements, including grassland easements, total more than 1.9 million acres nationwide and 90,987 acres in Kansas.

Carbon Sequestration and Easements

Working with private landowners to preserve and restore wetlands, grasslands, forests, and farmlands is integral to USDA’s efforts to build resiliency and reduce the impacts of climate change across the Nation. Easements protect sensitive lands from development in perpetuity, and landowners can partner with NRCS to implement voluntary climate-smart management practices that maximize the amount of carbon sequestered from the atmosphere and stored in soils or plant biomass across these landscapes.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our Nation’s lands, biodiversity and natural resources including our soil, air, and water. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new income streams for farmers, ranchers, producers, and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA to pursue a coordinated approach alongside stakeholders, including State, local, and Tribal governments.

Enroll in Easements

Farmers, ranchers, and private foresters looking to enroll farmland, grasslands, or wetlands in a conservation easement should contact their local USDA Service Center.

USDA offers a variety of conservation programs that provide help to plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches, or forests. Learn more about putting conservation to work through our Conservation at Work video series.

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Healthy Forests Healthy Communities

Every year, the Dickinson County Conservation District, in cooperation with the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and the National Association of Conservation Districts, hosts a Poster, Limerick, and Essay contest, open to students, grades K through 12, who reside in or attend school in Dickinson County. Public school, parochial school, and home school students are encouraged to enter the contest. First place posters in each category are automatically submitted to the statewide contest, along with first and second place limericks. State contest winners are entered in the national contest.

The theme of this year's contest was "Healthy Forests Healthy Communities." Students from four Dickinson County schools and two home-school families submitted over 150 posters, limericks, and essays. The entries were judged anonymously by the staff at the Farm Services Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Winning posters were selected for their use of the conservation message, visual effectiveness, originality, and universal appeal.

The winners for the 2020 Poster, Limerick, and Essay Contest are:



Kindergarten and 1st Grade Poster

1st	Scarlett Murphy	Rural Center
2nd	Jayce Wilson	St. Andrews
3rd	Kyra Simenson	St. Andrews
4th	Aubrie Zook	St. Andrews

Second and Third Grade Poster

1st	Blake Murphy	Rural Center
2nd	Kenslie Garrison	St. Andrews
3rd	Whitney Kollhoff	St. Andrews
4th	Lullaby Swenson	Chapman Elementary

4th, 5th, and 6th Grade Poster

1st	Lily Benten	St. Andrews
2nd	Jade Wilson	St. Andrews

3rd	Josie Wilson	St. Andrews
4th	McKenna Ridder	St. Andrews

Limerick

1st	Claire Kolohoff	St. Andrews
2nd	Jade Wilson	St. Andrews
3rd	Lucy Barten	St. Andrews
4th	Khianna Graf	St. Andrews

Essay

1st	Anna Martinez	Chapman Elementary
2nd	Caylor Clark	Chapman Elementary
3rd	Simon Soles	Chapman Elementary
4th	Jacob Van Meter	Chapman Elementary

Kansas Range Youth Camp Sponsorship

Kansas Range Youth Camp



June 15-18, 2021

Sponsored by:



KANSAS SECTION
Society for Range Management



If YOU are interested in plants, livestock, or wildlife, attend an educational event like no other in Kansas!

Participants: Upcoming High School Sophomores, Juniors, & Seniors

Location: Camp Mennoscah, Murdock, KS (in Kingman County)

Learning: Range Plant Identification, Plant Growth, Stocking Rate Determinations, Livestock Nutrition, Rangeland Wildlife Management, and much more!

Special Items: Field Trips, Steak Dinner

Activities: Swimming, Canoeing, Fishing, & Hiking

Tuition: \$250 per participant*

*Interested students should contact their local Conservation District, Extension Office, Farm Bureau office, livestock association, and/or other local business for possible financial assistance.



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Contact: Garan Belt, Kansas Range Youth Camp Chairman
3020 West 18th Avenue Emporia, KS 66801--- 620-583-5544---garan.belt@usda.gov

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Thank you to all our sponsors!

Conservation District Services

Equipment Rental and Sales

The Dickinson County Conservation District provides conservation equipment rental service to area landowners. Contact Cindy Montgomery at 785-263-2787 extension 332 to schedule your

Great Plains No Till Drill

Delivered: \$50 Delivery Fee + \$15/Acre
First 1/2 Acre Free
Customer Pickup: \$15/Acre
\$80 Minimum

Truax Grass Seed Drill

Delivered: \$40 Delivery Fee + \$11/Acre
First 1 Acre Free
Customer Pickup: \$11/Acre
\$40 Minimum

Drip Torch

\$100 Deposit
\$5/Day 1st 3 Days
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CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge—\$32

30" Wire Stem Marking Flags Fluorescent Pink

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CALENDAR

May 7— Deadline to apply for Range Youth Camp sponsorship

May 10—Regular Board Meeting

May 31 – OFFICE CLOSED

June 10—Regular Board Meeting

July 5—OFFICE CLOSED

July 12—Regular Board Meeting

August 9—Regular Board Meeting

September 6—OFFICE CLOSED

September 7—Regular Board Meeting

October 11—Regular Board Meeting

November 8—Regular Board Meeting

December 6—Regular Board Meeting

Funding to produce this newsletter is provided in part by the Division of Conservation through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan.

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