



Resources



Riley County Conservation District

Summer 2014 Newsletter

www.rileycountyks.gov/conservationdistrict

Volume 21, Issue 2

Sign Up in June for Cost Share Funds for Water Resources and Non-Point Source Pollution Control Practices

The Kansas Department of Conservation (DOC) will soon adopt their FY 2015 budget and allocate state funds to the county conservation districts to cost share on highest priority projects such as those listed below. The Riley County Conservation District will accept applications from landowners for these cost share funds from June 2nd through June 30th, 2014.

The **Water Resources Cost Share Program** assists with:

- Terraces
- Grassed waterways
- Livestock ponds
- Livestock waste structures
- Critical area plantings
- Diversions
- Feedlot or field windbreaks
- Dry hydrants
- Riparian fencing (fencing livestock away from stream)
- Pasture and hay land planting
- Spring developments
- Establishing streamside buffers
- Livestock wells
- Wetland development or restoration
- Cross fencing



Water Resources projects are best discussed in person with Aubrey Evans or Kevin Religa. Please

call Aubrey or Kevin at (785) 537-8764 ext 1301 or 1303 to arrange a short meeting.

The work under these contracts must be completed this fall or winter or the funding will be lost. It will be important to have a definite schedule and a contractor lined up to complete the work quickly.



The **Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program** funds assist with:

- On-site wastewater systems (repairing or replacing failed septic systems or lagoons - **these funds are only available for currently and continuously occupied homes** – not for empty homes nor for new home construction)
- Abandoned water well plugging
- Soil testing
- Livestock waste systems
- Riparian fencing (fencing livestock away from a stream)
- Livestock watering and pasture and rangeland management – which can include alternative water sources, cross fencing, native grass seeding and other practices

NPS projects are best discussed with Aubrey Evans at (785) 537-8764 ext 1301, and a preliminary application may be completed by phone.

Only this one signup is planned for the fiscal year.

Applications for these cost share funds which are received by June 30th will be evaluated, scored and presented to the RCCD Board for approval.

It is anticipated that the first round of awards will be made in mid July, for construction beginning after the awards.

Please note that cost share funds are not available for work which is started before approval by the DOC and before a signed contract is in hand. So please call and discuss your project before beginning any work.

Cropland or Lawn & Garden Soil Testing



With the high cost of fertilizer, concerns for water quality and drinking water treatment costs, **you don't want to apply any more nutrients than are necessary**. Soil testing is available through the Riley County Extension Office at 110 Courthouse Plaza in Manhattan, at **70% cost share**, with a maximum of **10 tests per year per landowner for cropland, and 2 tests per year per landowner for lawn and garden** - until the limited cost share funds are expended.

Failing Septic Systems

The Riley County Conservation District and the Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program provide cost-share to a limited number of Riley County landowners to repair or replace failing septic systems that are considered a threat to water quality. **Eligibility requirements must be met**. Cost-share is based upon average costs, up to a maximum payment of \$1,500.

Plugging Abandoned Water Wells

Abandoned water wells - either hand dug or drilled - are a physical hazard to humans and animals, as well as a potential avenue for ground water contamination. The plugging work can be done **either by the landowner or by a licensed well driller**, and cost-share is based upon average costs, up to a maximum payment of \$500.

Livestock Waste Systems

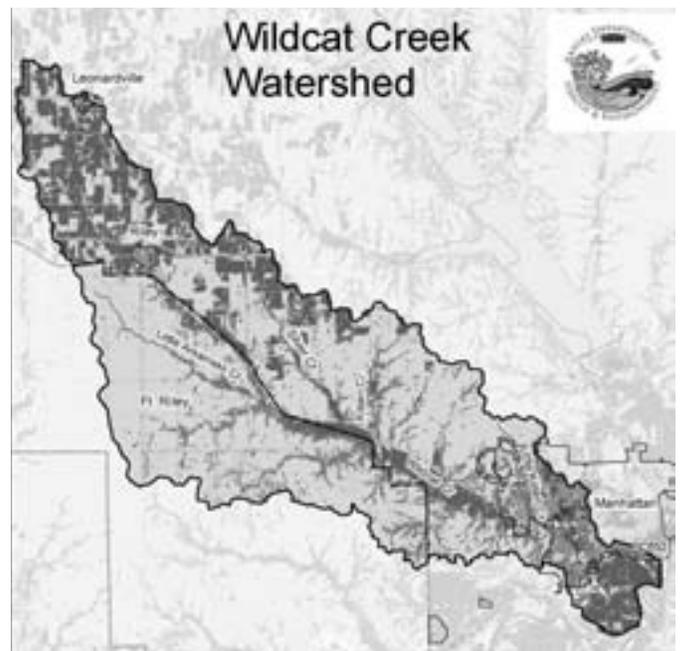
The RCCD may provide cost-share for livestock waste systems, and in certain cases the DOC may contribute additional funds, including design costs. EQIP funds may also be available for larger projects.

Funding provided by Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund. All programs and services are provided to anyone regardless of race, gender,

color, national origin, religion, age, marital status or handicap.

Additional Funds May Be Available for Wildcat Creek Watershed

The District is applying for grant funds to cost-share on **projects that would improve water quality in the Wildcat Creek watershed located west of Scenic Drive and above Manhattan**. This is a large area including Riley and reaching to Leonardville – see map. Eligible projects might include moving a feedlot or winter feeding area away from a creek, adding a spring tank or other water supply for livestock where a stream is the only current water source, seeding buffers or filter strips along a stream outside the Conservation Reserve Program, and possibly erosion control projects. Talk to **Aubrey or Kevin at (785) 537-8764 ext 1301 or 1303** if you have an idea for work within this watershed.



Ownership and Name Changes on Conservation Contracts

Please notify NRCS if you sell land that is under an EQIP, GRP, CSP, or WHIP contract, **or if the land has been transferred to a trust, LLC, or partnership**. Many landowners are changing ownership designation by creating trusts. Contract transfer paperwork needs to be completed for any of these changes to avoid contract violations and payment delays. Direct deposit banking information also needs to be updated. **Even if you notify FSA, you also need to notify NRCS separately** of any changes. Thank you.

Reminder on Land Conversions

USDA Farm Program participants are reminded that bringing any new land into production must be approved by FSA and NRCS to ensure that the land and conservation plan meets highly-erodible land compliance provisions. Removal of trees or grass to covert land to cropland must be documented with a map and form AD-1026 in your file. Removal of trees in some areas also triggers a wetland determination requirement. Even if you are removing old fencelines, farmsteads, or feedlots to clean up areas for cropping you still need to submit the required documentation so that your land can stay in compliance. The compliance provisions were enacted in the 1985 Farm Bill to keep highly-erodible land, environmentally sensitive land, and wetland areas from being converted to cropland without proper field reviews. In many cases conservation structural practices such as terraces and waterways will be required on highly-erodible land being brought into production.



Cedar Tree Control - It's Never Too Late to Start!

By Kevin Religa, District Conservationist

I consider cedar trees (Eastern Red Cedar to be exact) to be a noxious weed. If you farm and ranch in the flint hills I hope you feel the same way. Every year cedars are taking over more and more native pastures and hay meadows and the invasion is heading to western Kansas. Just like Musk Thistle I think everyone has a responsibility to control their cedar trees. I know there are many "wildlife" areas popping up in the county where people let the land revert back to nature without realizing that "nature" in this area is the tallgrass prairie (I have yet to see a deer eating a cedar tree!). Many people don't realize that cedar trees continue to grow the entire year, using up precious groundwater and drying up springs. Cedar trees belong in a windbreak, not in pastures and fencerows.

Thank goodness tree shears and tree saws are becoming commonplace attachments for skid loaders as many people have taken to clearing pastures, but much more work needs to be done. If everyone can make a commitment to control new cedar trees before they get 3 feet tall by either burning or clipping we can start turning the tide. We have a list of tree shear contractors here at the office if you are ready to start your own war on cedar trees. Let's hope everyone does their part!



Attention EQIP Contract Holders

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract holders are encouraged to **certify practice completion** as soon as the practices are completed.

Grassland practices such as prescribed burning, chemical brush control, aerial spraying, fencing, and mechanical brush control **should be certified within 30 days of completion**. Prescribed grazing and rotational **grazing practices should be certified no later than December 1st** of each year. **Cropland practices** such as no-till, nutrient management, and pest management **should be certified by August 1st** of each year.

Timely certification of practices avoids unnecessary delays in payments due to contract modifications and extensions, and saves time for all involved. **Call (785) 776-7582 ext 1303 for Kevin Religa**, NRCS District Conservationist.



ENVIROTHON

20 teams of 5 students plus their teachers took part in Envirothon events recently. **Riley County High School Team A placed 4th overall** in this year's regional event at Council Grove Reservoir in April. **RCHS Team B followed in 14th place overall** and their teacher is Ms. Corina Enns— **Congrats Falcons!**

Manhattan High School participated for the first time ever this year, receiving **6th place overall** at regionals. Their teacher is Mr. Noah Busch- **Congrats Indians!**

Top teams from each county then participated in the **2014 Kansas Envirothon competition**, which was held near Salina on April 30th. The Envirothon program is for students in grades 9 -12 who do fieldwork and compete in subject areas of Wildlife, Forestry, Soils, Aquatics, and the Current Environmental Issue.

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Conservation Newsletter

**Riley County Conservation District
Board of Supervisors:**

Steve Hargrave, Chair
Nathan Larson, Vice Chair
Stan Johnson, Treasurer
Steve Strauss, Member
David Cederberg, Member

Conservation District Staff:

Aubrey Evans, District Manager



**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Staff:**

Kevin C. Religa,
District Conservationist
Tom Roth,
Soil Conservationist
Andrew Klein,
Soil Conservation Technician
Myra Richardson,
Range Conservationist

Riley County Conservation District Board meetings are generally held the second Thursday of each month -
(April-October at 7:30 PM, and November-March at 6:30 PM). The public is welcome to attend – please call to verify time of meeting.