



Resources



Riley County Conservation District

Summer 2015 Newsletter

www.rileycountyks.gov/conservationdistrict

Volume 22, 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 2016 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 1st through June 30th, 2015.**

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.

Livestock Waste Systems

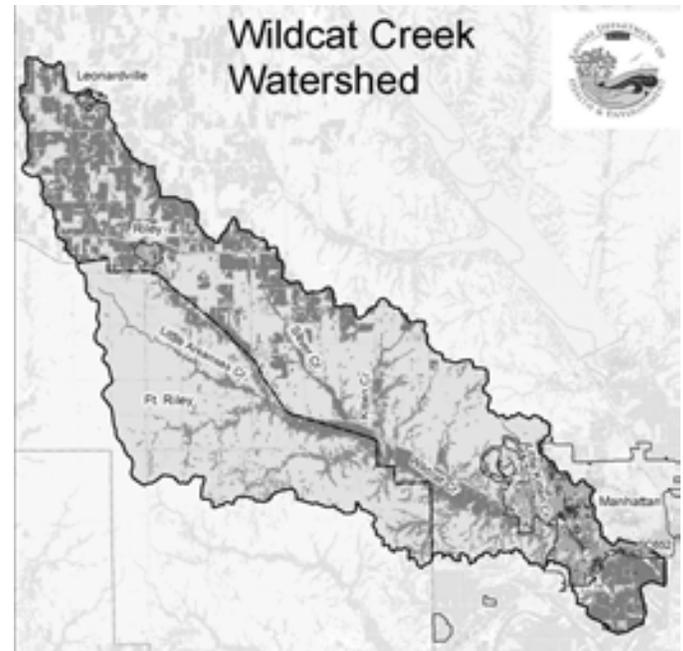
The RCCD may provide cost-share for livestock waste systems, and in certain cases the DOC may contribute additional funds, including design costs. EQIP funds may also be available for larger projects.

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 has 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 or CSP 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.

Soil Health and Cover Crops – How Do They Fit Your Operation?

By Kevin Religa, District Conservationist

Agriculture it seems has come full circle when it comes to soil health. We are once again learning from the past when it comes to soil health and that is a good thing. I hear many producers talk about “Grandpa” planting yellow sweet clover to build the soil. Now I hear producers planting cover crops to build the soil. When it comes to soil health, Grandpa knew what he was doing. Now we have the science and research to back that up.

Planting cover crops is becoming more and more popular as producers start to find a fit for them on their operation. Whether it is for grazing and a forage source or for soil health cover crops have many benefits, and

Grandpa knew that. Maybe Grandpa was planting sweet clover for the nitrogen. Maybe he was planting it to “build the soil”. Either way he was right.

Now there are dozens of cover crop species and dozens of mixes you can plant, just read the latest farming magazines. Mixes to do everything but put a man on the moon. But what mix or species is right for you? Do you need mixes to graze in late summer or in winter? Do you need mixes to build your soil organic matter? Do you need mixes to scavenge nitrogen to make it available for the next crop?

The NRCS Field Office and the Riley County Conservation District planted 30 cover crop test plots last summer near Leonardville to give local producers a chance to see cover crops up close. Producers were very interested in seeing new species such as Chickling Vetch, Sunn Hemp, Canola, and different mixes. Soil tests and compaction tests were completed on the plots for ongoing research. Those plots will be planted again this year in July after wheat harvest to once again build some local research to help local producers make decisions on what to plant, where to plant, and when to plant.

This is an exciting time for agriculture and soil health. This is once again a time for local producers to be innovators and pioneers, just as they were 20 years ago with no-till. As we see cover crops planted on larger and larger acreages we will be able to see the short-term and long-term benefits of cover crops. Think about it: a crop to add nitrogen to the soil; a crop to scavenge nutrients for the next crop; a crop to reduce erosion; a crop to reduce the fertilizer bill; a crop to graze so I can rest my pasture; a crop to reduce compaction; a crop to keep my soil healthy. The list can go on and on. Start planting them on your farm and see what cover crops can do for you.

For more information on how to get cover crops started on your farm call NRCS @ 785-776-7582 Ext 3. More information is also available on the Kansas Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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

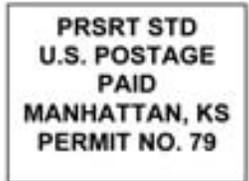
15 teams of 5 students plus their teachers took part in Envirothon events recently. **Riley County High School's Team 10th place overall at state** and their teacher is Ms. Cindy Thomson– **Congrats Falcons!**

Top teams from each county participated in the **2015 Kansas Envirothon competition**, which was held near Cottonwood Falls on April 29th. 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.

Soil Conservationist Leaving

Many of you have worked with our Soil Conservationist Myra Richardson. She is leaving to take a District Conservationist job in Nebraska in the town she grew up near. She will be greatly missed!

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Conservation Newsletter

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

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

Conservation District Staff:

Aubrey Evans, District Manager
Lisa Wainwright, Soil Conservation Technician



**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Staff:**

Kevin C. Religa,
District Conservationist
Tom Roth,
CNMP Specialist
Myra Richardson,
Soil 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 6:00 PM). The public is welcome to attend – please call to verify time of meeting.