



# Resources



## Riley County Conservation District

Summer 2011 Newsletter

[www.rileycountyks.gov/conservationdistrict](http://www.rileycountyks.gov/conservationdistrict)

Volume 18, Issue 2

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

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) will soon adopt their FY 2012 budget and allocate funds to the various 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 between June 1st and June 30th, 2011.**

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 Bob Lienemann or Nick Strawn. Please**

**call Bob or Nick at (785) 537-8764 ext 1301 or 1307 to arrange a short meeting.**

The work under these contracts must be completed by mid May, 2012, or the funds 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 Bob Lienemann at (785) 537-8764 ext 1301, and a preliminary application may be completed by phone.**

Only this one sign-up is planned for the fiscal year.

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

It is anticipated that the first round of awards may 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 SCC 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 a 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 SCC may contribute additional funds, including design costs. EQIP funds may also be available for larger projects.

*Funding provided by the State Conservation Commission 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.*

## Ownership and Name Changes on Conservation Contracts

Please notify NRCS immediately in the event of selling land that is under an EQIP, GRP, 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 must be completed for any of these changes to avoid contract violations and payment delays. Direct deposit banking information must also be updated. **Even if you notify FSA, you must also notify NRCS** of any of these changes. Thank you.

## 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 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year. **Cropland practices** such as no-till, nutrient management, and pest management **should be certified by August 1<sup>st</sup>** 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.

## District's Conservation Farm

Our District received a **gift of an 80 acre farm** north of Manhattan, to promote conservation education. To date we have repaired a pond spillway, cut cedars and locusts from the prairie, cleared trees along the county road that caused an ice problem in the winter, maintained several small buildings on the site, and related work.



The property includes a small cabin and sheds, ponds, and mature and recently planted trees. **We are looking for volunteers** to help mow the area around the buildings, stain the cabin and deck, prune trees, fix fence or related projects. This site also provides opportunities for 4-H, Scouts, FFA or other groups for individual or collective efforts. And we welcome your suggestions on how best to use the property into the future. For info or to volunteer your help, **call Bob at (785) 537-8764 ext 1301.**

## ENVIROTHON

48 teams – including Riley County High School - of 5 students plus their teachers took part in this year's **Area Envirothons**, held at Banner Creek Lake near Holton on April 13<sup>th</sup> and at Council Grove Reservoir on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The Envirothon program is for students in grades 9 -12, who conduct fieldwork, and then compete in the five subject areas of Wildlife, Forestry, Soils, Aquatics, and the Current Environmental Issue. Rock Creek High School and Wakefield High School won this year's area events.

Top teams from each county then participated in the **statewide Envirothon competition**, which was held on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Salina. Check with your school now, for next year's program!

## Conservation Districts' Role Continues to Evolve

At our annual meeting in February, Kris Ethridge provided an overview of how county conservation districts and USDA agencies came into existence, and evolved over time. Reorganization by our new Governor will place the State Conservation Commission which oversees district funding and programs into the Kansas Department of Agriculture on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This may restrict our independent voice on conservation issues and access to funding. Or we may develop new relationships with new partners to strengthen support for conservation programs. Time will tell.

Regarding the cost share funds that districts have provided for terraces and waterways, ponds, grassland management and other projects, we anticipate that these programs will continue. But beginning this past year, these projects must be completed between July and the following May, or the funds are lost to both the landowner and the county. We understand that this is a change from what folks had come to expect, and is sometimes difficult given weather and contractor schedules. In order to make this work for terraces and waterways or other work on cropland, it may be helpful to plan around a crop rotation that provides more time for the contractor to complete the work.



## Day on the Farm

Kevin, Andrew and Bob, along with Riley County Farm Bureau, FFA and many other volunteers hosted Kids' Ag Day for **all Riley County 3<sup>rd</sup> graders** on April 27<sup>th</sup> at CICO Park in Manhattan. **Over 500 students attended**, along with their teachers and assistants. The stream trailer was very popular, as it demonstrates practices that result in either good or bad water quality, both in town and on the farm, and also shows the impacts of stream erosion and sedimentation.

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## *Conservation Newsletter*

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**Conservation District Staff:**

**Bob Lienemann**, District Manager



**Natural Resources Conservation Service**  
**Staff:**

**Kevin C. Religa**,  
District Conservationist  
**Tom Roth**,  
Soil Conservationist  
**Nick Strawn**,  
Soil Conservation Technician  
**John Henry and Alex Miller**,  
Range Management Specialists

Riley County Conservation District Board meetings are generally held the second Thursday of each month – (May-October at 7:30 PM, and November-April at 7:00 PM). The public is welcome to attend – please call to verify time of meeting.