



DIVISION OF CONSERVATION PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

February 2021

What is the Division of Conservation?

The Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation (DOC) mission statement is to protect, enhance, and regenerate Kansas' natural resources through the development and implementation of policies, guidelines, and programs designed to assist local governments and individuals in conserving the state's natural resources.

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) was established by the Kansas Legislature in 1937 to promote soil and water conservation. The DOC was established in 2011 by an Executive Reorganization Order (ERO) to transition the SCC into the DOC. The DOC is governed by nine members consisting of an elected commissioner from each of the five conservation areas; two ex-officio members representing KSU Research and Extension; and one appointed member each representing the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) and the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The agency is administered by an Executive Director appointed by the SCC.

The DOC has the responsibility to administer the Conservation Districts Law (K.S.A. 2-1901 et seq.), the Watershed District Act (K.S.A. 24-1201 et seq.) and other statutes authorizing various programs. The agency budget is financed from the dedicated funding of the State Water Plan Special Revenue Fund, State General Fund, and fee funds.

The DOC implements programs in partnership with 105 conservation districts and 75 organized watershed districts, and other local, state, and federal entities to achieve the goals of the Kansas Water Vision.

What are the objectives of DOC programs?

- To protect federal reservoirs and other public water supplies from pollutants and siltation.
- To reduce flood damage in critical flood prone areas.
- To reduce the discharge of sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants into water bodies across the state to achieve the Water Quality Standards as set forth by the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) process.
- To improve the health of stream riparian areas.
- To improve soil health and reduce soil erosion.
- To improve habitat for wildlife and aquatic species.
- To reduce the consumptive use of groundwater supplies in the High Plains Aquifer to sustain and preserve agricultural, industrial, and municipal water supplies.

AID TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM

- The Aid to Conservation Districts Program provides matching funds (up to \$25,000 per district) to conservation districts for the county commission to match support to receive full state aid (K.S.A. 2-1907c).
 - Currently KDA-DOC is not able to fully match due to state budget restrictions.
- Funds assist the 105 county conservation districts to effectively deliver local, state, and federal natural resource programs as prescribed under the Conservation District Law (K.S.A. 2-1901 et seq.).
 - Hire management, administrative and technical staff.
 - Coordinate various conservation programs.
 - Implement state financial assistance programs at the local level.
 - Carry out information and education campaigns promoting conservation.
 - Provide clerical assistance to NRCS to meet Local Operation Agreement.
- A local five-member board, known as district supervisors, governs each conservation district. The 525 district supervisors are elected public officials who serve without pay and donate nearly 50,000 hours per year establishing local priorities, setting policy, and administering programs to conserve natural resources and protect water quality.



WATER RESOURCES COST-SHARE PROGRAM

- The Water Resources Cost-Share Program (WRCSP) provides financial assistance to landowners for the establishment of conservation practices.
- The program was authorized in 1979 and administered by KDA-DOC and local conservation districts.
- Goals are to protect public water supplies by reducing sedimentation, nutrient, pesticide and fecal coliform bacteria loading to water bodies, and reducing aquifer level decline.
- Technical assistance is provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and practices are built to NRCS standards.
- Appropriated funds are broken down into sub-categories and allocated to county conservation districts for program implementation. Sub-categories include:
 - District Needs Allocation - These funds generally address sedimentation, erosion, nutrient, pesticide, and bacteria-loading, and water conservation within the county. The local conservation district determines eligibility.
 - Water Quality Allocation - Funds are directed to high priority watersheds for the restoration and protection of water quality. Only practices directly affecting water quality are eligible.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM

- The Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program (NPSPCP) provides financial assistance to landowners for the establishment of conservation practices.
- The program was authorized in 1989 and administered by KDA-DOC and local conservation districts.
- Goals are for water quality protection and restoration in watersheds with TMDL's, information and education for adults and youth, and other water quality issues identified by the state water planning process.
- Technical assistance is provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and practices are built to NRCS standards.
- Appropriated funds are broken down into sub-categories and allocated to county conservation districts for program implementation. Sub-categories include:
 - Funds for Best Management Practices (BMP) to address bacteria-loading, nutrients and low dissolved oxygen in streams and sedimentation above federal public water supply reservoirs.
 - Funds for 10 employees providing technical assistance to conservation districts in high workload NRCS management units for program implementation. Current funding partners include NRCS, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).
 - Funds for information and education to conservation districts. Funds are targeted to no-till education for soil health field days and registration costs for landowners that are first time attendees to the No-till on the Plains and Soil Health U conferences.
 - Water Quality Allocation - Funds are directed to high priority watersheds for the restoration and protection of water quality. Only practices directly affecting water quality are eligible.



WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

WTAP

- The Water Right Transition Assistance Program (WTAP) purpose is to reduce “Historic Consumptive Water Use” in targeted, high priority areas.
- In WTAP, dryland farming is permitted after water right retirement.
- Priority areas are targeted and approved by the KDA-DOC, with recommendations from GMDs in applicable areas.
- Compensation is determined by an available fixed, flat rate established annually by the SCC and a competitive bid price submitted by the owner.

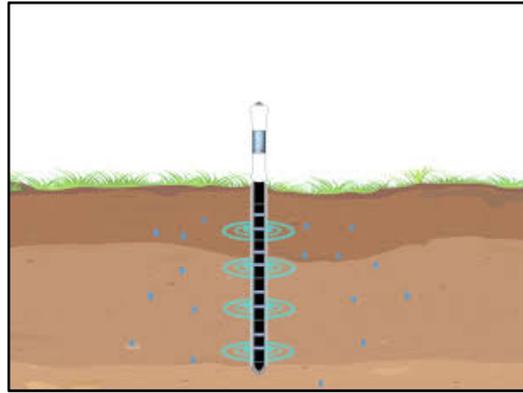
CREP

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) aims to permanently retire water rights in the Upper Arkansas River, and has recently been expanded into the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed.
- The landowner agrees to permanently retire water rights and plant a permanent cover (i.e. native grass) on the contracted land.
- Landowner will receive a 14-15 year rental rate from Farm Service Agency (FSA) and a sign-up incentive payment from the DOC.



IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY

- As the decline of groundwater continues, producers are becoming more interested in implementing innovative tools to improve irrigation efficiency and reduce water use.
- Funding is used to provide cost-share assistance to landowners for irrigation technology such as moisture probes.
- Currently focused on the Rattlesnake Creek Sub-basin to address the Water Right Impairment of the USFWS on Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, additional focus areas include LEMAs and WCAs.



RIPARIAN & WETLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM

- The goal of the Riparian & Wetland Protection Program (RWPP) is to protect, enhance, and restore streambanks, riparian areas, wetlands, and associated habitats by providing technical, educational, and financial assistance to landowners and the public in general.
- The program was authorized in 1989 by amending K.S.A 2-1915.
- Practices are implemented such as small-scale streambank stabilization – tree revetments, riparian tree plantings, and wetland restoration including playa lakes.



STREAMBANK STABILIZATION

- Streambank protection projects seek to reduce sediment loads above reservoirs, and the DOC continues to support streambank protection projects in the Tuttle Creek, John Redmond and Perry Reservoir watersheds through our leadership role within the Interagency Streambank Team.
- In addition to the benefits to water storage, streambank projects help protect farmland and re-establish important riparian forest communities.
- Through collaboration with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), the Kansas Water Office (KWO), and the Kansas Forest Service (KFS), the state has developed an Interagency Streambank Team to provide a consistent and efficient process to implement these multiple-benefit projects.



SEDIMENT AND NUTRIENT REDUCTION (BUFFER) INITIATIVE

- With the Sediment & Nutrient Reduction (Buffer) Initiative (SNRI), state incentives supplement federal incentives to encourage the establishment of riparian forest buffers and vegetative filter strips.
- One-time state incentive payment of \$225/acre are offered in a Tier 1 area, and \$162.50/acre are offered in a Tier 2 area.
- The SNRI is targeted to Milford Reservoir Watershed and other high priority watersheds above federal reservoirs across the state.



WATERSHED DAM CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

- The Watershed Dam Construction Program provides financial assistance to organized watershed districts, drainage districts, or other special purpose districts.
- This program is driven by demands of reducing sedimentation above federal reservoirs with water.
- In 1977, legislature created the program by K.S.A. 2-1915 for the creation of new dams. In 2006, an additional goal was created for the rehabilitation of existing flood control dams.
- Flood control dams are needed in flood-prone areas as well as in drought stricken.
- The KDA-DOC has qualified with the Corps of Engineers to hold third-party easement for mitigation resulting from construction of new flood control dams. The department qualification helps to reduce the cost associated with acquiring a third-party easement holder.



WATER SUPPLY RESTORATION PROGRAM

- The Water Supply Restoration Program provides financial assistance to public water supply sponsors to restore water supply systems.
- This program was authorized in 2007 with K.S.A 82a-2101.
- This is a voluntary, incentive-based water program designed to assist eligible sponsors to protect and restore public water supply systems where appropriate watershed restoration and protection are planned or already in place.
- The program budget is financed from the Clean Drinking Water Fee Fund through the State Water Plan Fund.

MULTIPURPOSE SMALL LAKES PROGRAM

- The Multipurpose Small Lakes Program provides financial assistance for flood protection, public water supply storage, and water related recreational facilities.
- This program was authorized in 1985 by K.S.A. 82a-1601.
- This program provides assistance for new construction or the renovation of an existing lake. Eligible sponsors as defined in statute include any entity with taxing authority and right of eminent domain.

