

Conservation Conversation



Conservation District Plans Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Barber County Conservation District is planned for January 30, 2021 at the Hardtner school. Conservation District law requires each conservation district to have an annual meeting to provide full disclosure of district activities/accomplishments and financial affairs, as well as hold an election of supervisors whose terms have expired.

At this time it is unclear if we will be allowed to serve a meal due to possible COVID-19 restrictions extending into the winter months. Safety considerations will include social distancing, hand sanitizer, masks, and following local current CDC guidelines, as well as possible prescreening questions. Yes, there are many uncertainties but the safety of our guests is our priority even as we comply with conservation district law.

Watch for updates over the next few months on our plans for the meeting and most specifically for the election of two supervisors.

Conservation Service vs. COVID Restrictions

Lockdowns and lockouts continue to affect the way we live and the way we do business. Our front door has been locked since March 19 here at the USDA Service Center in Medicine Lodge, adding to the frustration of our customers accustomed to face-to-face service with our employees. It has been equally frustrating for the staff as we struggle to balance safety precautions with the continued needs of customer service.

The Conservation District staff is still conducting business with our customers and keeping up with delivery of the goods and services they expect. We have distributed \$37,324 in cost share funds allocated to the District in July to address erosion issues and repair of failed septic systems, working closely with land-owners to administer their contracts in a timely manner.

We continue to maintain and sell our inventory of corrugated plastic pipe and fencing supplies. As a registered seed dealer in the state of Kansas, we custom order seed for native grass planting and cover crops, as well as bermudagrass, fescue, and buffalograss for lawns or pasture.

Our Conservation District Board holds our regular monthly board meetings in our district-owned shed, and we are still available to meet our customers there when they come to pick up products or rent our equipment. We look forward to the day when we can once again welcome our customers as they come through our front door. Until that time, please don't hesitate to give the conservation office a call at (620) 886-5311 so we can continue to be your voice for conservation in Barber County.

“Funding for our cost share programs is provided by the Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund .”

Board of Supervisors

John Cook.....Chairman
Ted Alexander.....Vice Chairman
Ann Cargill.....Treasurer
Calvin Boyd.....Member
Matt Cantrell.....Member

The Barber County Conservation District regular board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month.

Office Closings:

November 11: Veteran’s Day
November 26: Thanksgiving Day
December 25: Christmas Day
January 1: New Year’s Day

USDA NRCS Kansas Announces Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Application Deadline

SALINA, KANSAS, October 23, 2020—Karen A. Woodrich, Kansas State Conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), announced the 2021 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) application deadline of **Monday, November 30, 2020**. Kansas farmers and private landowners seeking conservation planning and financial assistance should contact their local NRCS Field Office (FO) for assistance with their natural resource concerns.


Using EQIP assistance, farmers can adopt structural and management practices that help with their natural resource concerns on working agricultural lands (such as soil erosion or water quality). Many of the available practices also provide supplemental benefits (such as improved soil health, wildlife habitat, and energy conservation).

Kansas agricultural producers and landowners with interest in the initial batching period for FY2021 financial assistance through EQIP must apply by Monday, November 30, 2020. NRCS accepts conservation program applications on a continuous basis and periodically makes application selections as funding allows.

This application cut-off announcement applies to all general EQIP, including conservation practices that address resource concerns to improve soil health, grazing lands and forestlands, water quality, water quantity, and livestock feeding operations. EQIP can also be helpful for transitioning to organic production, developing a rotational grazing system, adding a pollinator habitat to a farm, building a high tunnel system for fruit and vegetable production, and saturated buffers to improve water quality. Special initiatives (such as On-Farm Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel, and Monarch Butterfly Habitat) are also included in this announcement. Producers should discuss these sign-up options with their local NRCS FO to see if any of the initiatives or projects are right for them.

“The sooner we can begin (or continue) the conservation planning conversation with you, the better we can assist you in formulating alternatives for your operation. Understanding your objectives are key,” commented Woodrich.

Interested producers can apply at their local USDA Service Center or through www.Farmers.gov by submitting a request for conservation planning assistance and completing a Conservation Program Application (Form NRCS-CPA-1200). “NRCS is here to help Kansas farmers, ranchers, and private landowners make the best use of their land and natural resources,” said Woodrich. “Programs such as EQIP encourage management techniques that help the producer maximize their economic and environmental benefits.”

For more details on EQIP, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit <https://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov>. USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to work in the office, they will be helping producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors conducting business with NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), or any other Agency are required to call their local Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus  .

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

New Faces In The Conservation Office

When you call into the conservation office these days, you may be talking to a staff member you are not familiar with. We have taken on two new employees this year, as well as being served with assistance from Harper County in the NRCS Supervisory District Conservationist position. We welcome Blake, Ronnie, and Hannah to our team and appreciate their hard work since coming on.

NRCS Acting Supervisory District Conservationist

Blake McLemore is the District Conservationist for Harper County. He splits his time between his home office in Anthony and Medicine Lodge. Blake started with NRCS in May 2009, after graduating from Kansas State University with a major in Agronomy. He started his career in Colby, KS (also his hometown) as a Soil Conservationist. In August of 2010 Blake was transferred to the Emporia Field Office, where he very much enjoyed his time in the Flint Hills. Blake took over the McPherson Field Office as District Conservationist in January 2013. After getting married at the end of 2014, he then transferred to Anthony Field Office in March 2015, and has been there since. Blake's hobbies include hunting, fishing, camping, and playing music, all with family and friends. Blake also helps his family put on a bluegrass festival in Colby, KS. God first, and his wife and three kids come right after. Blake and his wife Lindsay are expecting number four in March



NRCS Soil Conservationist

Hi I'm Hannah Gerardy and I graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in agronomy with a secondary major in natural resources and environmental sciences and a minor in food science. I recently completed my masters in political science from Colorado State University with concentrations in environmental policy and public administration. During my undergraduate degree I have worked for the USDA-ARS and I am originally from Maryland. I am really looking forward to my time here at NRCS.

NRCS Soil Conservation Technician

My name is Ronnie Landwehr, I am a Barber county native that grew up outside of Sharon on the family farm/ranch. I have always loved my roots and really took a liking to cattle which is why I decided to stay in the Agricultural field. I graduated high school in Medicine Lodge in 2014. I then went on to complete my Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, OK.. After college I married my longtime friend and high school sweetheart and we moved back to Sharon where we could be close to family and start our lives together. For the next three years I worked as a day-hand on numerous ranches and helped with the family farm. In 2019 I decided to start my own cattle herd and in the same year I started to look for a career that would keep me close to home and was in the agricultural field. After a long time of searching I came across the conservation technician position at the Medicine Lodge NRCS field office and decided that it looked like the job for me, so I applied for it and was lucky enough to receive the position.

Ronnie, Morgan and baby Rose

