



Conservation Conversation

Official Newsletter of the Barber County Conservation District

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USDA Kansas Announces Application Cut-off for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

SALINA, KANSAS, March 1, 2021– U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the Statewide cut-off for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funding. All Kansas agricultural producers and landowners who wish to be considered for this year's funding should apply by **Friday, April 2, 2021**.

Through CSP, NRCS helps farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners earn payments for expanding conservation activities while maintaining agricultural production on their land. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques.

"CSP is the Nation's largest conservation program in terms of participating land," said Monty R. Breneman, Acting State Conservationist. "CSP has historically been and continues to be an extremely popular program in Kansas. CSP continues to grow every year making the application process very competitive."

Changes in the 2018 Farm Bill authorize NRCS to accept new CSP enrollments from now until 2023 and makes some improvements to the program. These updates include:


NRCS now enrolls eligible, high-ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres.

Higher payment rates are now available under the 2018 Farm Bill for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations.

Provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities and a special grassland conservation initiative (GCI) for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.

While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by the deadline to ensure their applications are considered for 2021 funding.

CSP is offered in Kansas through continuous signups. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements, and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP is for working lands including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of a Tribe.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business are required to call their local Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at Farmers.gov/coronavirus .

It is important that applicants provide accurate records of ownership to USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). This FY, all landowners are required to file a CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan, along with adjusted gross income and conservation compliance forms. Application information is available at your local [USDA Service Center](#). More information is also available at [Kansas NRCS](#).

To learn more about CSP or other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit [Get Started with NRCS](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

April is State Cost Share Sign-Up

Applications are now being accepted and throughout the month of April for cost share assistance through the state's Water Resources Cost Share Program (WRCSP) and the Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program (NPS). A few of the practices which are available through these two programs are erosion control structures, pipe outlet terraces, construction of terraces and grassed waterways, range and pasture seeding, livestock water developments (to include tanks, wells, pumping systems, and pipelines), fencing, and dry hydrants for rural fire protection. Also included in the NPS program specifically are abandoned water well plugging and repair of failed septic systems.

All applications will be ranked according to a priority based ranking worksheet, and funded corresponding to their ranking until all funds are allocated. Projects cannot be started prior to contract approval by the state. To apply for these funds, call or stop by the conservation office and let us know about your project needs.

Funding provided by the Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund.

Spring Wildflower Tour

District staff is planning the 34th annual Spring Wildflower Tour to be held May 8, 2021. Registration begins at 8:00 AM at the Medicine Lodge High School cafeteria. A continental breakfast is served before boarding the buses for 2 wildflower identification stops. The event ends around 1:00 PM after enjoying a delicious barbeque lunch. If you've never been on our tour, are looking for a unique Mother's Day gift, or just missed us last year, call the conservation office to make your paid reservations by May 3. Cost of the tour is \$20, children 12 and under—\$10.

Range Youth Camp Scholarship



Range Youth Camp is the most accepted and enduring activity of the Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management. The camp was first held in 1960 and is continuing to educate youth about the importance of Kansas rangelands to this day. The camp is designed to give students a basic understanding of the principles of rangeland ecology, including plant physiology, plant identification, ecological sites, range condition, and trend. Additional topics discussed at camp are animal behavior, animal nutrition, wildlife use of rangelands, and calculating stocking rates.

Upcoming High School Sophomore, Junior, and Senior students who have a serious interest in rangeland management, rangeland ecology, or grazing animals are eligible for a scholarship through the Barber County Conservation District to attend the camp at Camp Mennoscah in Murdock, KS. Dates for the camp have not been set at this time so be sure to watch for an update on our Facebook page!

NRCS Announces New Grasslands Initiative

USDA/NRCS has just announced the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Kansas Great Plains Grassland Initiative (GPGI). This program provides opportunity for producers to reduce vulnerability of Kansas core grasslands to woody encroachment. Core grasslands include targeted areas within the Flint Hills, Gypsum Hills, and Smoky Hills regions of Kansas. Treatment strategies will rely on a pest management conservation system plan to manage woody species encroachment on identified planned land units (PLUs) within the core grassland areas. Additional information is forthcoming and will be posted on our Facebook page as it becomes available.

No Tree Left Behind

By Jess Crockford, SW Regional Coordinator Kansas Prescribed Fire Council



Area ranchers working on controlling the spread of Eastern Red Cedar are fighting an arduous battle. Cedars are relentless in their ability to spread. In the last several years ranchers have seen the value of incorporating fire along with mechanical treatment. But, one of the issues facing the control of the spread of cedars is that they grow in some very inaccessible areas. As a result, some trees continue to survive after treatment. It is these survivors that are providing the seed to re-infest our grasslands.

Cedar trees have both male and female trees. Each mature female tree can produce over two million seeds in a good year. Most of these seed are only viable for one year. The primary method of spreading the seed is ingestion by birds. The seed passes rapidly through the birds' system and is usually deposited within 100 to 200 yards of the source tree.

It is very important that all fruit bearing trees be removed from the area to avoid re-infestation. This doesn't mean that all shelter belts with Eastern Red Cedars must be removed but intense control measures should be focused around those trees that are valued for other purposes.

Once control measures have been applied, i.e. fire, mechanical cutting, all remaining cedars trees should be cut by hand if necessary, to eliminate the seed source. Everyone's policy should be "no tree left behind".

If you are interested in learning more about prescribe fire, burn associations, getting assistance in developing a prescribed burn plan, contact your local Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service office at 620-886-5311, or the Kansas Prescribed Fire Council at 785-532-3316.

District Equipment Rental

If you're considering a burn on your native range and find yourself needing an additional water conveyance, the District has a 1000 gallon nurse tank and a 200 gallon slide-in unit for rent. Rental rates on each are \$50/three working days. Call ahead to reserve.

The District also has a 15' Great Plains No-Till Drill with a rental rate of \$10/acre (10 acre minimum) as well as a 12' Horizon Grass Drill— \$7.50/acre (10 acre minimum).

John Farney Memorial Scholarship

The John Farney Memorial Scholarship is a \$1000 scholarship sponsored by the Barber County Conservation District. The scholarship will be awarded to a student who is entering at least his/her second year of college. Applicants must be pursuing a college degree in a conservation-related field. The applicant must also be a resident of Barber County. The deadline for applications is May 28, 2021. Applications are available at the conservation office at 800 W. 3rd Avenue, Medicine Lodge, Kansas. You may also call (620) 886-5311 for more information.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

AND BY THE WAY...

- The Conservation District carries a large inventory of high density polyethylene (HDPE) corrugated pipe and components for all your drainage needs. Let us be your one-stop shop for your next project; tile outlets, culverts, ponds.
- We also carry a 19-strand lite cable, SunGuard fiberglass posts, metal clips, and lots of other components for cross fencing. Producers love the lite cable for its' "no-slinky" characteristics.
- If you are installing a livestock tank through cost-share, chances are you will be required to install a wildlife escape ramp - we've got them!
- As a registered seed dealer, the Conservation District would appreciate the opportunity to fill your custom orders for native grass seed, cover crop mixes, cool season grasses and much more.