



Summer 2011



Conservation Conversation

WILDFLOWER TOUR

THE WEATHER WAS PERFECT ON MAY 7TH AS WE WELCOMED 52 ENTHUSIASTIC WILDFLOWER TOUR GUESTS READY TO EXPERIENCE THE SPLendor BARBER COUNTY HAS TO OFFER. A BEAUTIFUL MORNING AND TWO SCENIC SITES GAVE OUR WILDFLOWER ENTHUSIASTS SOMETHING TRULY SPECTACULAR TO BEHOLD. EXPERIENCED, KNOWLEDGEABLE TOUR GUIDES SHARED THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE FLOWERS, INCLUDING SOME LITTLE-KNOWN USES FOR MANY OF THE PLANTS.

FOLLOWING A DELICIOUS LUNCH AT EAGLE PARK, WE WERE TREATED TO EXCITING ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED BY THE CAN-CAN GIRLS AND THEIR COWBOY PARTNERS. FOLLOWING ENTERTAINMENT, WE HEADED OFF TO THE AFTERNOON SITE WITH A DRIVE THROUGH THE GYP HILLS.

THIS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED EVENT IS A GREAT WAY TO INTRODUCE FOLKS TO THE WONDER OF WILDFLOWERS AND SHARE THE BEAUTY OF OUR LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD, BARBER COUNTY.



5TH GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAY

ON APRIL 21, 2011, THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT HELD A CONSERVATION FIELD DAY FOR THE 5TH GRADERS OF BARBER COUNTY AT THE CITY PARK IN KIOWA. THE DAY STARTED WITH 60 STUDENTS FROM BOTH NORTH BARBER AND SOUTH BARBER. AFTER DIVIDING INTO FOUR GROUPS, WE IMMEDIATELY GOT STARTED ON OUR MORNING ROTATIONS. ONE ROTATION WAS JERRY McNAMAR DEMONSTRATING A GROUNDWATER FLOW MODEL. JERRY SHOWED THE STUDENTS THE EFFECTS OF GROUND SPILLS AND HOW THEY CAN END UP IN YOUR DRINKING WATER. HAROLD DEMONSTRATED BEFORE A RAPT AUDIENCE HOW CHANGING A STREAM BANK AND ADDING THINGS LIKE LOGS TO THE RIVER CAN CHANGE ITS COURSE AND CAUSE DESTRUCTION DOWN RIVER. THE KIDS LIKED GETTING THEIR HANDS IN THE "SAND" AND SEEING WHAT THEIR IDEAS DID TO THE STREAM. THE THIRD ROTATION WAS SUNFLOWER RC&D COORDINATOR ROGER MASENTHIN AND HIS RECYCLING DISPLAY. ROGER'S PRESENTATION ON RECYCLING INCLUDED MUSIC AND A GAME THAT KEPT THE KIDS ON THEIR TOES. THE FOURTH ROTATION WAS NRCS SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN CARL JARBOE. CARL SHOWED THE KIDS HIS TREE "COOKIES" AND TRIED TO SEE IF THE KIDS COULD GUESS WHICH TYPE OF TREE THEY CAME FROM. CARL THEN LED THE KIDS ON A SHORT NATURE WALK.

AFTER A SACK LUNCH, SPONSORED BY CORONA HOCH, FARM BUREAU, EVERYONE GATHERED IN ONE GROUP AGAIN FOR THE AFTERNOON. CHARLIE SWANK WITH KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND PARKS (KDWP) STARTED THE AFTERNOON OUT BY BRINGING OUT SNAKES FOR THE KIDS TO SEE AND FEEL. THEY EVEN GOT TO SEE ONE SNAKE SNACK ON A MOUSE. JARRED KNEISEL FOLLOWED WITH THE RAINFALL SIMULATOR. THE KIDS GOT TO SEE THE EFFECTS OF RAINFALL ON DIFFERENT SOILS WITH VARYING AMOUNTS OF COVER AND THE CORRESPONDING RUN-OFF THAT OCCURRED. THE DAY CONCLUDED WITH EDIBLE SOIL AS THE FINAL ROTATION. THE KIDS ALL ENJOYED THEIR SOIL LAYERS (OREO'S AND PUDDING) BEFORE LOADING UP AND GOING BACK TO THE SCHOOL.



THE DAY WAS A GREAT SUCCESS AND WE ARE ALREADY LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR'S FIELD DAY! SPECIAL THANKS GOES OUT TO CORONA HOCH AND FARM BUREAU FOR SPONSORING OUR MEAL AND WATER BOTTLES THIS YEAR!!

District Increases Cost Share Fund

In response to the number of applications requesting cost share assistance for livestock water developments, the Board of Supervisors voted to set aside an additional \$12,300 in cost share funding for qualifying projects. The decision was made at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on July 5. Prompted by the extreme drought in 2005, the District set up a \$20,000 cost share fund specifically for livestock water developments: \$7700 remains in the fund. The additional money will be used to fund applications received during the April 2011 cost share sign-up for State funded programs.

HELP START A NEW BURN ASSOCIATION OR CHAPTER!

By Caleb Papenhausen

I know it's hard to think about burning in such a dry year and people often look at it as an expense. However, even with the all of the challenges SC Kansas has, most find burning is still one of the most cost efficient tools ranchers have, especially over the long term. As you know, many acres are lost to tree and shrub expansion as fire is suppressed, not to mention all that water they gobble up! Burn Associations help eliminate the biggest challenges to getting burns in by providing greater access to equipment, expertise, and probably the biggest limiting factor of all, having enough PEOPLE! I guess I should throw in a quick blurb here about what exactly a burn association is. The answer to that is in the end, whatever you make of it, which is really the beauty of it. In general however, it is a group of people who want to share resources (time, equipment, knowledge) to make burning easier. It is in no way a group you say "hey, I want to join" and then people come and burn for you. They are formed with the mindset I'll scratch your back, if you scratch mine. And it's the only way they can function. There's already an example of an association located on the West side of the county in the form of the Red Hills Prescribed Burn Association in which a new group can be modeled after (or even become a separate chapter within).

Starting new ventures like this can seem like an overwhelming task, but just think what it could become in just a few years! If anyone is interested in starting a new burn association in Barber County you can contact Caleb Papenhausen, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist with Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever at 620-213-2621 or 620-886-5311 ext.110 or cpapenhausen@pheasantsforever.org. Contacting me with something as simple as "I'm interested" with your contact information would suffice if you just want to see what becomes of it. Of course, if you are interested I would certainly entertain a longer conversation if you have ideas or would like to take on a leadership role to help get things going. If there's enough interest I will take on the role of organizing a place to discuss and communicate with each other online (via a forum most likely) and organize and advertise in-person meetings to get the ball rolling initially.

Student Trainee - James Ungerer

James L. Ungerer is the student trainee working for NRCS here in Barber County this summer. His first day of work was on May 23rd and he will be providing services through August 12th. This is his third station of duty with the agency. Last summer he was located in Scott County, KS. This past spring he worked at the Manhattan Field Office while attending school. He was introduced to the agency through his father, Jon, who has worked for NRCS for many years. His aspirations lie in becoming a Range Conservationist and trying to improve rangelands in any way he can.

He will graduate from Kansas State University this August with a B.S. in Construction Science and a minor in Agronomy. This fall, he will begin to pursue a Master's Degree in Agronomy with a focus on Rangeland Management. He will be conducting research on fall burning and the effects it may have on *Serecea Lespedeza* and different species of brush.

James' hometown is Marysville, KS. His family is now located in Manhattan. His father works at the NRCS state office in Salina and his mother works on campus at Kansas State. He has two younger brothers, one of which is attending Kansas State and the other just graduated high school and has joined the Marines. During his free time he enjoys hunting, fishing, reading westerns, and spending time with family.



eWaste

A special thank you goes out to SC Telcom for pulling the eWaste trailer to the Lyons recycling center on June 29. A plea for help was put out to Steve Allen for a truck to pull the trailer which was filled to capacity. His quick response was a truck and driver, Eric Jahay, who helped load the overflow into the trailer and make the trip on a hot, windy day. Thanks guys! You really came through for us!

Range School Scholarship

The Conservation District is offering a full scholarship to a Barber County producer interested in attending the KGLC 2011 Principles of Rangeland Management School, Mid-Shortgrass Prairie session, August 23-25, 2011 at Camp Lakeside, Scott County Lake, KS. To make application, contact the conservation office at (620) 886-5311, ext. 3.

Come Join Us At The Fair!

Be sure to stop by the Conservation District's Booth at the Barber County Fair in Hardtner, Kansas, July 22-23.

This Year's Booth Is All About Youth & Education!! Come Visit Us For A Display On This Year's Stewardship & Poster Contest Theme As Well As Wildflower Tour, 5th Grade Field Day & Cotton Candy!

Waterways, Do They Need Maintenance?

By: Carl Jarboe, Soil Conservation Technician at the Medicine Lodge Service Center, NRCS

As a technician for NRCS I see well cared for waterways and some that are not maintained. They, Waterways, do not require a lot of maintenance but as with all things constructed by man, some is required. Usually the best waterways are ones that are hayed. This is no surprise. They often get the best maintenance including being fertilized on a regular basis. Tame grasses respond well to fertilizer. The operator also fills any cuts when they get started. Haying a rough waterway is not fun and is very hard on equipment. I've been told by several by producers that they quit haying a waterway because it was getting rough. Why not fix the cuts and continue haying?

I often see terraces that haven't been cut into the existing well covered waterway. The waterway was built, planted to native or a tame grass type, and then left on its own. Some have small cuts running down the middle that developed along a drill ridge that need some attention. Many have great grass stands and are ready to have terraces cut into them it just hasn't happened yet. I have seen a few waterways that have erosion on the outside of the berm because of this. This erosion could have been avoided had the terraces been cut into the waterway after it was grassed over. This seems simple enough but as things seem to go these days we get so busy we over look things like this until we have a canyon next to the waterway. Waterways can take 2 to 3 years to have enough grass cover to cut the terrace into them. If you have some newly built waterways on your land or land you rent, take time to check them out. Fix any eroded spots and re-seed if needed. If the waterway looks ready to have terraces cut in, see to it that it is done. If you are unsure if it is ready call your local NRCS office and schedule a field visit to check it out, it may be ready or just need one more growing season to have good cover. Often a shot of fertilizer will make all the difference in getting a good grass cover, without fertilizer it is going to take longer particularly with Bermuda grass or cool season grasses like Brome.

Older waterways that have built up with sediment over time may need the sediment removed. You will need to refer back to the original design of the waterway to determine how much soil should be removed. Warm season grass waterways can be cleaned out anytime May through July. This allows the grasses time to recover before winter sets in. Often these grasses will come back from the roots. This saves reseeding or sprigging. Cool season grasses like brome should be cleaned out in September, October or March, April. This again is at a time that the grass can recover quickly. Some re-growth is possible but reseeding will help the recover process along, it all depends on how much sediment is removed. Fertilizing the waterways after doing a clean out will help the grasses come back quicker. Call your local NRCS office for assistance if you are unsure on how to go about this type of procedure.

Waterway Maintenance Do's and Don'ts

Do: fertilize tame grasses to promote a healthy stand, fix any areas of erosion as they show up seeding if needed, mow or hay to reduce sediment deposition, control spray booms to prevent over spray into waterway that can kill out grasses, control noxious weeds as they appear.

Don't: drive in waterway during wet periods, use as a turn row, damage can occur during tillage operations, use as a road, tracks can funnel water causing a cut.

Do waterways need maintenance, yes but a little bit each year can keep them functioning for many more years and save a costly rebuild and in particular save a tremendous amount of soil loss.

Terrace Maintenance

By: Jarred Kneisel, Supervisory District Conservationist

You know how the old saying goes: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. That holds true for many things, and can certainly apply to maintenance of the terraces on your farm as well. While you're out in the fields during wheat harvest this summer, be on the lookout for some tell-tale signs that your terraces need some work.

Your terraces should have a *minimum* of one foot of height (from the top of the ridge to the bottom of the channel), to still be considered to have adequate storage. Anything shorter than that, and your terrace could easily be overtopped in the next rain event, causing big troubles down the hill. Over time, it is inevitable for a terrace to lose some of its capacity and become "shorter" through the accumulation of sediment in the terrace channel, or by traveling up and over the terrace season after season. When you see that you have started to lose some height to your terraces, your best course of action would be to plow up the terraces, moving the sediment from the channel to the top of the terrace. Be careful when performing this type of maintenance to not dig a hole in one place of the terrace channel, where water can stand and potentially harm your crops. On the flip side, you want to maintain the grade within the channel to what it was originally designed at, as it can be easy to cause the water to run too fast in an effort to drain these wet spots. Terraces that are draining too quickly will have erosion show up within the channel, dumping excessive amounts of sediment into your waterways, and potentially creating some ugly gully erosion.

It is common to see some sediment build up at the point where the terraces enter the waterway. If you see this occurring, it is time to clean that sediment out so that the terrace can continue to outlet the water freely. If there is an excessive amount of sediment at the outlet of a terrace, keep in mind that that soil was once on your field, and you may have a problem elsewhere. As it was mentioned earlier, be careful when cleaning out the terrace outlet not to get carried away by digging so much that water rushes down the channel into the waterway, as this would create washing and erosion in either the terrace, waterway, or both.

An important item to keep in mind if you're debating on fixing just one terrace, or spending some more time to ensure that each terrace is functioning correctly: terraces are designed to only handle the water that falls in that one small area. They are not capable of handling water from another failing terrace, so having one failing terrace could potentially cause the rest of the terraces below to fail. Go ahead and spend the time to address any problems and protect your investment!

A couple of final thoughts – maintenance is key to a successful erosion control system – no-till is certainly not a cure-all for erosion and you will still need to maintain those structures. Secondly, a poorly-maintained terrace system can lead to worse erosion problems than if there were no terraces in place, as the water (and consequently, erosion) are concentrated into a smaller area, causing more localized damage.

If you are interested in some technical advice, or would like to find out about some of the programs available to help cost-share on terraces (or any other conservation practice you have in mind), please don't hesitate to call or stop by the office to talk with us about your operation and plans. Or, you can look on the NRCS website – www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov.

KGLC Range School Format Is Rancher-Friendly, Questions Welcomed

2703 Derenda Drive, Hutchinson, KS 67502 Phone: (620) 241-3636 Email: tdchristian@cox.net

(Hutchinson, KS) Why do some native grasses and forbs prefer shallow soils? Why do the plants in low-lying areas or along stream sides look different from upland plants? Why don't all native grasses and forbs respond to grazing pressure the same? What can I do to keep invasive plants out of my pastures? We hope to help students answer these and other questions. To start each school, all students are asked to state their interests in attending the school and what they hope to learn to take home and use on their ranch. In other words, the critical beginning session in our producer-oriented schools is to find out what students have come to find out, then we tailor materials and presentations to get at answers for them, said Tim Christian, state coordinator for the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC). And, David Kraft, NRCS state grazing lands specialist, added that each person attending the school has come with the idea of learning and sharing ranching and grazing experiences with others who are challenged with managing Kansas grass-land resources while earning a living.

The 2011 Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition's (KGLC) mid-/short-grass range school will be held August 23-25 at Camp Lakeside, Scott County State Lake, and The Nature Conservancy's Smoky Valley Ranch. This is our third time to hold the school at Camp Lakeside and are pleased to be able to spend a day on the TNC ranch which should provide students a unique learning experience, Christian said. The registration fee is \$300 per person and scholarships will be available to eligible ranchers, students, and agency staffs. He explained that scholarships range from \$150 for ranchers and students to \$100 for agency personnel. Registration and scholarship application deadline is July 22. Forms are available online at www.kglc.org, under the 2011 Range School heading in the navigation bar, or by contacting KGLC staff. We encourage anyone interested in attending to get their paperwork completed and in to us as the cut-off dates will get here quickly, he said. The school is limited to 35 students.

Kraft said that each instructor tries to tailor their remarks to meet the needs expressed by individuals through the entire course. The set of instructors varies by location but will include ranchers, federal agency staffs, organizational staffs, and university and Extension specialists.

Co-sponsors of the schools are the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kansas State University Extension, Fort Hays University, The Nature Conservancy, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, Kansas Rural Center, Kansas Native Plant Society, US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners For Wildlife Program, and the Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management. Kansas Rural Center, Kansas Native Plant Society, US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners For Wildlife Program, and the Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management.

More information on the schools can be obtained by contacting Tim Christian, KGLC state coordinator, at 620-241-3636, e-mail tdchristian@cox.net, Ken Sherraden, assistant, at 785-922-7061, e-mail kennethsherraden@sbcglobal.net.

Drought Information for Livestock Producers

by Jim Wright, Rangeland Management Specialist

As the weather keeps moving around us our grazing lands are getting dryer and dryer. It is fast approaching or, in some cases, past the time we need to start making difficult decisions. The following are some reminders and suggestions that David Lalman, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist from Oklahoma State University put together in 1998:

- 1. If selling stockers or cattle is inevitable, don't put it off. The markets are much better at the beginning of a drought than later.**
- 2. Wean calves early. This will reduce the cow's energy requirements and help her maintain body condition. You could put the calves on the better pasture, if available, and furnish supplements to them.**
- 3. Ammoniate low quality roughage. This can improve the intake and digestibility while providing the roughage needed.**
- 4. Consider limit feeding a concentrate diet to cows if grain prices are moderate to low.**
- 5. Start feeding hay and/or energy supplement before pastures become too short.**
- 6. Strip graze or rotationally graze pastures to improve utilization. This will increase total grazing days.**
- 7. Provide an ionophore (Bovatec, Rumensin, etc.) through concentrate supplement, salt/mineral mix, or other mixes.**
- 8. Make sure cattle are parasite free. A high parasite load will compound nutritional stress.**

Remember to monitor your cow herd body condition on a weekly basis and make needed adjustments to maintain a body condition score of 5 or better. For more information regarding these management practices along with others, check with your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices.

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www.cocorahs.org
www.fsa.usda.gov
www.ctic.purdue.edu/CTIC/CTIC.html

Notice: When you call the Barber County USDA Service Center at (620) 886-5311 an auto attendant will answer the phone. You may enter any of the following numbers during the message:

2 - Farm Service Agency
3 - NRCS and Conservation District

If you have a rotary phone, please stay on the line and a person will assist you.

**Barber County Conservation District
Board of Supervisors**

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The Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the Barber County USDA Service Center. If you have any questions or comments for the Board of Supervisors, or suggestions for this newsletter, please call (620) 886-5311.

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