

SUMMER

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The regular board meeting of the Barber County Conservation District is the first Tuesday of each month.

Board of Supervisors

Calvin Boyd—Chairman

Matt Cantrell—Vice Chairman

Ted Alexander—Treasurer

Sam Baier—Member

Georgi Dawson—Member

The Conservation District is offering a full scholarship to a rancher, landowner, or student interested in attending the KGLC 2014 Mid/Shortgrass Range School August 19-21, 2014. Call the conservation office for more information.

Adapting to the Changes Around You is 2014 Range School Focus

“Change is a hard thing to accept, but for ranchers in Kansas things are always changing and successful ranchers are always looking ahead - adapting their management to meet that change,” said Tim Christian state coordinator for the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC). “Registration is open for the 2014 KGLC range schools and we encourage interested folks to get their names on the list to attend one of two schools.”

The Mid-/Shortgrass Range School runs from August 5-7 at Camp Lakeside, Lake Scott, and the Tallgrass Range School is set for August 19-21 at Camp Wood YMCA, Elmdale. Registration is \$300 per person and scholarships funds are available to qualified attendees. A scholarship form and more information on the Schools is available at www.kglc.org under 2014 Range Schools found in the navigation bar. Scholarship applications must be submitted by July 22 for the Mid-/Shortgrass School and August 5 for the Tallgrass School.

Moving from drought to wetter conditions, staying ahead of market shifts, or dealing with challenges posed by wildlife habitat considerations all factor into planning for the grazing season, the off-season, and in making many of the needed management decisions on ranches today, said Christian. To help ranchers, landowners, and land managers think through many of these processes and remain economically viable is the goal set before our range school instructors as they work to provide tools, concepts, and sound advice on better managing ranch operations.

KGLC partners help with the costs for covering about half of those participating ranchers, their hired help or spouses; landowners; land managers; college students; and qualifying agency staffs. This requires outstanding financial support from many of our KGLC partnering individuals, organizations and agencies. Sponsors include USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kansas State University Research and Extension; Fort Hays state University; National Grazing Lands Coalition; Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism; US Fish and Wildlife Service Kansas Partners Program; Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management; The Nature Conservancy; William F. Bradley, Jr.; Trust, Feed-Lot Magazine; ITC Great Plains; Kansas Farm Bureau; and Graze the Prairie.

KGLC organized in 1991 as a non-profit educational organization and its vision is to regenerate Kansas grazing lands. For more information on the 2014 KGLC Range Schools, contact Tim Christian, state coordinator, at 620-241-3636, email to tdchristian@cox.net, or Ken Sherraden assistant coordinator, 785-922-7061, email to kennethsherraden@sbcglobal.net. You may also go to the web at www.kglc.org.



MUCH NEEDED RAINS, MUCH NEEDED REPAIRS

By Carl Jarboe

Finally, it started raining and along with it we have seen some erosion problems. After several years of little moisture, it's amazing to see water running again. Terraces have water in them and waterways have water running down through them again. With the rain can come some concerns.

As I have been out in the county I have noticed several terrace systems that need some work. The terraces have breaks in them or have lost capacity and are over-topping. Issues like these can be easy to fix but can sometimes be an indication of a failed system. Plowing up terraces can be a simple fix. Filling in the breaks can extend their life also. Be sure to pack the soil in so the next big rain doesn't just blow it out. Try to achieve a 1 foot height on the terraces at a minimum; 1.3 foot height would be even better. Be careful not to make low spots in your terrace channels when performing these maintenance items. Nothing is worse than working on a project like this and fix one while creating another.

How do you know if you need a total rebuild instead of just repair? If you need to work the entire system over it may be time to consider a total rebuild. If the outlets are needing repair it may mean a different outlet type is in order. We have designed several tile outlet systems in the last few years and they seem to be working very well. Like all practices, maintenance is important. The life of a system is all about the care given over time.

Your waterways are the same, they need some maintenance. Be sure to mow the grass waterways. Better yet hay them if you can. I know of several that have cuts in the channel that need repaired. Sometimes we can just fill the cuts, packing the soil as you bring it in. Especially in Bermuda grass waterways the grass will cover the fill quickly. Give it a little nitrogen fertilizer to help it along. If it is a native grass waterway you may want to hold off on the repair until winter. Then you can dormant seed the grass and with some nice rains get the new grass established in the spring. Putting in some small check-dams will help prevent the soil from just washing back out. Brome waterways could use some nitrogen fertilizer also. Repair them in the late summer and re-seed in the fall, September is good timing. That should give the grass a chance to get established before winter.

If you have any questions about your terraces and or waterways and how to deal with concerns you have feel free to give us a call at the USDA office. We can schedule an appointment to meet and discuss your concerns and offer some advice as to how to go about repair work if it is appropriate or maybe help design a new system.

SEE YOU AT THE FAIR!

Be sure to come out and support the Barber County 4-H Clubs at the Barber County Fair July 24-27. While you cool off in the Merchants Building, stop by the conservation booth to say 'howdy' and enjoy a cotton candy!



ARE THERE WEEDS IN YOUR PASTURE?

I have had some calls about excessive weeds in pastures. Are they a problem? Do I need to plant some more native grass? What do I do?

The abnormal amount of weeds (forbs to a range manager) is not unusual after several years of drought. Where grass once was and has died back due to dry conditions, forbs have filled in. Thank goodness we have cover. Without the forbs the soil might wash with excessive rain, or blow during a strong wind event. I have also noticed the forbs are actually in places Cheat was before. This spring the cheat didn't get ahead of the native grass as it has the previous few years. Where it looked like grass it was cheat now without cheat the forbs have filled in.

So, what should you do? First I would tell you go out and look closely through the "weeds" (forbs). There may be grass coming up. I have noticed several places where some grass did exist below the canopy of the forbs. Given a chance it will come through. There is little need if any to spray the weeds – we rarely see any instance in which chemical control makes financial (or vegetative) sense. Many of the forbs are good for the pasture. Some provide nitrogen for all to grow on. Others are actually very palatable, livestock love them and they are nutritious. Cattle gain weight on them. I have heard Range Specialist say that in August, forbs make up a large amount of livestock's diet.

What should you do? Watch how Mother Nature repairs the land herself. Save your money, don't spray. If you kill what is there you may have bare ground which could start some erosion problems. Mowing weeds sometimes helps give the grass a chance but is costly to do.

I know it's hard to see all of the weed, forbs, out there but give time a chance. I believe it is the best answer.

2014 SPRING WILDFLOWER (WILDLIFE) TOUR

Yep, that's right – our Spring Wildflower Tour took a little different direction this year with a 'wildlife tour' incorporated into the event.

In early May (back before such a thing as rain) we were very concerned that guests who had made reservations for our wildflower tour would be greatly disappointed at the lack of flowers. Guides were keeping an eye out for identification sites but were just not seeing the flowers because of the continued drought.

The idea of looking at what few flowers there were, then adding a few bison into the mix was just the ticket. Keith and Eva Yearout were approached with the plan, and typical of this pair, a hearty agreement was made.

Homemade cinnamon rolls and fresh fruit were served before guests loaded the buses for a trip to the Z-Bar Ranch. They were met by the Yearouts at a watering hole where the bison were called in with the familiar banging of the cake wagon. Many of the guests were city folk, so the site of these magnificent animals coming over the rolling hills was quite impressive to them. Eva captivated the audience as she shared her knowledge of the bison and their habitat. But the guests were in for another surprise as the buses bounced along to a prairie dog town on the Ranch. The group clapped appreciatively as Eva ended her informative talk on these little critters.

The hearty barbeque lunch at Eagle Park was followed by a wildflower identification site where, despite the continued drought, we were all inspired by the resilience of the native wildflowers.

The Spring Wildflower Tour is always scheduled the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend and who knows about next year? We may be onto something...