



## Conservation Conversation

### **Conservation District To Hold Annual Meeting**

The 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Barber County Conservation District will be held January 20, 2018 at the Community Building in Kiowa, KS at 6:00 P.M. Dinner is provided by the banks in Barber County.

The business session will include the district's financial report for 2017 as well as highlights of events and activities throughout the year. There will also be an election of two supervisors to the district board. Calvin Boyd and Georgi Dawson hold the expiring positions. Calvin has agreed to run for an additional three-year term. Georgi has served on the district board 34.5 years and is not seeking re-election.

Presentation of the Bankers Award Winner will be given to one family for their accomplishments and efforts in performing and maintaining their conservation plan. A Grasslands Award will also be presented for improvement to and maintenance of native grassland. The top three conservation poster contest winners in five categories will receive recognition for their posters which will be on display.

Reservations can be made by contacting the conservation office at (620) 886-5311 by January 16, 2018. Hope to see you there!

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### **Kansas Wildfire Cost Share Initiative**

The Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation (KDA/DOC) announces the Kansas Wildfire Cost Share Initiative to provide Cost-share assistance to landowners in areas affected by the March 2017 Kansas wildfires as well as the Anderson Creek wildfire in 2016.

Cost share assistance for this initiative is targeted at livestock water supplies, grass seeding, windbreaks, obstruction removal, and cross fencing (to include temporary electric fencing). This is an open sign-up but don't wait too long to make application. Stop by or call the conservation office to find out more about available practices and funding limits.

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

# Watching For Invasive Plants By Carl Jarboe

Are you on the watch for invasive plants in your pastures? There is one plant coming our way you should be AFRAID of!

An invasive plant is one that is not native to a specific location. Often they are introduced plants from another area and have a tendency to spread to and invade your pasture. They will compete with native plants for moisture and often become the dominant plant in the area. The balance of the range site is changed. The new invasive plant grows faster than the native species but provides poorer quality forage for grazing. The perfect balance that God created for us to manage is broken when these introduced invasive species escape into our native prairie.

When was the last time you really looked at your pasture? Have you seen any plants in your pasture that don't belong? Do they look out of place? The invasive plants start with one, then two and away we go. You may notice small pockets of a plant that is just different. The plant doesn't look like others in the pasture, kind of unique. This may just be an invasive plant. Collect a sample and bring into our office or take it to the county extension office so it can be identified. Find out if you have a plant of concern or not. If you wait to identify the problem you may just have a much more serious problem in 10 years. One plant sure can multiply.

Salt Cedar or Tamarisk: this plant is a huge problem the further west you go. It's becoming a problem in Barber County as well. Salt Cedar has an almost evergreen looking foliage that is blue green in color. This plant grows in wet sites however you can find it almost anywhere. This plant actually brings salts up through the soil profile to the surface. By increasing the salts, that it loves, it is making an environment that other native plants can't tolerate so they die. This woody plant is very difficult to eradicate.

Old World or Caucasian Bluestem: showing up in yellow patches of grass in your pasture right now. This is a grass introduced to the area from Russia. It is very invasive in our native pastures. This grass is planted by some and hated by range managers. It is planted because it produces a large amount of forage at green-up in the spring that is nutritious. The problem is that the grass becomes less nutritious and un-palatable as it matures. At that point cattle will not eat it if they are given a choice. This means the true native grasses are eaten to the ground. Cattle graze around the Old World and eat everything else. That alone should tell you something.

Eastern Red Cedar: many of you recognize this plant name. The wildfire in 2016 did at least one good thing - eliminated many cedar trees. Cedars are native to the area. I have read many accounts of the cedar forest in Barber County in the late 1800's. The problem may have been when hybrid cedars were introduced as windbreak trees in the "dirty 30's". These trees grew very fast and were easily propagated. With the change in native range management, the lack of or at least the reduction in the use of fire, the range changed. Eastern Red Cedar was able to get a foot hold on the area. In the '60's there were a few trees in the canyons and by the year 2000 they were everywhere and spreading fast.

Now the one I'm afraid of – and you should be too!

Redberry Juniper, *juniperus pinchotii*: this juniper is coming from the south. It has been found in Woods County Oklahoma, not too far away. The scary part is that this juniper will sprout from the base unlike an Eastern Red Cedar that will die when cut off below its green foliage. This evergreen is moving north. It's not a question of if – it's more a question of when we will have it to deal with in Barber County. I have read that when it is young (the first three years of its life) fire can kill it. As it matures dormant buds develop below the soil surface. Cutting it off and burning will remove the top, however those dormant buds will sprout and it starts all over. Can you imagine if we would be dealing with the burned trees we have now with growth coming up from the bottom? We would have to treat every stump to kill the trees for one thing. Cutting them down with the sprouts would be so difficult. What a nightmare. Yes, I'm concerned about this plant.

Be watchful: if you see any of these plants or wonder what is growing on your land and whether it belongs there, stop and check into it. Don't wait! If you see a Juniper with red berries, let us know. Let the county extension office know as well and be sure to kill the plant!

For advice on control measures contact your local county extension office or your agricultural chemical provider.

For cost share assistance in removing plants that are invading the native range contact the NRCS office and we'll see how we may be able to assist you.

## Kansas NRCS and The Nature Conservancy Providing \$1.4M Financial Assistance

To improve, restore, manage, and conserve habitat for Monarch Butterflies on agricultural and tribal lands, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and other partners have joined in a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to offer financial assistance to help agricultural producers increase milkweed and nectaring plants on agricultural land to improve habitat needs for Monarch Butterflies.

NRCS is providing funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). There will be two fiscal year 2018 EQIP application evaluation periods for this RCPP project.

The first application evaluation period will be for applications received by January 19, 2018. The second application evaluation period will be for applications received by March 23, 2018.

Targeted areas where EQIP funds will be available for agricultural producers interested in implementing conservation practices include all counties in Kansas. Funding will go toward conservation improvement practices such as milkweed plantings, pollinator plantings, brush management, prescribed grazing, as well others.

For more information, go to the Kansas NRCS Web site [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs) or visit your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, go to [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov).

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***Applications are now being accepted for the John Farney Memorial Scholarship, a \$1000 scholarship awarded annually to a student entering at least his/her second year of college. Applicants must be a resident of Barber County and be pursuing a degree in a conservation related field. Applications are available at the conservation office. Deadline is March 15, 2018.***

### Goodbye, Kelsey

Not a smile one in this management unit meeting as we said goodbye to Kelsey (Welter) Ramerth, Range Management Specialist, on December 7. She has accepted a position as Soil Conservationist with NRCS in the state of Maine. We appreciate the work she did during her time with us and wish Kelsey and her husband Eric the best of luck in this new adventure.





## Kansas NRCS and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Providing \$182,000 in Financial Assistance

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### Conservation Field Day On The Z Bar Ranch

Z Bar Ranch was host to the 5th & 6th grade Conservation Field Day on October 19. Alternating annually between USD 255 & USD 254, this year North Barber brought 78 kids out to tour the ranch and learn about the ecosystems of the bison and prairie dog that live on the ranch.

Education Stations included the rainfall simulator, stream flow trailer, wildlife safety, plant I.D., water conservation relay race, and soil profile. There was plenty of activity and fun to keep this large group busy but not without the help of volunteers which included Harold Kline, Retired NRCS; Chris Shrack, Kansas Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism; Blake McLemore, NRCS—Harper County; Carl Jarboe, NRCS; USD 254 educators and parents, and our incredible host and hostess Keith and Eva Yearout.

South Barber next year!



## Poster Contest Winners



Each year the Conservation District provides poster paper to students K-12 in Barber County to participate in the National Association of Conservation Districts annual poster contest. A total of 254 students turned in posters this year, sharing their thoughts on the theme “Healthy Soils Are Full Of Life”.

The top three winners in each age division and their families will be invited to the Conservation District Annual Meeting on January 20, 2018 where they will receive prizes and certificates.

The top three winners in each age division are:

### K-1

Easton Molz—1st  
Jancey Goodno—2nd  
Janda Goodno—3rd

### 2-3

Sawyer Moody—1st  
Lauryn Cropp—2nd  
Emalee Etheridge—3rd

### 4-6

Grace Leone—1st  
Ayden Bryan—2nd  
Arrington Allen—3rd

### 7-9

Madison Pilkington—1st  
Rietta Thomas—2nd  
Delaney Davenport—3rd

### 10-12

Connor Zusspan—1st  
Lauren Barnes—2nd

## Conservation District Supervisor Honored at KACD Annual Convention

Ted Alexander was honored as Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) Supervisor of the Year for Area II at the KACD Convention Awards Banquet in Wichita, November 20, 2017. Ted has served the District as supervisor since January 1993. His contributions to the promotion of the Conservation District and the conservation message have been invaluable over the years. Congratulations, Ted—an honor well deserved!

Cheryl Davis was named District Manager of the Year.

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

*December 25, 2017 Christmas Day.....Office Closed*  
*January 1, 2018 New Year's Day.....Office Closed*  
*January 15, 2018 Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday.....Office Closed*  
*January 20, 2018 Annual Meeting*  
*February 19, 2018 George Washington's Birthday.....Office Closed*