

Conservation District To Hold Annual Meeting

The 70th Annual Meeting of the Barber County Conservation District will be held January 25, 2020 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 2019 as well as highlights of events and activities throughout the year. There will also be an election of two supervisors to the district board. Matt Cantrell and Ted Alexander hold the expiring positions and each has agreed to run for an additional three-year term.

Presentation of the Banker's Award Winner will be given to two families for their accomplishments and efforts in performing and maintaining their conservation plans. 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 20, 2020. Hope to see you there!

NRCS Cost Share Programs Wyatt Sperry, NRCS Supervisory District Conservationist

The NRCS office is still taking applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which provides financial and technical assistance to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related natural resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. Some of the practices that are available, but not limited to, are the installation of fence, livestock pipeline, watering facilities, prescribed grazing, brush management, terraces, waterways, and grass seedings.

We are also in our fourth year of the Anderson Creek Wildfire Initiative, which helps producers that went through the 2016 wildfire, remove burnt cedar trees. This will remove some of the cedar carcasses, that can be perches for birds to drop seeds, causing other cedars to grow. Not only will it remove these problems, but it will also help gain more grazing acres in your rangeland.

The office is also still taking applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program. CSP helps producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional activities to address priority resource concerns. Under this program, participants earn payments based on their performance. CSP contracts are for 5 years, with the possibility to renew at the end of those 5 years if contract holders have successfully fulfilled their original contract terms and agree to adopt new activities.

If you would like more information in any of these programs, please stop in the office, or call, and we will help you out.

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Silver Bluestem—The Ideal Range Health Indicator? Lody Black, NRCS Range Management Specialist

What is Silver Bluestem (Silver Beardgrass)? It's actually a native grass species in Kansas. Some commonly mistake Silver Bluestem (SB) as one of the controversial Old World Bluestems (OWB), when in fact it isn't! However, cattle will treat it closely like OWB, where they will graze it and do well on it when it is young and tender but as soon as it starts getting stemmy they avoid it like the plague.

What I use SB for is, to be an indicator of rangeland health. It can be an indicator of either becoming healthier range or trending toward an unhealthy range. What I mean by healthy in this situation is the grass stand health. So, healthy would be closely mimicking the historic climax plant community of tall warm season grasses. An unhealthy range site would be one that is dominated by short grasses or overrun by nonnative invasive species.

If I know someone took over a pasture a few years ago and mentioned that it looked like a golf course when they took it over, but now it is chuck full of SB. I can then assume, that we are heading towards a healthy rangeland. On the other hand, if someone tells me a pasture used to be full of Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Switchgrass and Little Bluestem but is now full of SB, I may assume it is getting pressured heavily.

So, in other words, just because you see Silver Bluestem doesn't always mean bad. Instead, it can be used as a monitoring and indicator tool for what direction the health of your rangeland is heading!

Thanks for taking the time to read this article, hopefully this information is useful and as always, feel free to call me at the office!



All Conservation Work Is Important

The year of 2019 has been an impressive year for Barber County as two ranches were awarded highly coveted conservation related awards.

Blew Partnership took the honors as one of seven Regional Environmental Stewardship Award recipients, and is competing for the National Award to be announced during the 2020 Annual Cattle Industry Convention in February. Ted Alexander was named the 2019 Leopold Conservation Award winner at the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention in November. Both awards are in recognition of each operation's "outstanding stewardship and conservation efforts".

While both these operations are rather large and certainly worthy of recognition, CJ and Russel Blew, and Ted Alexander would say that conservation work done on any level, a large or small operation, is vitally important and the hard work put forth in accomplishing your goals is noteworthy at best.

At our annual meeting, and through the Kansas Bankers Conservation Award Program, the Barber County Extension and Barber County Conservation District recognize at least one landowner/operator in Barber County who is making efforts to improve, maintain, and preserve their land. These awards are given in an effort to bring to light the importance of good stewardship and conservation of our natural resources.

Two landowners will be honored at the Conservation Annual Meeting on January 25, 2020. We encourage you to come help us celebrate their accomplishments and encourage others to continue their conservation efforts. And as always, if you know of someone who should be recognized, let them know how much you appreciate their hard work.

Following are some links to read about the awards received by Blew Partnership and the Alexander Ranch.

<https://sandcountyfoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award-program>

<https://sandcountyfoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award-program/ted-alexander>

https://www.hpi.com/livestock/blew-partnership-wins-regional-environmental-award/article_ee0ae7e7-4d1e-5489-81c8-bc251019dd62.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J5VvTi9SSo>

<https://www.beefmagazine.com/pasture/transforming-rangeland-kansas-gyp-hills?fbclid=IwAR02fdKlJVHk2LEr5wAw4OXFrz5W50eZKAyqxws4O5ybLsta4xrY9Fbb-Kg>

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 25, 2020 Christmas Day.....Office Closed
January 1, 2020 New Year's Day.....Office Closed
January 18, 2020 Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday.....Office Closed
January 25, 2020 Annual Meeting
February 17, 2020 President's Day.....Office Closed