

Project addresses variety of water concerns

Restoration is needed to restore the health of rivers, streams and lakes that do not meet water quality standards. Protection is needed to ensure the water quality does not deteriorate and will be protected from pollution in the future.

Why WRAPS? Watershed Restoration And Protection Strategy efforts are needed to address a variety of water and related natural resource concerns such as water quality, public water supply and reservoir protection, flooding issues, wetland and riparian habitat protection and restoration for our watersheds.

The Norton County Conservation District is sponsoring the Watershed Restoration And Protection Strategy project for the Keith Sebelius Lake/Prairie Dog Creek Watershed. A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river or lake. Everyone lives in a watershed. Everything we do affects the soil, water, air and habitat. Water is essential to life and it is our responsibility to

District sold 1,835 trees

Last spring the Norton County Conservation District sold 1,835 trees for planting, 7,660 feet of weedbarrier and planted 797 acres of grass.

Continuous CRP sign-up

An important new opportunity to help you establish conservation buffers on your farm or ranch is the continuous CRP sign-up. This program allows you to establish certain conservation buffer practices on cropland and marginal pasture and enroll the land in the CRP at any time *without having to go through the process of submitting a competitive offer*. If you have land covered by an expiring CRP contract, you don't have to make an "all-or-nothing" choice about bringing the land out of CRP. *You* decide what land to enroll in the program.

Working with the staff in your local Natural Resources Conservation Service or conservation district office, you identify those buffer practices available under the continuous CRP sign-up that are most suitable for you and meet your needs. You then submit an offer to your local Farm Service Agency office. That offer will be automatically accepted if all eligibility

requirements are met.

The Prairie Dog Creek Watershed is located in the northwestern portion of Kansas and includes the counties of Thomas, Sheridan, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton, Phillips and a small portion of Harlan County in Nebraska extending to the Harlan County Reservoir.

The watershed population is less than 7,500 with four percent of the land cover of the watershed being urbanized or developed, this is distinctly a rural watershed. Agriculture comprises the predominant activity with the Prairie Dog Creek Watershed. Cropland accounts for 57 percent and grassland 37 percent of the land use within the watershed.

We are currently in our first phase of development for the Lower Prairie Dog Creek, while in the second phase (assessment phase) for the Upper Prairie Dog/Sebelius Lake.

During the development phase, information will be compiled for the watershed such as identifying the stakeholders, their concerns, and development of a leadership team. Addressing concerns will be the main focus for the leadership team.

The assessment phase will be establishing

requirements are met.

To be eligible, you must have owned the land for the previous year. Cropland is eligible if it was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in two of the last five crop years and is physically and legally capable of being cropped. The land does not have to be highly erodible.

Marginal pasture that is suitable for use as a riparian buffer is also eligible. Marginal pasture includes any land along streams or rivers that is grazed, whether previously seeded to grass or not. Most land covered by expiring CRP contracts that is determined suitable for a CRP buffer practice is likewise eligible.

It's that simple. Your local USDA Service Center staff will know specifically what technical and financial help is available to help you design and establish buffers, including assistance from state and local programs.

assessment criteria, inventory and assessment to watershed conditions, identifying needed and opportunities and educate. At this time the leadership team will start the process of making a priority list of needs to be able to achieve their goals. We have plans for many different projects

Tips to conserve water resources

Everyone can use the following tips to conserve the state's water resources.

Kitchen and laundry

- Use automatic dishwashers only for full loads. Every time a dishwasher is operated, about 17 gallons of water are used. Make each gallon count.

- When washing dishes by hand, do not leave the water running for rinsing. If two sinks are used, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If one sink is used, gather all the washed dishes in the dish rack and rinse them with an inexpensive spray device.

- Do not let the faucet run while cleaning vegetables. The same purpose can be served by putting a stopper in the sink and filling the sink with clean water.

- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. This ends the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it for drinking. Storing water in the refrigerator also has the nice effect of removing any chlorine taste out of the water.

- Use automatic washing machines only for full loads. Automatic washers use 30 to 35 gallons of water for a few garments.

- Check faucets and pipes for leaks. Leaks waste water 24 hours a day, seven days a week and often can be repaired with a very inexpensive washer. Not only will repairing leaks conserve water, the effort may save on the water bill.

Bathroom

- Check toilets for leaks. A leak in the toilet, that can be neither seen nor heard, may be wasting more than 100 gallons of water a day. To check for leaks, put a little food coloring in the toilet tank. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, the tank is leaking and should be repaired immediately.

- Take shorter showers. Long, hot showers waste five to 10 gallons of water every unneeded minute. Limit showers to the time it takes to soap

up, wash and rinse off.

If you are interested in protecting our watershed and would like to be part of our leadership team or volunteer for water testing, please call our office at 877-2623.

up, wash and rinse off.

- Install water-saving shower heads or flow-restrictors. Most shower heads put out five to 10 gallons of water a minute, while three gallons are actually enough for a refreshing, cleansing shower.

- Take baths. A bath in a partially filled tub uses less water than all but the shortest showers.

- Turn off the water after wetting toothbrushes. After wetting a toothbrush and filling a glass for rinsing, there is no need to keep water running down the drain.

Most valuable asset to farmer is his land

We all know the most valuable asset to a farmer and their family is their land and how to protect it. Buffers are a common-sense way to protect your land. Many farmers and ranchers are already involved in some form of conservation buffers.

Buffers slow water runoff, trap sediment, and enhance water infiltration in the buffer itself. They also trap fertilizer, pesticides, bacteria, pathogens and heavy metals, minimizing the chances of these potential pollutants from reaching surface and ground waters. Buffers also trap snow and reduce blowing soil in strong wind areas. They protect livestock from harsh weather and in some places provide shade. Conservation buffers can provide habitat for crop pest predators and wildlife for seasonal hunting.

Not all buffer practices are eligible for the continuous Conservation Reserve Program.

Buffers are also becoming popular for farmers to straighten field edges to reduce wear and tear on equipment, making less sharp turns in and out of small coves and creek banks.

If you are interested or have any questions on



Saluting area farmers for all your soil and water conservation efforts

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