

Wetlands Reserve Program in Kansas



*Kansas Alliance for
Wetlands and Streams*

In the next few pages we will show you a way you can take those persistent wet spots on your farm or ranch and turn them into productive, beneficial assets, and, as you will see, how wetlands can become an economic plus for your operation.



In recent years, people have taken an interest in restoring, enhancing, and protecting wetlands. More and more people are recognizing the benefits and are working to make the most of their wetlands.

One program receiving attention by a growing number of people is the USDA's Wetlands Reserve Program, established in the mid-1990's and administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. Today, WRP, as it is known, has become one of a number of successful options for landowners interested in working with wetlands. In Kansas, WRP is gaining popularity as people learn about how the program works.

Producer Quotes...

Ben Duell *It was an idea I had long before the program came along. I was wondering what could I do to make the water stand longer in the playa – it's so shallow – how could I concentrate the water in a narrower area so that it would last all season for the wildlife. So, when I learned about this particular program (WRP) I thought "that's the answer!"*



Victor Hurtig *There are two sites to the project and we may continue to even add to what was started here.*

Lee Nelson *This particular piece (here) was one that our family members have always wanted to have in a long-term program where it would not be broke out and it would be saved for future generations. The actual wetland program (WRP) fit it very well. We got compensation back for it and also, it is in a program where it won't be broke out.*





Bob Fry *When we first started looking at the ground, we contacted the local NRCS agent, Ron Briggs. He was very helpful in helping us establish management objectives and suggested that we might want to consider the Wetlands Reserve Program. We've been very happy with*

the WRP. It has provided us with a lot more resources to expand the property, to develop more systems than we could on our own.

Getting Started...

You will need to contact your local NRCS staff to begin investigating your options with WRP. The staff can provide you with the program details and complete any on-site inventories to let you know if your project might fit the program.



Coffeyville Ducks *We made contact with the local (NRCS) agent in terms of doing some ground improvements...for the property to enhance it for wildlife. We entered into the program and this is the culmination of a lot of effort and anxiousness on our part to get it completed...to improve the acreage of water and wildlife habitat.*

Dallas and Evelyn Nelson

We had two reasons – we want to keep it (the wetland) in the shape its in and, secondly, economic. There was a payment for it and I think it's a fantastic program. When wetlands are identified, they should be preserved...where the farmer has to



pay taxes on them, I think there should be some way that the general public can help support that.



Hattie Siron (Ed Siron was one of the first WRP participants in Kansas. Ed passed away recently and Hattie, his wife, now manages the property and is carrying on his dream for the land) **Ron Briggs, DC** – When the program became available in Kansas, Ed had read about it in a farm magazine...he came into my office and wanted to know how the program might fit his operation. We looked at it, we arranged and had a wetland determination made, found out how much of it was actually wetland, how much of it was restorable wetland, and practically all of it was eligible to enroll in the WRP.

Several options exist for enrolling land in WRP

Those options are:

- ◆ Permanent easement
- ◆ 30-year easement
- ◆ Restoration cost-share agreement

Program Options	Easement Payment	Restoration Cost-share	*Easement Recording Fees
Permanent Easement	Pays 100% of market appraisal; geographic area rate; or landowner offer, whichever is less	Pays 100% of restoration cost	Pays 100% of recording fees
30-Year Easement	Pays 75% of market appraisal; geographic area rate; or landowner offer, whichever is less	Pays 75% of restoration cost	Pays 100% of recording fees
**Restoration Cost-Share Agreement	No Easement	Pays 75% of restoration cost	N/A

*Includes recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

**The agreement is a contract, for a minimum of 10 years, to re-establish degraded or lost wetland habitat.

10-year restoration...

Terry Alstatt, DC – *A landowner may consider going into a 10-year restoration agreement as opposed to a 30-year or perpetual easement if he's got a specific site he is interested in developing but isn't really interested in losing control of the ground.*

Victor Hurtig, Landowner
We're leasing this acreage to the wetland people (NRCS) and in 10 years it is turned back to us, but we basically have control over the wetland during that period. There are two sites to the project and we may continue to even add to what was started here.

I am hoping I'll have a grandson that can maybe come out here and shoot a duck sometime.

We are trying to provide some habitat for wildlife...I have destroyed habitat in the past thinking that we needed more to farm, so I am trying to give back a little for what I took.

WRP ranking...

WRP uses a ranking system for each application and all applicants compete for the program dollars available in Kansas. The process is not difficult and your local NRCS staff can explain the details.



Partnering Points...

One way to gain more ranking points is to look for partners who might be able to help you pay for the restoration costs.

Other agencies, conservation districts, and private conservation organizations may provide additional money for easement payments and wetland restoration costs reducing your share of the costs and improving your score.

Partners continued...

Ben Duell – *Fred Wedel, DC* – *The partners involved in this Wetlands Reserve Program process are the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other groups that are supportive like Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, and other wildlife groups...that help this project and other WRP projects become a reality.*

Hattie Siron – *Ron Briggs* – *We entered into an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – an extension agreement through the Partners (for Fish and Wildlife) Program and used that money to replace a water control structure and repair a dike.*

For more information on whom those partners are and where you can get a hold of them, see the list on page 11.

How is WRP working for people enrolled?

Producer Quotes...

Lee Nelson – *This program is really fitting us well – it fits us well and we feel it fits the land as far as future generations. It's roughly 390 acres of grass and then there is cropland which will be put back to grass making a total of 513 acres.*

Bob Fry – *Two things – that the WRP has really helped us with...number one – we had great help from the NRCS staff...they have helped us immensely to define our objectives and to help us design and implement these diverse ecosystems (that was our initial objective). The WRP funding also has helped us put in a lot more infrastructure than we otherwise would have and allowed us to build a lot of diverse background with trees...with moist soil units...than we could have on our own.*

Dallas and Evelyn Nelson – *The landowner has control of the access, he can hunt it, he can lease it for hunting...everything is so favorable. The only thing is that he has to take care of it which is what you should do anyhow.*

To ensure success in getting your wetland project on the ground, you need to begin with a sound plan. No matter what program you are considering...a good plan lays out your objectives and will help direct your decisions.

The first step in getting started is to talk with your local NRCS staff or a Kansas Wildlife and Parks biologist. They will help you through the planning processes as well as the program applications you will need to complete.

The Wetlands Reserve Program may be a good fit for you as you consider how you can make the most of your wetlands.

WRP a plus for producers...

Ben Duell – *We may over the long-term, say 20-30-40 years, maybe get a little less income by going into this permanent easement project, but we think we'll be sufficiently rewarded if we can get it fully developed into a sort of wildlife sanctuary.*

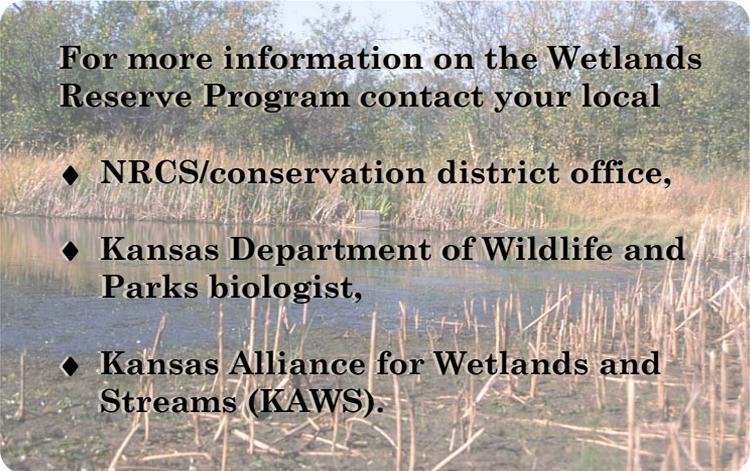
Bob Fry – *I have another 170 acres about two miles from here that we are in the process of putting into the program now, so I guess that is a pretty good testimony that we are very pleased with the program.*

Hattie Siron – *We have enrolled it in the easement...in the wetland (WRP) and we have 235 acres in. The benefits are good...I think it is a good idea.*

Dallas and Evelyn Nelson – *It is a win-win situation for everybody! Any farmer that has some property that is designated as being wet - hydric soils - I would certainly encourage them to go to their county NRCS office and talk about it (WRP).*

As you can see, some of your neighbors are using the WRP as a tool to help them manage their operations and make the most of their wetlands. Maybe you should look into the Wetlands Reserve Program!

WHO to CONTACT...



For more information on the Wetlands Reserve Program contact your local

- ◆ **NRCS/conservation district office,**
- ◆ **Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks biologist,**
- ◆ **Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS).**

Partners List...

- ◆ Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
www.kdwp.state.ks.us
620-672-5911
- ◆ State Conservation Commission
www.accesskansas.org/ksc
785-296-3600
- ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<http://kansaspartners.fws.gov>
785-539-3474
- ◆ Pheasants Forever
www.pheasantsforever.org
785-823-0240
- ◆ Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS)
www.kaws.org
620-241-3636

Contact your local NRCS/conservation district office for more information on the Wetlands Reserve Program.

www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov



KAWS Mission: To ensure the future of wetlands, streams, and their adjacent riparian areas as an integral part of our Kansas heritage and landscape.



Thanks to:
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The Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams—a not-for-profit group devoted to promote education and to complete projects to improve our wetlands and streams.

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Bob Fry, Linn Co. Landowner



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