

Kansas NRCS Fact Sheet - 2018

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

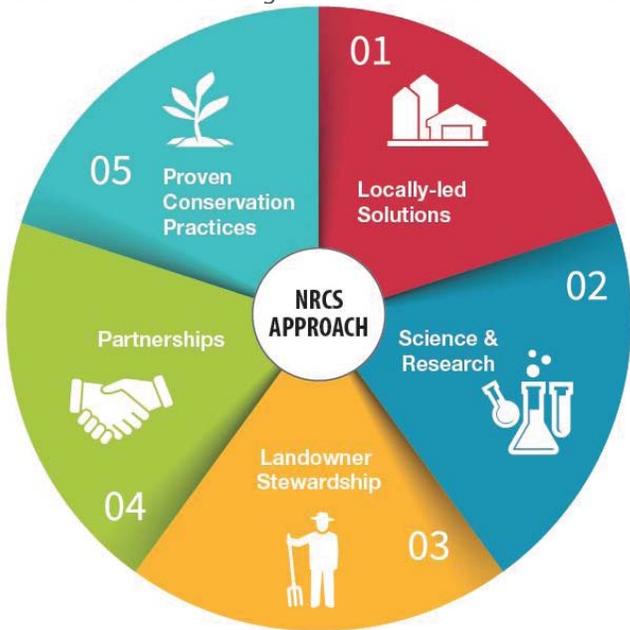


What We Do

President Roosevelt signed the bill establishing the Soil Conservation Service on April 27, 1935. Now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), we have a deeply held vision of a nation where the use of our natural resources is guided by a widely shared and heartfelt stewardship ethic.

Our approach starts with talking one-on-one with the landowner to understand their goals. We then apply science-based conservation practices to create a plan to fix problems such as soil health, grazing capacity, water and wind erosion, wildlife preservation, and wetlands management.

We use the latest technologies such as water erosion modeling, precision mapping software, and other tools to provide practical solutions based on tested practices. This technical assistance is free.



Streamlining Customer Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and the Risk Management Agency are being reorganized under a new USDA mission area called Farm Production and Conservation.

The goal is to create a one-stop-shop that delivers a streamlined customer experience for farmers and ranchers.

When the reorganization is complete in 2018, customers will find a team based approach to providing information about any program in any of these three agencies – whether it is about conservation, commodities, crop insurance or disaster programs.

The farming disaster caused by drought and poor conservation practices in the 1930's spurred a new era of conservation innovation.

One of the worst dust storms in American history occurred on April 14, 1935, a day known as "Black Sunday."

After moving across Kansas, the dust cloud reached Washington, D.C. the next day. Congress took immediate action.



President Roosevelt signed the bill creating the Soil Conservation Service on April 27, 1935.

Dust storm approaching Elkhart, Kansas in May 1937. (Library of Congress)

The name was changed to the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1994 to reflect the agency's mission to provide expertise for all resource concerns.

Kansas NRCS Technical Assistance Fiscal Year 2017

Number of conservation plans written 3,954

Number of acres covered by these conservation plans 567,149

Number of acres of land to improve water quality 428,596

Number of acres of grazing land with applied conservation to protect and improve resource base 134,591

Number of acres with applied conservation to improve environmental quality 485,202

Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Putting Conservation on the Farm

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related natural resources on agricultural land.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Fiscal Year	2016			2017		
Program	Number of Contracts Approved	Acres Treated	Funds Obligated	Number of Contracts Approved	Acres Treated	Funds Obligated
General EQIP	816	190,760	\$20,779,822	1,113	207,316	\$31,019,487
Kansas Wildfire Initiative (2017)	na	na	na	17	40,178	\$1,691,830
Ogallala Aquifer Initiative	10	1,404	\$1,164,050	6	1,776	\$782,498
National Water Quality Initiative	13	1,868	\$373,093	20	3,092	\$633,474
Anderson Creek Wildfire Initiative	na	na	na	14	20,742	\$555,439
High Tunnel Initiative	39	221	\$292,443	48	563	\$349,025
Organic Initiative	3	302	\$61,248	2	386	\$47,673
Monarch Butterfly Habitat Initiative	7	144	\$20,917	5	159	\$9,092
On-Farm Energy Initiative	2	77	\$16,957	2	2,126	\$4,392
Lesser Prairie-Chicken initiative	6	23,271	\$605,919	na	na	na

Regional Conservation Partnership Program - Engaging the Conservation Community

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) offers new opportunities for NRCS, conservation partners, and agricultural producers to work together to harness innovation and expand the conservation mission. Besides NRCS assistance, RCPP partners make a significant contribution to the cost of the project.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Fiscal Year	2016			2017		
Partnership	Number of Contracts Approved	Acres Treated	Funds Obligated	Number of Contracts Approved	Acres Treated	Funds Obligated
Improving Water Quality Through the Implementation of Forestry Practices	16	1,569	\$144,709	49	5,349	\$496,041
Middle and Lower Neosho River Water Quality Project	18	1,906	\$338,260	22	2,174	\$444,408
Kansas Pheasant Initiative	3	754	\$71,285	22	3,966	\$289,372
Native Grasslands Protection (2017)	na	na	na	7	4,338	\$174,159
Grassland Birds and Grazing Land Enhancement Initiative	11	4,703	\$223,153	9	2,511	\$145,188
Advanced Irrigation Water Management on the High Plains Aquifer	17	2,598	\$126,852	10	2,606	\$126,867
Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies (new for FY2018)	na	na	na	na	na	na
Kansas Wetland Easements (new for FY2018)	na	na	na	na	na	na

Conservation Stewardship Program - Enabling Sustainable Production

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. NRCS can custom design a CStP plan to help you meet those goals.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

Fiscal Year	2016			2017		
Program	Number of Contracts Approved	Acres Treated	Funds Obligated	Number of Contracts Approved	Acres Treated	Funds Obligated
Conservation Stewardship Program	479	1,043,208	\$11,050,934	441	1,056,595	\$9,062,480

Total Kansas Funds Obligated - for EQIP, RCPP, and CStP for FY2017 **\$45,831,425**



Conservation Starts with Soil Health

Soil is a living and life-giving substance, without which we would perish. Soil is teeming with micro-organisms, working together to create an environment that provides vital nutrients for plants.

Likewise, plant roots exude carbohydrates that provide food for the micro-organisms. This symbiotic relationship between the plants and micro-organisms is known as the “soil food web.”

Conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops, and crop rotation builds healthy soils. These practices conserve water by absorbing rainwater, keeping runoff from fouling streams and water supplies.



Prescribed burning can restore prairie pastures.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) - Supporting Kansas Conservation Innovators

CIG is a program to spur the development and adoption of innovative conservation practices and technologies. In general, CIG funds pilot projects, field demonstrations, and on-farm conservation projects that gather statistical data on conservation practices that can be done using typical farm equipment

Conservation Innovation Grants Winners for 2017

Playa Lakes Joint Venture, <i>Kansas Dynamic Surface Water Application,</i>	\$50,000
Kansas State University, <i>Improving Soil Health & Profitability with Cover Crops and Precision Conservation</i>	\$49,990
Kansas State University, <i>Restoring Grazing Land Hydrologic Services Through Eastern Redcedar</i>	\$49,281
Kansas State University, <i>Cover Crops to Increase Water Infiltration in Dryland & Irrigated Systems in Western Kansas</i>	\$49,933
Kansas Conservation Innovation Grants Awarded in 2017	\$199,204

Kansas NRCS Sets Aside \$200,000 for Conservation Innovation Grants for 2018

The 2018 CIG grant carves out 25% of the funding for applicants from underserved producers, veteran farmers and ranchers, or community-based organizations representing these groups.

There are six priority categories for 2018: Data Analytics for Natural Resources Conservation; Precision Conservation Approaches; Grazing Lands (Invasive Species); Soil Quality/Soil Health; Water Quality and Quantity; and Wildlife (Pollinator Conservation)

The 2018 winners will be announced at the end of 2018

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Restoring Wetlands

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps American Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easement component (WRE), NRCS helps to restore, protect, and enhance enrolled wetlands.

<i>Number of Wetland Reserve Easements enrolled in FY2016</i>	5
<i>Number of Wetland Reserve Easements enrolled in FY2017</i>	23
<i>Number of Wetland Reserve Easements applications for 2018 (as of FEB 2018)</i>	31



L-R, Luke Westerman (NRCS), Kenneth Van Cleave (NRCS, retired), Maurice Erickson, rancher

In 1958, Maurice, at the age of 16, bought a 160 acre farm that was in miserable condition. Kenneth, then the Greenwood county district conservationist, helped Maurice institute conservation practices to fix erosion and water problems.

Maurice now runs a 2,250 acre grazing operation.

Luke is the district conservationist in Eureka, carrying on the tradition of helping people help the land.

Kenneth was 92 when this was taken in 2017.

Protecting Kansas Watersheds

Watershed Operations (Public Law 566)

Kansas NRCS has received \$2M in funding for 9 projects in 3 watershed districts in FY2017. Five work plans are being updated for the 9 projects, 2 projects will include design assistance. Kansas was among 20 states and territories receiving funding from NRCS through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program. NRCS works with local groups to help prevent floods, protect watersheds, improve agricultural water management and enhance wildlife habitat through this program.

Sponsors in Kansas have built more than 800 flood control dams since 1948 under Public Law 566. Kansas has the third largest number of PL-566 projects in the United States.

Watershed Rehabilitation Projects

Kansas is currently working on 5 watershed rehabilitation projects.



Kansas NRCS Organization at a Glance

Kansas State Conservationist
Damaris Mortenson (acting)

ASTC Management & Strategy

ASTC Programs

State Resource Conservationist

State Engineer

State Soil Scientist

ASTC Water Resources

ASTC = Assistant State Conservationist

ASTC Field Operations Area 1

ASTC Field Operations Area 2

ASTC Field Operations Area 3

ASTC Field Operations Area 4

Broad Range of Expertise Needed to Solve the Resource Concerns of Producers

To provide technical and financial help to landowners, NRCS hires people with specialized technical knowledge, most requiring a bachelors degree or higher in a specific scientific field, from all types of backgrounds. There are many more technical positions, such as cartographers, agronomists, and computer specialists working in the agency. The table below list the specialties farmers and ranchers will work with most often.

Job Title	What They Do
Soil Conservationist	Do conservation planning and provide technical help to everyone from family farmers to local government officials. Provide solutions to conserve the soil, improve water quality, manage nutrients, restore wetlands, and protect and improve wildlife habitat.
Soil Conservation Technician	Advise landowners on the effectiveness of applying soil and water conservation practices and assist in research efforts. Design conservation practices and oversee their installation. This work is key to the success of NRCS because these ground practices directly improve, conserve, or restore our natural resources.
Rangeland Management Specialist	Help plan grazing systems to improve the quality of forage and other grazing land functions. Provide guidance on how to use grazing animals to improve and sustain natural resources. Offer advice on water management, invasive species control, and sustainable forage production.
Soil Scientist	Map and classify soils and solve problems such as soil moisture and erosion. Use digital and satellite imagery to map soils and write descriptions. Evaluate soil quality and work with information on watersheds, water quality, and changes in land-use patterns. Work requires knowledge of chemical, physical, mineralogical and biological properties and processes of the soils and their relations to climate, physiographic, and biological influences.
Biologist	Spend most of their time on-site working with private landowners, other agencies, and units of government. Provide technical support and advice on fish and wildlife habitat development or restoration and suggest methods to manage fish and wildlife populations, restore streams and wetlands, and improve habitat.
Engineer	NRCS employs a large number of engineers who have specialized skills in erosion control, water management, structural design, construction, hydraulics, soil mechanics, and environmental protection. Job assignments may include restoring streams, controlling erosion, developing water systems for livestock, improving and conserving irrigation water, and restoring wetlands.
Engineering Technician	Involved in planning, design, and construction work. Help with surveying the land, plotting survey information, and laying out construction measures. Gather data, make computations, and prepare maps and cross sections of profiles. May serve as a construction inspector on a wide variety of projects.



Area 1	Hays	785.625.2588
Area 2	Hutchinson	620.663.3501
Area 3	Emporia	620.343.7276
Area 4	Manhattan	785.776.7582
State Office	Salina	785.823.4500

**Kansas
Natural
Resources
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www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/



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