



Buffalo Wallow Chapter

Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams

Happenings

December 2002

Our Purpose:

The Chapter serves as a clearinghouse for wetlands and riparian areas information and activities, promotes educational opportunities with a variety of targeted audiences, and facilitates project implementation for wetland and riparian area projects within the participating counties.

Our Mission:

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

Our Vision:

A public that is well informed and involved in activities that foster the protection, enhancement, and establishment of wetlands and riparian areas in Kansas.

Steering Committee

Kevin Nelson, NRCS, Tribune
Tom Norman, KDWP, Garden City
Debbie Ohman, Gray Co. CD,
Cimarron

Membership is free and open to any interested individual, organization or agency interested in wetland and riparian area conservation. For more information on KAWS and its activities please contact:

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November 7 Highlights

Members Report - Chapter Business

Mark Sexson – Bob Price's wetland project has made some progress since the last meeting. Bob is willing to proceed if the project can be funded under the KWO/EPA grant. Tim noted that all needed permits will need to be acquired before the project can be submitted to the Project Management Team for approval. Mark covered the details of a recent KS Natural Resource Legacy Alliance meeting in Garden City. He and Connie Richmeier, Finney Co. CD, provided information about KAWS and the Buffalo Wallow Chapter at the formal meeting. He said that livestock waste opportunities were a key topic as well as irrigation with the group.

Dan Baffa – The US Army Corps of Engineers is working with the City and County on a three-mile stretch of the Ark River. He said that he had proposed including storm water treatment into the plans describing how a 300-acre wetland might be created to treat up to three million gallons of city water. The project would extend from the east (one mile past the highway by-pass) west to Holcomb. The wetland site would be on the east side of the project area. Obviously, acquisition and partners would play a key part of making this work. Baffa also noted that the educational graphics for the "waters of Kansas" display should be completed with CARA Light funds (through KDWP). *(continues on page 2)*

KAWS Coordinator's Report

**Next
Buffalo Wallow
Chapter meeting
January 8, 9:30 a.m.,
Lakin Public Library,
Lakin, KS**

KAWS Fall Tour

Over 40 people attended the Fall Tour held in Topeka on October 14. The tour was hosted by Mark Green, City of Topeka. The group viewed several innovative projects designed to help treat stormwater.

KAWS Executive/Steering Committee meeting highlights held October 15

Steve Swaffar, KFB, discussed the Farm Bureau's award programs noting the Natural Resource Award winners. He asked for KAWS to help with ideas for expanding the Wetlands Conservation Award noting that only two counties have used the award over the past two years. Swaffar provided an overview of the work of the KS Natural Resources Legacy Alliance. **Barth Crouch, PF**, discussed the status of the PF Habitat Teams and the need for funding to get started in Kansas. The

Coordinator's Report (cont. from page 1)

Teams will serve to help landowners put practices on the ground including grass and tree plantings, fencing, and the like. Barth also covered the Playa Lakes Joint Venture draft Super CREP plan which is designed to protect 10 percent of the playas in the affected states amounting to about 100,000 acres.

Joe Kramer, KDWP, discussed deer management issues, chronic wasting disease concerns, and other Department priorities. He outlined the playa easement program status. KDWP has enrolled a total of 87 acres containing 49 acres in playa lakes in 5 separate playas in 3 counties in western Kansas. There is a total of 44 acres of buffer strips scheduled for establishment to protect the playas. Additional contracts are pending and there are additional applications to consider. The additional applications total nearly 300 acres of playas and buffers with a potential dollar value over the 10-year life of the contracts of \$120,000.00. **Don Snethen**, KDHE Watershed Management, provided an update on water quality and KDHE efforts. He noted that the federal fiscal year 2002 funds from EPA Region 7 for the 319 Incremental NPS Pollution Control Program have \$461,000 earmarked for KAWS per our request. The funds should be accessible after they are awarded from EPA in early 2003 calendar year. He discussed the details of the EPA Watershed Initiative noting that several are being formulated for the Governor's review. They are the Marais des Cygnes in KS/MO, Cheney Lake/Wichita, Blue River in KS/MO, and the Blue River in KS/NE.

Damien Miller, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program State Coordinator, reviewed the Partners program in Kansas covering staffing, funding and challenges. **Rod Egbarts**, NRCS Programs Staff, provided an overview of several USDA programs including WHIP, Farmland Protection Program (FPP), and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). A quick summary includes WRP for 2002 - \$370,000 committed in 9 contracts covering 830 acres; WHIP totals 265 contracts on 47,000 acres committing \$1.1 million and FPP which is new for KS has one easement held by the Nature Conservancy in Butler County.

Rod discussed how KAWS can help promote these programs through active education and noted our CO-OP agreement to provide educational materials on WRP.

The Flint Hills seminar was held with 40-plus attendees on October 2 with a follow up meeting soon, and the Lower/Little Ark seminar was held on November 4 with 48 people attending. A follow up meeting will be set for December. KAWS will have nine chapters covering close to 75 percent of the state once these groups form.

Chapter Business (continued from page 1)

He hopes for a July 4, 2003 dedication of the display. Then, the next phase will include 50-60 feet that could include wetlands and stream information as previously discussed (PLJV grant application for June 02).

Under old business, Tim provided an update on the Playa Easement Program (see *Joe Kramer's report—first column*). **Debbie Ohman** asked if there were any generic news releases on playas available for use. Tim said he would check and if not, perhaps he could develop some over time. Tim discussed the need to identify and get any other projects approved under the KWO/EPA Wetland Protection Program grant. Several projects could be potentially funded under this grant. Tim also noted the new KDHE 319 Incremental grant funds received by KAWS included \$50,000 for projects and that members should be looking for projects to fund. Details on application and limits should be available in January.

The group discussed the western Kansas KAWS workshop details, setting the tentative dates as February 18 and 25. Debbie will check on the availability of the Gray County 4-H building in Cimarron as it was determined that this might be a little more centrally located for at least two of the three western chapters. Speakers will include the Playa Lakes Joint Venture staff, Phil Balch, Dennis Haag and other TTEMI staff, and perhaps another topic area or two. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting date was set for January 8 at the Lakin Library.

Upcoming Chapter meetings, activities, and events

NEXT Buffalo Wallow Chapter meeting—January 8, 9:30 a.m., Lakin Public Library, Lakin, KS.

Mid-Plains Chapter meeting, January 7, Bucklin
Prairie Wetlands Chapter meeting, January 13, Colby
Playa Lakes Joint Venture Board meeting, January 14-17, Littleton, CO

Lower/Little Ark Group meeting, January 29, Maize
Executive Committee, February 4, KFB, Manhattan
Western KS KAWS Conference, February 18, Cimarron