



Mid-Plains Chapter

Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams

Happenings

April 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

Greg Henderson, NRCS, Kinsley
Craig Curtis, KDWP, Dodge City

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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March 12 Meeting Review

Stream Restoration Techniques Highlight Meeting

Phil Balch, SCC, provided a presentation on stream restoration techniques – planning and design considerations and outlined work he, Ken Sherraden, and others are doing on the Little Blue River in Washington County. There are 30 sites and 7.6 miles of river being affected by the stream work – mainly bendway weirs – and bank shaping and re-vegetation. The land is being enrolled in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program as riparian forest buffers, so landowners will receive help with establishment and then annual rental payments for 15 years. Balch also noted upcoming training a demonstration project on the South Fork of the Ninnescah River five miles west of Kingman using continuous-fill bags to serve as weirs. The bags will be filled with sand and gravel and laid into the stream bed to divert water just a rock weirs work. They can be filled to any length and stacked as need to meet design widths and heights. For more information, contact Balch at 785.296.3600.

Ken Sherraden, NRCS/SCC, provided a quick update on the Buffer Partnership and noted a buffer coordinator meeting to be held at Great Bend at the Central Prairie RC&D in early April. He highlighted discussion from a meeting held recently in eastern Kansas with coordinators.

KAWS Coordinator's Report

The KWRAA Executive/Steering Committees met on February 6, 2002, in Hartford, KS. They completed several key pieces of including:

1. A review of the Year Three KDHE budget revision, which adds \$300,000 to the coming budget for projects, plus another \$125,000 or so to provide for product and staff. This budget reflects establishing a third position – chapter coordinator for western Kansas.
2. A review of the second EPA Wetlands Protection Program Grant offered through the Kansas Water Office in the amount of \$350,000 of which \$175,000 would go for educational demonstrations (similar to the current grant KWO has with EPA). This grant will provide for two half-time employees to help administer the grant as well as the two current positions. These funds coupled with the KDHE money should provide adequate resources to hire the third contract employee (chapter coordinator).
3. A chapter development review including the two new chapters in the Upper Ark River basin – Mid-Plains and Buffalo Wallow. The third is the Southeast Kansas Chapter that organized after a December 11, 2001, one-day seminar. New starts are targeted for 2002 in the Cimarron, Upper Neosho/Verdigris, Walnut, and the Little and Lower Ark river basins.
4. Working with the Eastern I-70 Chapter to organize and hold an urban-oriented wetlands and riparian area conference in the next six months. The chapter is going to hold a more local event in the next two months.
5. Reports on the Playa Lakes Joint Venture Board meeting in Lubbock, TX, in January. The playa easement proposal was approved for funding at \$20,000,

Coordinator's Report (cont. from page 1)

which KDWP will provide an increased match to enroll targeted playas. Leonard Hopper, KDWP, is providing oversight of the program and brochures have been distributed. Hopper indicates that he has interest from Ducks Unlimited and the PLJV BCR coordinator in providing extra funding for the lease program.

The PLJV is adding staff, which should ultimately benefit western Kansas chapters. A Biological Team Leader position and a Communications Team Leader position are being advertised. Both these should help by offering services that we may not be getting now, e.g. playa-oriented publications, web site support, educational materials. The PLJV is "all-bird" oriented and that should bring new funding and help along, too. Currently, PLJV has a full-time Bird Conservation Region (BCR) [Shortgrass] 18 coordinator looking to assist anyone working on bird projects.

6. John and Tim reported on a meeting with the Kansas City District COE staff to investigate opportunities to use their 206, 1135, and eco-restoration programs to implement wetland, stream and riparian area projects. One cited case is that of using organized watershed districts to install low-head dams and to construct, renovate, or protect wetland and riparian areas to achieve upstream flood control in lieu of high-cost flood control dams. Kansas has real potential to use this and get COE funding.

7. Bob Atchison appointed a sub-committee of the Executive Committee to develop a long-range funding plan for consideration at the annual meeting in May 2002.

8. The group approved pursuit of organizing a national wetlands/streams/riparian areas conference. Coordinators are to report preliminary findings in May.

9. The Executive Committee voted to change the name of the organization to the Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS) subject to clearance from the Kaw Nation. Approval was received with a ringing endorsement from the tribe, so they will offer a person to serve on the steering committee and may have projects to work on with us. The name change is officially changed at the May 16 annual meeting to be held in southeast Kansas.

KWO/EPA grant update

The project management team approved funding for two projects under the current KWO/EPA grant – Elk Creek marsh, Clinton Reservoir, at \$18,000 and Little Blue River, Washington County, at \$15,000. John Bond, KAWS chapter coordinator, is soliciting projects from

the Glacial Hills and Southeast Kansas chapters, which would leave funds for another 5-7 projects (\$15-20,000 average cost).

Other items–

The KWRAA (now to be KAWS) annual meeting is May 15-16, 2002 in SE KS. Each chapter is asked to provide a representative (normally from the chapter steering committee) to sit on the State Steering Committee. The Executive/Steering Committee meets on the 15th, then stay over for the annual meeting. KWRAA has travel expense money for the representative, if needed.

May is American Wetlands Month and the Isaac Walton League sponsors nationally. Check out their web site www.iwla.org for details. This is a great time to do outreach and educational events to make a tie to this celebration.

Chapter Business

Mid-Plains Chapter meeting was held at City Hall in Kinsley. **Ron Tema**, NRCS in Dodge City, reported that the city of Dodge City is seriously considering a stormwater management wetland development on the north end of town (the group toured the site at their January meeting). **Scotty Baugh**, KDWP, reported that they are at a stand-still on the Herron Playa project near Spearville due to water right concerns by the Division of Water Resources. He indicates that additional options for construction are under development. The **Chapter** members determined that they would make specific contacts with potential members for the upcoming meeting, hopefully to be held in Greensburg. Tim Christian reviewed the **Chapter's** new identity materials including the letterhead, member agreement, project request forms and activity request forms. The group also discussed putting out the meeting summary in the form of a newsletter to generate more interest from people. Tim will draft and issue for this meeting summary.

No new project profiles were presented for consideration...Ron is working to have one at the next meeting from Dodge City. Tim encouraged members to solicit projects for consideration, especially through the KWO/EPA grant (column one, page two).

Tim noted the upcoming annual meeting for KAWS, May 15-16, requesting that someone come to the meeting and represent the Chapter. **Craig Curtis**, KDWP, serves on the steering committee and will attend for the Mid-Plains Chapter.

Upcoming Chapter meetings, activities, and events

NEXT Mid-Plains Chapter meeting—May 7, 9:30 a.m., Big Well Museum offices, Greensburg, KS.

EPA Region 7 Wetlands Conference – 4/2-4, KCMO Stream Link Summit – 4/4-6, Council Grove
Earth Day – Garden City Zoo, 4/22 Water Festival – Finney, Kearny, Gray Counties, 5/20/21
Prairie Wetlands Chapter meeting, 4/10 KAWS Annual Meeting, 5/15-16, Pleasanton