

County’s conservation district has been in operation for 78 years

By Kati Latulip

The Rawlins County Conservation District was established in 1946. The State Soil Conservation Committee held a public hearing at the courthouse in February 1946 after 150 Rawlins County farmers signed a petition asking for the formation of a local district. At that time, 60 soil conservation districts had been established within the state.

In June of that year, Ray E. Frisbie, Fred T. Gatlin and John E. Ruda were elected supervisors of the District Soil Conservation Committee by a county-wide vote.

Kansas Soil Conservation District laws were established in 1937 and the first conservation district was formed the following year. The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts formed in 1944 and the National Association of Conservation Districts in 1946. In 1972, Soil Conservation Districts became simply Conservation Districts.

Conservation districts are a division of the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). The 105 local districts are divided into five regions. Rawlins is part of Region 1, which also includes Cheyenne, Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Smith, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, Graham, Rooks, Osborne, Wallace, Logan, Gove, Trego, Ellis and Russell Counties in Northwest Kansas.

Watershed Districts are also part of the KDA Division of Conservation, established by the Watershed District Act in 1953. Rawlins County is part of the Upper Republican Watershed

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NOTICE OF HEARING UPON ORGANIZATION OF PROPOSED RAWLINS COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

WHEREAS, on the 5th day of February, 1946, there was duly filed in the office of the State Soil Conservation Committee, a petition signed by more than 150 land occupiers of Rawlins County relevant to the provisions of the Soil Conservation Districts Law, Chapter 5, Session Laws of Kansas 1937, requesting the establishment of the Rawlins County Soil Conservation District; and

WHEREAS, the lands to be included in the said District include all of Rawlins County, Kansas.

NOW, THEREFORE, notice is hereby given that public hearings will be held pursuant to the said petition, upon the question of the desirability and necessity in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare, of the creation of such District; upon the propriety of the petition, and all other proceedings taken under the said act; and upon all questions relevant to such inquiries. The said public hearings will be held in Rawlins county according to the following schedule of time and place:

Tuesday, February 26—Court House in Atwood—8 p. m.

All persons, firms, and corporations who shall hold title to, or shall be in possession of, any lands lying within the limits of the above mentioned territory, whether as owners, lessees, renters, tenants, or otherwise, and all other interested parties are invited to attend the hearing and opportunity will be given for all to be heard.

STATE SOIL CONSERVATION

District.

In 1995, The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service was changed to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Division of Conservation, formed in 2011, aims to protect

public water supplies as well as sustain and preserve groundwater supplies, reduce flood damage in flood-prone areas, reduce pollutants in state waterways, minimize pollution caused by agricultural run-off, reduce soil erosion, and improve wildlife and aquatic habitats.

USDA announces safety-net enrollment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced the 2025 enrollment periods for key safety-net programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC).

Agricultural producers can submit applications to USDA’s Farm Service Agency for ARC and PLC for 2025 crop year from Jan. 21 to April 15.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop

prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

“Our safety-net programs provide critical financial protections against commodity market volatilities for many American farmers, so don’t delay enrollment,” said FSA Administrator Zack Ducheneaux. “If you are getting coverage through ARC or PLC, avoid the rush and contact your local FSA office for an appointment. Even if you are not

changing your program election for 2025, you still need to sign a contract to enroll. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm, it will continue for 2025 unless an election change is made.”

USDA reminds producers that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products including Supplemental Coverage Options and Enhanced Coverage Options.

Kansas Wheat, K-State promote wheat resources for residents

By Julia Debes
for Kansas Wheat

The echoes of the 1930s Dust Bowl are most evident in the commitment of each subsequent generation of Kansas farmers to care for the land on which their livelihoods depend. A \$1 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) - recently awarded to Kansas State University State and Kansas Wheat - provides dedicated resources to aid these efforts by helping farmers navigate Farm Bill programs and implement proven conservation practices that best fit their winter wheat acres.

“This program is really about conservation programs and practices that include winter wheat as part of a sustainable crop rotation,” said Aaron Harries, Kansas Wheat vice president of research and operations. “This is an opportunity that will benefit the farmer and bring attention to the role of winter wheat as a very important conservation tool in High Plains cropping systems.”

The NFWF grant will fund a three-year project, kicking off in 2025, that focuses first on sharing information about the benefits of conservation practices. Led by Harries and Romulo Lollato, K-State associate professor of wheat and forage production, the project aims to advance crop management priority strategies, including reduced tillage, increased adoption of cover crops and diversified crop rotations and improved nutrient management. These practices have well-documented outcomes in helping improve soil health, reduce erosion and conserve water and carbon.



KANSAS
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Reflective of the private-public partnership integral to the grant, the project also includes working with certified crop advisors (CCAs) to train them on how to advise farmers on conservation practices. Kansas Wheat and K-State will also work with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kansas to help increase engagement with and enrollment in Farm Bill programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Equally as important, the grant will provide additional capacity to help producers enroll in these Farm Bill programs that provide financial assistance for implementing the practices. The grant provides for two full-time staff members to help work one-on-one with growers and CCAs alike across Kansas. This outreach will complement K-State Research and Extension work by including targeted conservation discussions during wheat-related producer field days, pre-plant wheat meetings and other conferences and meetings.

“We intend to work with groups like CCAs to set up educational programs to train these experts and help them identify farmers that might have the potential to enroll acres,” Harries said. “Some of those programs can seem intimidating, so we’re going to help work to make it as easy as possible and work with producers on a case-by-case basis to identify which conservation practices fit best and to navigate the enrollment process.”

The new project supplements the existing partnership between K-State Research and Extension and Kansas Wheat, called Wheat Rx, which disseminates the latest research recommendations for high-yielding and high-quality winter wheat to Kansas wheat farmers. The work will also be housed at the Kansas Wheat Innovation Center (KWIC) in Manhattan, another tie back to the commitment by Kansas wheat producers to invest in the future of their industry.

Keep up with the NFWF grant work as the project kicks off in 2025 and find additional resources at kswheat.com/wheatrx.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



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