

Sedgwick County Conservation District

In Partnership with
Natural Resources Conservation
Service



ANNUAL WORKPLAN
2024

DISTRICT INFORMATION

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NRCS INFORMATION

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SUPERVISORS AND ADVISORS

Steve Hermann, Chairman
Greg Winterscheidt, Vice Chairman
Virgil Hill, Treasurer
Larry Kincheloe, Supervisor
Doug Kohls, Supervisor
Susan Erlenwein, Advisor
Abby Sroufe, Advisor

STAFF

Brenda Matson, District Manager

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Kevin Arnet, Supervisory District Conservationist; kevin.arnet@usda.gov
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I. INTRODUCTION

Sedgwick County is at the forefront of a host of environmental and conservation issues. With a population estimate of 525,525 (U.S. Census Bureau, July 1, 2022) the county is home to the largest city in Kansas (Wichita, pop. 396,192) and is one of the leading agricultural producing counties within the state. The dual nature of the county results in the difficult task of balancing the interests of urban dwellers and rural/agricultural operators and producers. Increased development in rural areas is taking prime farmland out of production in addition to increasing the burden on other natural resources. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there was a 1-2% increase in the number of farms as well as the amount of land in farms between 2012 and 2017. The urban population continues to grow at a fast pace creating potential environmental problems. As the population in the county continues to increase, so do the burdens on our natural resources.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) established Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) for the Lower Arkansas River Basin. Pursuant to this process approximately 60% of Sedgwick County is designated as 'high priority' for the following contaminants: eutrophication; fecal coliform bacteria; nutrients and siltation. The water bodies identified are the Big Arkansas River, the Little Arkansas River, Dry Creek, Cowskin Creek, the Big Slough, and Lake Afton. Several other streams and lakes have been identified as medium priority. Additionally, the Ninnnescah River, which drains a portion of the southwest part of the county, is subject to tremendous erosion problems. In some instances, more than a quarter mile of riverbank has been washed away. The rains in the spring and summer of 2019 exacerbated these problems.

The Division of Conservation-Kansas Department of Agriculture works "to protect and enhance Kansas' natural resources through the development, implementation and maintenance of policies, guidelines and programs designed to assist local governmental entities and individuals in conserving our renewable resources." K.S.A. 2-1901 et seq. Pursuant to the Kansas Conservation Commission Long-Range Program (1981) seven objectives were identified. The objectives guiding the Sedgwick County Conservation District are:

1. EROSION
 - a. Reduce erosion to the acceptable level on agriculture land that has a soil loss exceeding the allowable rate.
 - b. Maintain soil quality regarding tilth, infiltration capacity, organic matter, and compaction.
2. WATER QUALITY
 - a. Reduce the discharge of potential pollutants and dissolved solids with highest priority directed to those posing the greatest threat to human health and safety.
 - b. Minimize pollution caused by organic waste from agricultural production.
 - c. Reduce the nutrients reaching the water from agricultural runoff in accordance with TMDL's developed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.
 - d. Achieve sediment reduction goals set forth in the Agricultural Runoff Water Quality Management Plan and in accordance with TMDL standards developed by KDHE.
3. WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION
 - a. Increase the efficiency of water use in agriculture.
4. FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
 - a. Improve upland habitat on both cropland and non-cultivated land.
 - b. Improve the quality of fish habitat.
5. URBAN AND BUILT-UP AREAS
 - a. Provide information to help urban developers and other land users overcome resource limitations.
 - b. Reduce the conversion of prime and unique farmlands and wetlands to urban areas.
 - c. Reduce sediment delivery from construction sites.

Within this framework it is the mission of the Sedgwick County Conservation District to "Develop and implement programs to protect and conserve soil, water, farmland, rangeland, woodland, wildlife, riparian, and wetland resources." The Sedgwick County Conservation District (SCCD) and its partners, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g. braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY).

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

In addition to our partnership with NRCS the Conservation District also works very closely with Sedgwick County Environmental Resources, Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department, Wichita Department of Environmental Health, and K-State Research and Extension – Sedgwick County.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following have been identified as major concerns and high priority items at the local level:

1. Identification and development of programs to protect environmentally sensitive areas within Sedgwick County
 - Prime agricultural land
 - Wetlands
 - Riparian corridors
 - Water supply sources (surface and groundwater)
 - Sand pits
 - Floodplain
2. Maintaining a viable agricultural economy through partnerships between rural/agriculture and urban areas
3. Public education and awareness programs

Based on these priorities identified at the local level, the Sedgwick County Conservation District's goals and objectives for fiscal year 2023 are as follows. Please note order does not reflect priority.

1. Implementation of conservation practices designed to protect and enhance wetland and riparian areas
2. Protection of agriculture land from erosion (water and wind)
3. Protection of surface water from urban and rural contaminants (TMDL)
4. Protection of groundwater from contaminants
5. Implementation of water quality protection measures in TMDL impaired Hydrologic Units (HUC's)
6. Development of methodology to 'target' funds to high priority HUC's
7. Identification of high-risk watershed or hydrological units
8. Increase awareness of best management and water quality protection measures
9. Development of water quality protection measures demonstration projects
10. Increase cooperation between federal, state, and local governmental agencies
11. Educate the public about Nonpoint Source Pollution
12. Educate the public concerning water quality protection measures
13. Educate the public about soil stewardship
14. Educate the public about resource conservation
15. Educate the public about Farm Bill Conservation Programs

III. STRATEGIES

The most important strategic development at the Sedgwick County Conservation District is the methodology we are using to target funds and enroll participants in cost-share programs. We have concluded that the best way to reach landowners is via contractor referrals, City staff referrals, Facebook, website, e-newsletter, partner organization newsletters/events, and presentations at community events.

In developing strategies to meet the objectives identified in the preceding section, particular attention will be devoted to strategies that assist in meeting more than one objective. The following strategies will be used to meet the objectives identified above.

1. Partnership With NRCS
 - a. Execution of the Local Operating Agreement

- b. Partnership with NRCS will assist in meeting all District goals and objectives
 2. Memorandum of Understanding - Sedgwick County Commissioners
 - a. MOU between the Conservation District and the County Commissioners
 - b. Sets forth relationship duties/responsibilities
 - c. Will assist in meeting all goals/objectives
 3. State Water Resources Cost Share Program
 - a. Administration of cost share funds
 - b. Partnership with NRCS -
 - Technical Assistance
 - Equipment
 - c. Marketing program - sign-up
 - d. Development of prioritization method
 - e. Implementation of best management practices
 - f. Measurement/Evaluation
 - Save 50,000 tons of topsoil
 - Plan Best Management practices on 5,000 acres
 - Apply Best Management Practices on 5,000 acres
 - g. Objective #'s 2 - 7, 13, 14
 4. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Programs
 - a. NRCS administration of programs
 - b. Partnership With SCCD
 - Equipment
 - c. EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program
 - d. CRP – Conservation Reserve Program
 - e. CSP – Conservation Security Program
 - f. Measurement/Evaluation
 - EQIP – 75% of allocation obligated
 - g. USDA programs assist in meeting all of the District's goals and objectives
 5. Non-Point Source Cost Share Program
 - a. Administration of cost share funds
 - b. Partnership with NRCS
 - Technical Assistance
 - Equipment
 - c. Identification of priority practices
 - d. Identification of priority areas
 - e. Marketing program/Publicity
 - f. Objective #'s 1 – 4, 6 - 14
 6. Equipment
 - a. 1 No-till Drill and one 4-foot Drill - Available for rental
 - b. Root Plow - Available for rental
 - c. Objective #'s 2 - 4

The District No-Till Drills are available for rental. District Supervisor Virgil Hill stores, maintains, and schedules the drills.



7. Publicity of Programs
 - a. Partnerships (Friends University, Great Plains Nature Center, Farm Bureau, Extension)
 - b. Brochures/pamphlets
 - c. Website
 - d. Facebook
 - e. Media Opportunities
 1. Television
 2. Radio
 3. Newspaper
 - f. Will assist in meeting all goals and objectives
8. Education and Information
 - a. Party for the Planet at Sedgwick County Zoo
 - b. Special Events
 - c. Partnerships
 - d. Presentations to local service groups/business entities
 - e. School Presentations.
 - Demonstrations using models
 - f. Equipment
 1. Stream bank trailer
 2. EnviroScape Model (borrowed from Cowley County CD)
 3. Will assist in meeting all goals and objectives
9. Conservation District Annual Meeting
 - a. Public disclosure of operations, i.e., accountability
 - b. Publicity of programs
 - c. Education through guest speakers
 - d. Objective #'s 8, 11 - 15
10. Grants
 - a. Research Grant Opportunities - The District will pursue grant opportunities. Objective #'s 1 – 15.
11. Program Delivery
 - a. All business consisting of demonstrations, finances, cooperation and output towards inner/outer agency personnel, clientele, and all others in the performance of official business will comply will NRCS Civil Rights policies and responsibilities.



IV. ACTION PLAN

To implement strategies to meet the District's goals and objectives the following actions will be taken:

- ◆ **Partnership with NRCS.**
The SCCD and NRCS will work in close partnership with each other. It is understood that equipment may be shared on an as needed basis upon the approval of both parties. A local operational agreement has been approved.
- ◆ **Memorandum of Understanding - Sedgwick County Commissioners.**
- ◆ **United States Department of Agriculture Programs**
NRCS will be responsible for the administration, publicity, and implementation of these programs. The SCCD will work in partnership with NRCS to assist in meeting their goals and objectives.
- ◆ **State Water Resource Cost Share Program**
The District Manager is the administrator of this program. Actions necessary for the implementation of this program are ongoing throughout the year.
- ◆ **State Non-Point Source Cost-Share Program**
The District Manager is responsible for all aspects of this program. Program is ongoing throughout the year.
- ◆ **Data Base**
The District has concluded the best way to promote District Programs and effectively target funds is via a website, email, Facebook, and public presentation campaign.
- ◆ **Equipment**
SCCD currently owns a root plow, 10-ft no-till grass drill, 4-ft grass drill, and stream bank trailer. This equipment is rented out at reasonable rates as a method of encouraging landowner participation in programs and installation of best management practices. All equipment will be made available to our partners upon Board approval on an as needed basis.
- ◆ **Publicity of Programs**
All staff will participate in publicity activities. The District uses events such as Party for the Planet at the Sedgwick County Zoo and numerous other events to publicize the District and our programs.
- ◆ **Education and Information**
The District Manager and Supervisors are responsible for activities. The District utilizes models in many of its presentations. Currently the District owns a stream bank trailer and has borrowed an Enviroscope.
- ◆ **Annual Meeting**
The Annual meeting will be February 20, 2024. The District Manager and Supervisors are responsible for this activity.

◆ **Membership In Work Groups**

The District Manager, Supervisors, and Advisors are responsible to represent the District on Work Groups. These groups generally meet throughout the year and staff will diligently attend meetings.

◆ **Special Projects**

The Sedgwick County Conservation District is constantly developing and evaluating special projects that further our goals and objectives.

V. OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS

1. State Water Resources Cost Share – Brenda Matson, District Manager
2. Nonpoint Source Cost Share– Brenda Matson, District Manager
3. USDA Farm Programs – NRCS staff
4. Information and Education – All Staff
5. Cooperative Agencies
 - a. Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - b. K-State Research and Extension – Sedgwick County
 - c. Sedgwick County Health Department
 - d. Wichita Water Department
 - e. Wichita Environmental Health Department
 - f. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
 - g. US Army Corps of Engineers
 - h. Sedgwick County Commission
 - i. Sedgwick County GIS
 - j. Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources

Methods of Financing

The Conservation District receives funding from several different sources. Operating funds for the District come from four sources. Most of the funding for operations comes from the County General fund. For FY 2024 the County allocation is \$40,000.00. The State Conservation Commission provides up to \$25,000.00 as “Matching Funds” for operations. Other Funds come from grass drill rental and root plow rental. These programs will continue, and efforts will be undertaken to increase revenue potential.

Cost-share funding comes from the Kansas Department of Agriculture-Division of Conservation. The following are cost-share programs administered by the Conservation District: State Water Resource and Non-Point Source, including Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS).

VI. DISTRICT CALENDAR

The following is a calendar of important District activities for FY 2024. Throughout the year applications for cost share (all programs) will be processed as received, and normal day-to-day activities of the District will be performed.

2023

October 10: District Board Meeting

November 14: District Board Meeting

November 20-22: KACD Convention

December 12: District Board Meeting

2024

January 1: State Cost-Share Sign-Up Begins

January 9: District Board Meeting

February 13: District Board Meeting

February 20: 2024 Annual Meeting

March 12: District Board Meeting

April 9:	District Board Meeting
April 31 – May 7:	Stewardship Week
TBD:	Party for the Planet at the Zoo
May 14:	District Board Meeting
June 11:	District Board Meeting- unless cancelled for harvest
July 1:	State Fiscal Year begins, cost-share contracts submitted for approval
July 9:	District Board Meeting
August 13:	District Board Meeting
September 1:	District Annual Work Plan 2025 due
September 1:	District Annual Budget 2025 due
September 10:	District Board Meeting

The Sedgwick County Conservation District Board of Supervisors has reviewed the FY 2024 Annual Work Plan; it was officially approved at the Regular Board of Supervisors Meeting on July 11, 2023.

 Steve Hermann
 Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST

 Brenda Matson
 District Manager

 Kevin Arnet
 District Conservationist

File:CD 2024 WORKPLAN