



# Online HydroGRAM

## Sign-Up Underway for Water Right Retirement Program

The State Conservation Commission began accepting applications for the Water Transition Assistance Program (WTAP) on October 1, 2008 in three areas of the state. They are Prairie Dog Creek, Rattlesnake Creek and the six high priority units in Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 (GMD4). Sign-up continues through November 15, 2008.

WTAP is a voluntary, incentive-based water right retirement program designed to help restore aquifers and streams in critical areas.

A fixed rate price of \$2,000 per acre-foot of Historic Consumptive Water Use is available for eligible water rights to be permanently retired. Priority is given to retiring water rights in areas which would have the greatest impact on the stream or aquifer system. WTAP grants are approved on the basis of competitive bids and the amount of Historic Consumptive Water Use which has been established under the water right.

To be eligible, water rights must have been actively used in the last 10 years. Dryland farming is permitted after a water right is retired. Limited irrigation can be temporarily allowed to establish a permanent cover on the land being transitioned from irrigation. Partial water right reductions can also be considered for retirement grants.

The six high priority units in GMD4 are in need of aquifer recovery and are now closed to further appropriations of water. The six areas, located in Cheyenne, Sherman, Thomas, and Sheridan counties, also are the subject of additional management program protocols being discussed with landowners by GMD4.

The Prairie Dog Creek basin has been selected as a pilot project target area because it is significant in the State of Kansas' efforts to maintain compliance in the Republican River Compact with the State of Nebraska. The "High Priority" areas of this basin in Phillips, Nor-

ton, Decatur, Sheridan and Thomas counties have been designated to be in need of stream restoration and aquifer recovery and are now closed to further appropriations of water.

The Rattlesnake Creek subbasin has been selected as a pilot project target area because of the significant water issues being addressed by the State of Kansas, the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5, and the Rattlesnake / Quivira Partnership. The high priority areas of this basin in Barton, Rice, Reno, Stafford, Pawnee, Pratt, Edwards, Kiowa, Ford and Clark counties have been designated to be in need of stream restoration and aquifer recovery and are now closed to further appropriations of water.

If program funds are still available, a spring sign-up period will be held on February 15 through March 31, 2009.

For more information, contact Steve Frost, Water Conservation Program Manager, at (785) 296-8964. Complete WTAP rules and regulations, applications, maps, and other details are posted on the SCC web site at [www.scc.ks.gov](http://www.scc.ks.gov). Information and assistance can also be provided at the NW KS GMD No. 4 in Colby, (785) 462-3915, or at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources Field Office in Stockton, (785) 425-6787.

