

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible participants to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Kansas is working with NRCS to target funding toward quick response areas under the EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation program. Groundwater Management Districts 1, 3, 4 and 5, and the Division of Water Resources, are prioritizing areas of the Ogallala-High Plains as quick response areas. These quick response areas will rank higher on the Water Quantity-Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land: Aquifer Overdraft Evaluation Worksheet.

The groundwater management districts, Kansas Water Office and Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources submitted a proposal to NRCS staff and the state technical committee to add these quick response areas to the evaluation worksheet. To qualify, at least 50 percent of the application acres need to be within the defined quick response area for 2006.

Landowners who voluntarily enroll in the program cannot irrigate the enrolled acres but may raise crops under dryland conditions. Cost-share and incentive payments are available only for land that has been irrigated at least two of the past five years and a minimum of 40 acres enrolled. Other eligibility requirements are:

- EQIP self-assessment tool must be completed and returned by cutoff date.
- Incentive payment for conversion of irrigated cropland to non-irrigated cropland or to non-irrigated permanent cover is available.
- All irrigated land used to receive cost-share or incentive payments must have irrigation water management and water measuring devices.
- Producers must stay within the certified rate and amount of existing water right.
- No end guns or similar appurtenances will be used on center pivots.
- Well modifications, pumping units and power facilities for irrigation systems are not eligible for cost-share.
- Cost-share is not available for a sprinkler system to replace an existing sprinkler system.

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Water savings can be achieved by:

- Converting to a less water intensive cropping system or non-irrigated land use.
- Improving irrigation systems.
- Enhancing irrigation efficiencies.
- Improving water storage through water banking and ground water recharge.
- Including other practices that improve ground water or surface water conservation, as deemed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.



Legislators Tour Kansas

This year's Kansas Field Conference focused on natural resource and economic issues in west-central and north-central Kansas.

Representatives, Senators, legislative researchers and directors of natural resource departments in Kansas toured Cedar Bluff Reservoir,

Nicodemus National Historical Site, Webster Reservoir, Circle K Ranch, Arkansas River phreatophytes site in Pawnee County, Cheyenne Bottoms, Wilson Lake and Fencepost Limestone Quarry in Lincoln County.

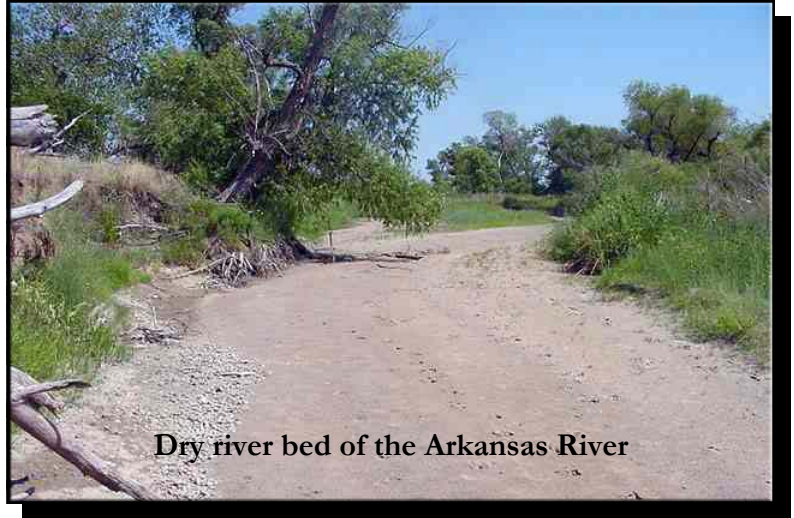
Participants learned the importance of water; especially where precipitation levels are low and ground water supplies are scarce. Lakes within the area are expected to fill many roles, from irrigation to recreation, which creates conflict in a region where water is valuable. The interaction of ground water and streamflow, and the impact of water-loving plants, are two topics that were addressed, along with conversations about the economic impact of nature-based tourism and the challenges created by changing demographics.

Day one of the tour provided a drive through rural Kansas to discuss population issues. A stop at Cedar Bluff Reservoir to discuss the challenge to provide recreational use of the reservoir while managing the Smoky Hill River and the ground water in the alluvium for water users. At Webster Reservoir, participants heard about the history and geology of the reservoir and surrounding area.

On day two, participants discussed the role Circle K Ranch could play in central Kansas water issues. They also took a walk down a dry river bed of the Arkansas River and information was presented on the Arkansas River phreatophytes. To conclude the day, participants visited the future site of the Kansas Wetlands Educational Center at Cheyenne Bottoms.

On day three, participants began with a stop at the Fencepost Limestone Quarry (Vonada Stone Company) in Lincoln County for a demonstration of how the fence post was quarried in the 1800s. Later that afternoon, they visited Wilson Lake, the clearest and saltiest in Kansas. There participants discussed Wilson Lake being a water-supply source for Russell and Hays and the many challenges it faces related to development, recreation and water supply.

The Kansas Geological Survey, Kansas Water Office, Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks sponsored the Central Great Plains Water, Recreation and Economic Development 2005 Field Conference from June 8 to 10.



Dry river bed of the Arkansas River

Governor's Rural Life Task Force Seeking Rural Communities for Pilot Project

By Lisa Taylor, KDA

TOPEKA – Governor Kathleen Sebelius recently announced that her Rural Life Task Force is seeking two rural communities to take part in a two-year pilot project that eventually will serve as a template for other communities pursuing more sustainable futures.

“Many Kansas communities are facing the same challenges, whether it’s a declining population, a weak economy or access to health care,” Sebelius said. “What I want to do through the Rural Life Task Force is find two communities ready to identify how these problems can be solved.”

The Governor’s Rural Life Task Force will select two communities for the pilot project and also will serve as a bridge between the community and state and other support agencies.

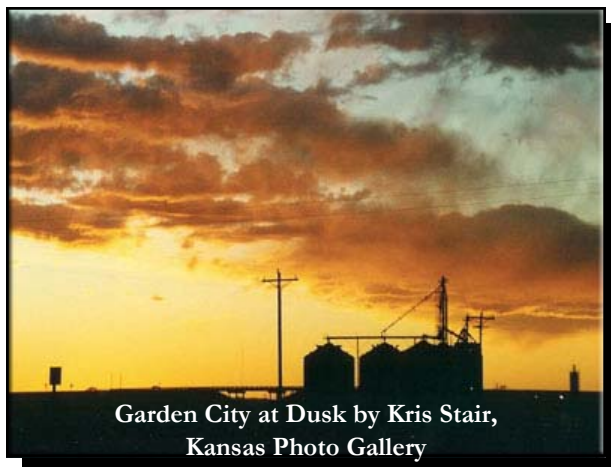
“We’re looking for communities that have a well-defined sense of the issues they seek to address, as well as the leadership and human resources needed to complete the project and document the process,” said Marci Penner, director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation, who is co-chair of the task force with Dan Nagangast of the Kansas Rural Center. “The task force will help by supporting the community’s efforts through mentoring, helping to identify and remove barriers to success and, in some cases, providing hands-on technical assistance or training.”

A community can be a town, an alliance of rural communities, or a consortium of niche businesses, like small-town grocery stores, as long as the outcome of the project could benefit many communities. If the community is a town, it must have a population of less than 2,000. If the community involves several towns, each must have a population of less than 2,000.

The community’s project will be deemed a success if it improves quality of life, helps sustain the community and provides increased economic opportunity for the people who live there.

A description of the community pilot project and the preliminary application form are available online at http://www.ksgovernor.org/workgroups_rltf.html. Communities have until July 15 to apply to participate in the pilot project. The two communities selected for the project will be announced Nov. 15.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius assembled the 43-member Rural Life Task Force in 2003 to bring together many representative voices of rural communities to cultivate a common vision and preliminary action plan to preserve and enhance rural Kansas. They were selected for their energy, enthusiasm and dedication to all facets of rural Kansas. Although they represent different communities, professions and memberships, they share a commitment to rural Kansas.



Garden City at Dusk by Kris Stair,
Kansas Photo Gallery

County Precipitation

Information provided by
Kansas State University
Weather Data Library at
www.oznet.ksu.edu.

Rush County

January 2005	1.13”
February 2005	2.08”
March 2005	0.88”
April 2005	1.56”

Pawnee County

January 2005	1.01”
February 2005	1.90”
March 2005	0.45”
April 2005	1.83”

Edwards County

January 2005	0.91”
February 2005	0.74”
March 2005	0.83”
April 2005	1.79”

Barton County

January 2005	0.82”
February 2005	2.08”
March 2005	1.07”
April 2005	2.69”

Stafford County

January 2005	1.72”
February 2005	1.96”
March 2005	1.10”
April 2005	1.59”

Rice County

January 2005	1.46”
February 2005	1.75”
March 2005	1.72”
April 2005	1.54”



Proposed quick response areas are as follows:

GMD No. 1:
Areas around the municipalities. The radius is still being determined.

GMD No. 3:
The Arkansas River from the Dodge City USGS gaging station to the Ford-Edwards county line that falls within the IGUCA boundary.

GMD No. 4:
A four-township area known as the friesen area and two two-mile circle areas in Sheridan and Rawlins Counties.

GMD No. 5:
Two-mile corridor along the Middle Arkansas and Rattlesnake Creek subbasins and the high-decline area in the two subbasins (Edwards and Pawnee Counties).

DWR:
Alluvial area along Beaver Creek, Prairie Dog (both upstream and downstream of the Keith Sebelius Reservoir), Upper North and South Fork Solomon and an area within Hodgeman County.



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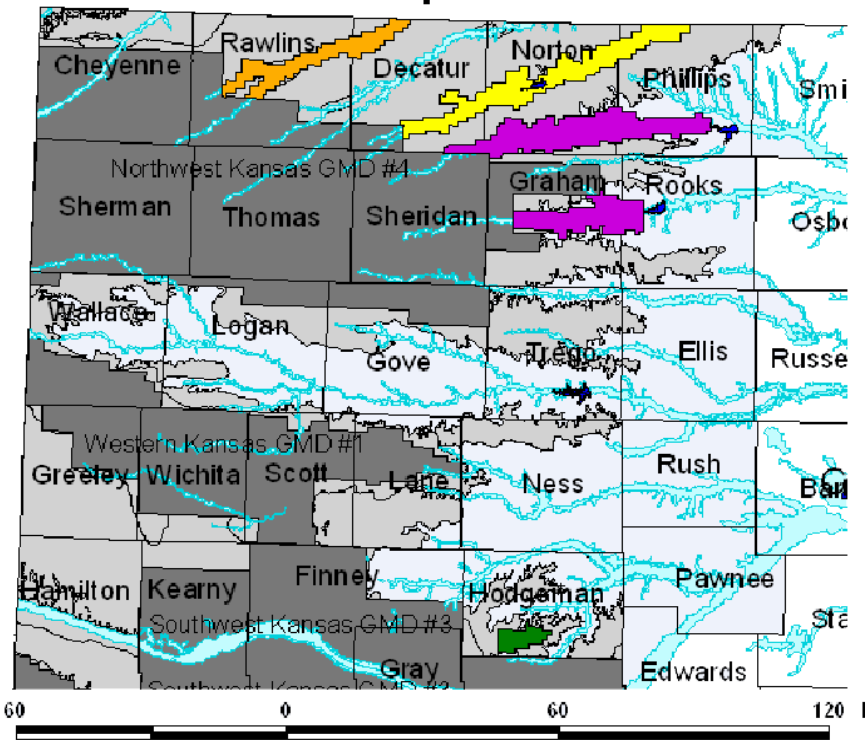
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Additional options on the application are to enroll the acres into the Division of Water Resources Water Rights Conservation Program (WRCP) for 10 years and/or the application can be approved for a contract with a groundwater management district, State or local contract for conversion to non-irrigated land use. The groundwater management districts and the state are seeking to establish programs that would offer additional incentives for applicants to convert irrigated land to non-irrigated land use.

Anyone can apply for the EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation program, but individuals located within one of the quick response areas will rank at a higher priority.

If you have questions regarding the quick response areas, please contact Tina Alder with the Division of Water Resources at (785) 296-3705, Susan Stover with the Kansas Water Office at (785) 296-3185, or your local groundwater management district office.

Quick Response Areas



- Area #1: Prairie Dog Creek
- Area #2: Hodgeman County
- Area #3: Upper North & South Forks of the Solomon River
- Area #4: Beaver Creek
- County
- Alluvium
- GMD's
- High Plains Extent
- Lakes

Grace Period To Convert From Domestic Use To Stockwatering Use To End By Lisa Taylor, KDA

TOPEKA - The chief engineer of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's division of water resources has issued an order to end a grace period for confinement livestock operations of a certain size to convert their domestic water use to a stockwatering permit.

The order was published in the June 30, 2005, edition of the Kansas Register.

The order states that the chief engineer will not approve any application to change a domestic water use to stockwatering permit if it is filed after Dec. 31, 2005. The order applies to confined livestock operations with 1,000 head or more of cattle, or dairies and confined livestock operations that divert 15 acre-feet or more water a year that existed prior to 1985.

Before 1985, livestock watering was considered a domestic use that did not require a permit. However, the regulations were amended in 1985 to require confined livestock operations of 1,000 head or more to have a livestock watering permit. The regulations were clarified in 2000 to include dairies or other livestock operations that divert 15 acre-feet or more water in a calendar year.

"We have been very generous about allowing operators extra time to come into compliance with these regulations," said David Pope, chief engineer of the division of water resources. "Now we are establishing a deadline for all affected facilities to achieve compliance."

The division of water resources has tried to identify and contact all individuals who had confined feeding operations before 1985 that were operating under a domestic water use who have not yet obtained the stockwatering permit. Those individuals have until the end of this year to file an application to change from domestic use to stockwatering use.

Confinement livestock operators who have questions about the regulation and achieving compliance may call the division of water resources at (785) 296-3717, or one of its field offices: Garden City at (620) 276-2901; Stafford at (620) 234-5311; Stockton at (785) 425-6787, or Topeka at (785) 368-8251.

The order may be viewed at www.ksda.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=173.

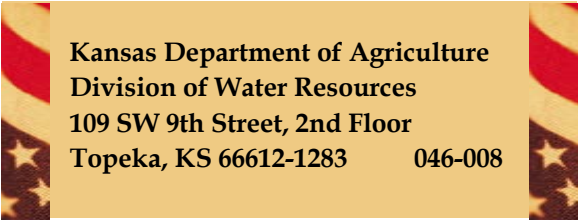


Who needs to file an application?

- Any feedlot with the capacity to confine 1,000 or more head of cattle.
- Any confined livestock operation that utilizes 15 acre-feet or more of water in any calendar year.
- A group of feedlots or other confined feeding operations shall be considered to be one feedlot, or confined feeding operation, if there are common feeding or other physical facilities and the group of facilities is under common management.
- It should be noted that this conversion process is limited to that quantity of water used for watering of confined livestock through 1985, but does not pertain to any expansion of use subsequent to that date.

Who does NOT need to file an application?

- Confined feeding operations that obtain water from another permitted source, such as a rural water district or municipality.



ADDRESS LINE

About Our Staff

The Subbasin Water Resource Management Program is designed to take a proactive management approach within subbasins identified in the Kansas State Water Plan. The program employs five environmental scientists and one support staff.

Environmental scientists and support staff work to find resolutions to ground water declines and streamflow depletion. In an effort to resolve these issues, our scientists monitor and measure 795 wells, 33 streamflow sites and 18 USGS gages. They also conduct hydrological analysis on collected data, create correlating maps and reports, facilitate public meetings and educate the public on their findings.

If you have questions regarding the status of the middle Arkansas subbasin, contact our office.

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