



Resources



Riley County Conservation District

Winter 2017 Newsletter

www.rileycountyks.gov/conservationdistrict

Volume 24, Issue 1

ANNUAL MEETING – February 2nd

The Riley County Conservation District’s **68th Annual Meeting** will be held on Thursday evening, **February 2nd, 2017 at Pottorf Hall** in CICO Park, near the intersection of Avery and Kimball Avenues in Manhattan, Kansas. **Supper will be served at 6:30 PM**, and will consist of a hearty buffet catered by Ricky’s Café of Hanover, Kansas. Kevin Larson will speak after dinner on historical churches of Riley County, and awards will be given to the poster and essay contest winners!

A short **business meeting** will follow, and District Board Supervisors will present the 2016 annual report and treasurer’s report. One Board Supervisor will be elected to a three year term. The 2016 Water Quality Award and Grassland Award will be presented to Riley County landowners, and we will draw for Door Prizes! **(If you’d like to donate a door prize, it would be very much appreciated!)**

In order to know how much food to prepare, **reservations are required**. To make your reservations, please phone (785) 537 8764 ext 301, or send an email message to aubrey.evans@ks.nacdnet.net, or return the form below to the Riley County Conservation District’s office in Manhattan. Please contact Aubrey if you are able to contribute a door prize, and **please respond no later than January 30th, 2017**.

_____ (clip here and return) 

RESERVATION FORM

Please reserve _____ meal(s) for the 68th Annual Meeting of the Riley County Conservation District to be held on February 2nd, 2017 at Pottorf Hall in CICO Park in Manhattan. The meal will be served at 6:30 PM.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Return to:
**Riley County Conservation District, 3705 Miller Parkway - Suite A,
Manhattan, KS 66503-7604**

Thank you to Riley State Bank, UMB National Bank, Farm Credit, Union State Bank, Commerce Bank, and Leonardville State Bank for contributing to our Annual Meeting and meal.

Your Current Staff



NRCS and FSA employees in the Manhattan Service Center serve both Riley and Geary Counties. **Kevin Religa**, District Conservationist is your best contact for CSP, EQIP, and other program questions. **Lisa Wainwright** is our Soil

Conservation Technician, providing design, staking and checkout for field work. **Alysia Towey** is the new Rangeland Conservationist, taking over for Myra Richardson, and **Tom Becker** is a technician temporarily in our office. We also have two Student Trainees, **Shaina Ott and Reese Wilkison**.

Aubrey Evans is your best contact for state cost share funds, drill rental, grass seed, educational programs and the District's farm. We try to keep someone in the office, but occasionally we are all in the field. **If you have a specific need, it is best to call ahead** and be sure that we'll be here to help you - (785) 537 8764 ext 301.

Not of This World- Old World Bluestems

James L. Ungerer- Rangeland Management Specialist

Rapid expansion of Old World Bluestems (OWB) is an ever-growing concern and a very real threat to native prairies. As more land managers discover the presence of OWB on their prairies, the need to address this challenging resource concern is long overdue.

Caucasian and yellow bluestems were introduced into the United States in the early 1900s for use as forage and erosion control. It is now realized these invasive species have created extreme problems on the landscape. OWB appear to accelerate erosion on rangelands because they can cause an altered carbon-to-nitrogen ratio that inhibits the growth of native plants. These grasses are also less palatable to livestock, in comparison to native bluestem species, and can tolerate extreme grazing pressure. Invasive species, like OWB, harm the natural ecological systems of native prairies. If left uncontrolled, OWB will damage ranching economies to the point of threatening cattle producers' livelihoods due to the extreme costs and profit loss. As OWB invades and takes over rangelands, native wildlife is also negatively impacted.

OWB grasses spread by root and by seed. They are prolific seed producers and the length of seed viability in the soil is unknown. Spread may be attributed to

machine, animal, or wind. OWB often invades or occupies difficult to control areas in pastures or rangeland.

Early detection is key to addressing and controlling of OWB before it can completely take over a landscape. However, identification of these grasses can be difficult to the untrained eye looking out across the native prairie. Fall season is a good time to view it on the landscape because it will appear in dense, shiny blond patches, in comparison to the reds and maroons of native plants. During the growing season, it will exhibit a much lighter green color than many native grasses. Many land managers first realize the presence of OWB when they observe dense stands that cattle graze right up to and stop.

At this time, strategies to deal with OWB require an ever changing approach to treatment, management, and control. If seeding new grass stands, be sure that mix is not contaminated with OWB seed.

When feeding hay on rangeland, be certain that it does not contain OWB. Producers need to realize other ways it spreads and take necessary precautions and preventions against OWB expansion.

Chemical treatment of OWB includes spot application following Kansas State University recommendations and appropriate product labels.

Prior to any herbicide treatment, mowing, or prescribed burning of patches during the dormant season, early spring, is recommended to remove standing dead plant material to maximize chemical contact with live-plant material. Post-application monitoring of treatment and follow-up treatments should be repeated as needed. Others have used livestock to heavily graze areas with OWB to control seed production of the grasses.

Educating others to the potential risks of OWB spread, detection, treatment options, and ultimate negative impacts is key to addressing this rapid concern. For questions regarding identification or treatment options of OWB, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

For more information, visit the Kansas NRCS Web site www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, check on the Internet at offices.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

District's Website

www.rileycountyks.gov/conservationdistrict will take you to our website. Current and recent newsletters are available there in full color in January and June - plus other timely information. Check us out!



Burn Permits



Prescribed burning is required on many local CSP, CRP, WHIP and EQIP contracts. Landowners are reminded that a **burn permit is required in Riley County**. Please be safe and follow all county burning guidelines. For information or to obtain a permit, contact Riley County Emergency Management at (785) 537 6333, or you can apply online at www.rileycountyks.gov.



ENVIROTHON

This year's **Area Envirothon** competitions were held at **Soldier, KS and Wilson Lake on April 13th and at Council Grove Reservoir on April 6th**. The statewide Envirothon competition was held near **Emporia on April 27th**. Riley County High School teams represented us at Soldier and at State and Blue Valley High school had a team representing us at Council Grove and State.

The **Envirothon program** is for students in grades 9 - 12. They conduct fieldwork, and then compete in the five subject areas of Wildlife, Forestry, Soils, Aquatics, and Current Environmental Issue.

Any questions about Envirothon can be taken by Aubrey Evans at (785) 537-8764 x301 or aubrey.evans@ks.nacdnet.net

EQIP / CSP Signups

Producers with cropland, rangeland, or forestland with any concerns should visit their local NRCS office and

work with the staff to **develop a conservation plan**. Financial assistance for certain improvements may be available, and applications for these programs can be submitted at any time. As future signup deadlines are announced, the **applications on hand will be ranked and considered for funding**. For information about **EQIP, WHIP and CSP** – call Kevin Religa at (785) 776 7582 ext 303 - or visit the KS NRCS Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs. NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Ownership and Name Changes on Conservation Contracts

Please notify NRCS if you sell land that is under an EQIP, GRP, CSP, or WHIP contract, **or if the land has been transferred to a trust, LLC, or partnership**. As a contract holder you are required to notify NRCS within 60 days of any changes. Many landowners are changing ownership designation by creating trusts. Contract transfer paperwork needs to be completed for any of these changes to avoid contract violations and payment delays. Direct deposit banking information also needs to be updated. **Even if you notify FSA, you also need to notify NRCS separately** of any changes. Thank you.

Conservation District News

We have **limited cost share funds available for work in the Wildcat Creek watershed**. Give us a call at **785 537-8764 ext 301** if you have a project in this area.



The District offers items for sale or rent from time to time, with the **proceeds going toward** Annual Meeting costs, awards to school children for poster and essay contests, conservation awards to landowners, participation in the Envirothon and other **programs that educate and promote the wise use of our county's natural resources**.

Native Grass Seed – our standard mix includes Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Switchgrass and Sideoats Grama. **Special seed mixes can be prepared for your site, and we rent grassland drills**. We also sell cover crop seed and mixes, call for pricing. **NEW THIS YEAR: The District has purchased a brand-new Great Plains no-till drill!** Please call us at (785) 537 8764 ext 301 for availability.

Riley County Conservation District
3705 Miller Parkway – Suite A
Manhattan, KS 66503-7604
785 537 8764 ext 301

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Happy New Year 2017!

Conservation Newsletter

**Riley County Conservation District
Board of Supervisors:**

David Cederberg, Chair
Stan Johnson, Vice Chair
Steve Strauss, Treasurer
Nathan Larson, Member
Steve Hargrave, Member

Conservation District Staff:

Aubrey Evans, District Manager



**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Staff:**

Kevin C. Religa,
District Conservationist
Alysia Towey,
Rangeland Conservationist
Lisa Wainwright,
Soil Conservation Technician
Tom Becker,
Soil Conservation Technician
Shaina Ott,
Student Trainee
Reese Wilkison,
Student Trainee

Riley County Conservation District Board meetings are generally held the second Thursday of each month - (May-October at 7:30 PM, and November-April at 6:00 PM). The public is welcome to attend – please call to verify time of meeting.