



CONSERVATION CONNECTIONS

Dickinson County Conservation District Newsletter

Issue #7 October 2016

www.dkcoconservation.com



dkcoconservation

Receive our quarterly newsletter via email, US Mail, or download on our website:

www.dkcoconservation.com

Call 785-263-2787 to change your preferences.

EQIP Funding Deadline: November 18, 2016



The Dickinson County Conservation District

is still accepting nominations for the Conservation Awards.

Each year, the Dickinson County Conservation District presents awards to six county land owners for implementing con-

servation practices that exemplify a commitment to stewardship of our natural resources.

Awards are presented at the Annual Meeting in February and recipients are recognized in a special supplement to the Abilene Reflector-Chronicle.

Nomination may be made by phone at 785-263-2787 extension 332, by email to cindy.dooley@ks.nacdnet.net or by submitting a form on the website:

www.dkcoconservation.com

Conservation District Seeking Conservation Award Nominees



FSA REMINDERS:

- Grass and Alfalfa must be certified by November 15, 2016
- Wheat must be certified by December 15, 2016

Contact FSA to schedule an appointment to certify: 785-263-1351



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ October 10 - OFFICE CLOSED - Columbus Day
- ◆ October 11 - Regular Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting - USDA Service Center, Abilene
- ◆ November 11 - OFFICE CLOSED - Veteran's Day
- ◆ November 18 - EQIP Funding Deadline

Top Three Time-Saving Advantages Using NRCS' Conservation Client Gateway

Salina, Kansas, August 8, 2016—Farmers put in long days. Driving to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office every time paperwork needs to be signed is not always productive. With Conservation Client Gateway, a producer can do most of their business with NRCS online. Farmers using Conservation Client Gateway find these three things to be the most advantageous for them.

Advantage 1—Sign documents electronically. It is a secure way to sign contracts online. Viewing and printing documents at the farmer's convenience saves time. Plus, everything is logically organized and easy to find. For many farmers that have a long drive to the USDA office, or have multiple projects going on with no time to spare, this feature is a tremendous time saver.

Advantage 2—Keep track of payments. Everyone wants to know when they are getting paid. With Conservation Client Gateway, you can get payment status online without the need for a phone call or waiting for a call back.

Advantage 3—Request conservation practice certification or technical assistance. Submitting certification online speeds up the process—no need for a special trip to the USDA Service Center. And by asking technical questions online, NRCS is better able to reply with more detailed information that can be read online and available to go back to anytime.

“Many farmers in the surrounding states have really appreciated its time-saving features – use is growing in Mis-

souri, Nebraska, Iowa, and Texas. Over 1,700 farmers are using this nationwide. We'd like to see Kansas farmers adopt this to help them get more time back in their day,” says Eric B. Banks, Kansas NRCS State Conservationist. We have new initiatives underway to get the word out and show how easy Conservation Client Gateway is to use. Farmers can expect to see more demonstrations at partner events and field demonstrations this year. Saving time, being more productive, and most of all convenience—we hope our farmers and ranchers explore the possibilities with this application.

More information about Conservation Client Gateway can be found online at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/ and clicking on the Conservation Client Gateway banner on the main page.

Learn more about NRCS or find your local field office by visiting the Kansas NRCS Web site (www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/).

Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas.

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2016 Conservation District Speech Contest

The Dickinson County Conservation District will once again sponsor a speech contest open to all Dickinson County high school students. All students in grades 9 through 12 are welcome to register for and participate in the contest, including home-school students, public school students, and private or parochial school students.

The topic for this year's speech contest is "Local Heroes: Your Hardworking Pollinators". The speech must address the general topic, but students are encouraged to present the topic in a way that is creative and personally meaningful. The speech should have a strong emphasis on soil or water conservation or the importance of conserving our natural resources.

The county contest will be held in mid-October at the USDA Service Center, 328 NE 14th Street, Abilene. The winner of the Dickinson County contest will advance to the area contest. Area contest winners will then advance on to the state contest, held at the KACD Annual Convention in Wichita in November, the Monday before Thanksgiving. The Dickinson County Conservation District contest, the area contest, and the state contest offers incentives to encourage student participation and support future educational endeavors.


Students wishing to participate in the speech contest must register by October 7, 2016. Contact Cindy Dooley at the Dickinson County Conservation District by phone, 785-263-2787 extension 332, or by email: information@dkcoconservation.com. Complete rules and a speech score card that will be used during the contest are available on the Dickinson County Conservation District website Resources, Forms, and Publications page.



Conservation Tree Planting Program

Kansas Forest Service offers containerized seedlings for sale and distribution September 6 through October 14. Fall is a great time to plant seedlings, allowing them to get established before winter. Fall-planted seedlings have the advantage of growing early during optimum growing conditions in the spring. The cost is \$50 plus shipping and sales tax for 25 seedlings and the seedlings must be used for conservation purposes, such as windbreaks, wildlife habitats, riparian plantings, wood lots, and Christmas trees. Contact the Kansas Forest Service for more information.

Phone: 1-888-740-8733
www.kansasforests.org





Good news for the upland bird hunter and his or her bird dog: As a whole, pheasant numbers nationwide are comparable to or higher than last season.

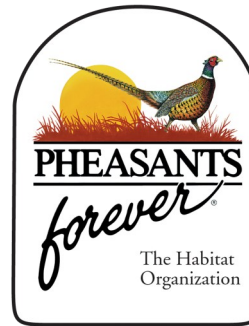
Pheasant populations continue to rebuild in the aftermath of a decade of historic habitat loss and a severe multi-year drought that gripped the Great Plains.

The traditional top-tier of states – Kansas, North Dakota and the mighty “Pheasant Capital” of South Dakota – will again offer the highest density of ringnecks. Pheasant numbers in Colorado and Minnesota are up noticeably.

And while official counts in Iowa and Nebraska dipped ever so slightly, summer survey conditions were poor, leading game managers to speculate that bird numbers could be underestimated. Other states, too, had their ups and downs. To get the details, read our comprehensive state-by-state Pheasant Hunting Forecast.

Continued growth in pheasant populations in the years ahead will hinge largely on whether high-quality upland habitat can be added back to pheasant country. That means a higher Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) cap combined with the continued efforts of Pheasants Forever chapters and conservation partners. It means your membership and volunteer support of Pheasants Forever has never been more important.

Good luck in the field this fall. If you're not yet engaged in the cause for conservation, help us continue the fight and become a Pheasants Forever member today.



PHEASANTS FOREVER'S 2016 PHEASANT HUNTING FORECAST

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There's No Place Like
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PHOTO BY JOHN HAFNER

Kansas NRCS Announces Deadline for EQIP Funding

tions



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced November 18, 2016, as the first cut-off date to apply for fiscal year 2017 funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

"EQIP provides Kansas agricultural producers a wide range of opportunities to improve the quality of natural resources on their land," State Conservationist Eric B. Banks said.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers. Through EQIP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat.

The November 18 application deadline also applies to the following initiatives:

- High Tunnel System Initiative: NRCS will help producers implement high tunnels that extend growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.
- Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative: NRCS will assist producers to implement conservation practices specifically targeted to improve the lesser prairie-chicken habitat while promoting the overall health of grazing lands.
- Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Project: NRCS will assist landowners to establish milkweed and other plants critical to the iconic Monarch Butterfly.
- Ogallala Aquifer Initiative: NRCS will assist producers to reduce aquifer water use, improve water quality, and enhance the economic viability of croplands and rangelands.
- On-Farm Energy Initiative: Producers work with an NRCS-approved Technical Service Provider to develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an agricultural operation.
- Organic Initiative: NRCS will assist producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural opera-

related to organic production. Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or producers who are exempt based on the National Organic Program will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns.

- National Water Quality Initiative: Application cutoff date will be established at a later time.

NRCS accepts applications for all of its programs on a continuous basis, but applications must be filed for these programs by November 18 to be eligible for the next round of funding. Producers interested in EQIP should submit a signed application to the local NRCS field office.

EQIP also helps address the unique circumstances of socially disadvantaged, veteran, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers, who have natural resource concerns that need to be addressed on their land," said Banks. Qualifying Kansas producers compete separately and receive higher payment rates.

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.



Wildlife of Kansas

Ruby-Throated Hummingbird

Adult Males: are Emerald green on their back, they have an iridescent ruby red gorget (throat), will have gray flanks with forked tail with no white and is smaller than the female.

Adult Females: Is emerald green on their back, white rounded throat and has a tail with white tips. She is larger than the male and has a longer bill. The average length of an adult is 8.9 cm and weight is 3.1 grams. Juveniles: male and female look alike until several months the male will develop some red spots on his gorget. Ruby's have very short legs, they don't really walk or hop they shuffle!

Adult Habitat: Ruby's like open forests, grasslands, gardens, scrub vegetation and often near water. The nest the female builds is anywhere from 1 m – 9 m above the ground, usually in a fork of a tree.

Adult Diet: Adults love to feed on the nectar and sap of flowers and occasionally eat insect and spiders. They have been known to frequent feeders with sugar water around people's homes.

Conservation Status: stable

Adult Distribution: Ruby Throated Hummingbirds are throughout the Eastern to the mid-western North America from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. They spend the winters in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Some Ruby's remain around the Gulf States and the outer banks of North Carolina.



Female Ruby-Throated Hummingbird



Thick-Spike Gayfeather (*Liatris pycnostachya*)



Plant of the Month

Native *Liatris pycnostachya* is a striking plant occurring naturally on glades, bald knobs, meadows, dry upland prairies, and savannas from Ontario to Wisconsin and North Dakota, south to Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. Part of the Aster Family.

Also known as Prairie Blazing Star, Kansas Gayfeather, or Button Snakeroot, the plant grows 3 to 5 feet tall spikes of dense violet-lavender to rosy purple flower heads, which provide striking vertical form in the perennial garden. Prairie Blazingstar is easily grown in average well-drained soils and full sun yet also tolerates poor soils, drought, and summer heat.

Prairie blazing star is a hardy, native perennial herb that grows from a tuber. It is one of the most conspicuous of the prairie inhabitants, as its leafy stems grow erect to a height of 5 feet. The narrow leaves on the lower two-thirds of the plant are so crowded that to the casual observer they may appear spiraled rather than closely alternate. Lower leaves, up to 4 inches long and ½ inch wide, are larger than those further up the stems. Both the leaves and stems usually display short, stiff hairs.

The top two-thirds of prairie blazing star is a spike of rose-purple, thistle-like flowers that are given a somewhat fuzzy appearance by extended white stamens (male flower parts) and pistils (female flower parts). Flowering starts at the top of the spike and moves progressively downward. Each flower head along the spike is made up of 5 to 12 tubular florets. A dense circle of bracts (tiny, modified leaves) surrounds the base of each flower head. The tips of these long, pointed bracts tend to spread and curve back toward their bases. Bracts of this species may have a purplish tinge.

All *Liatris* produce flowers in wand-like spikes or racemes. Their flowers are produced in late summer and autumn. They multiply by offsets from their cornlike base, or may be grown from seed, which should be sown in autumn. They will grow and produce flowers in poorer soil than most garden plants, but thrive best in good, rich garden soil, and require no special care. *Liatris pycnostachya* is one of the showiest species. The slender seeds of *Liatris* are usually less than 1/4 inch long. The seed narrows toward the base and is tipped with a set of soft bristles about as long as the seed itself. There are 10 ribs or ridges running along the length of the seed. Prairie blazing star seeds per pound average 131,000.


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WATER	WATERCOLOR	WATERSHED	

More conservation education booklets avail available on our website: www.dkcoconservation.com




Find the solution to this puzzle
on Facebook: dkcoconservation



Celebrate Bats for Halloween



It's time for Halloween and what animal is more iconic to Halloween than the bat? Fall is a great time to celebrate these amazing creatures, one of Your Local Heroes, the Hardworking Pollinators!



BANANAS for BATS!
Banana producers are
dependent upon bats
for pollination.



What You Can Do for Bats

Visit <http://dkcoconservation.com/education> for complete instructions on creating a wall-mounted, single-chamber bat house.

Plant a pollinator garden that will attract bats! The flowers that bats feed on are open at night, pale or white and very fragrant with a fruit-like or fermenting odor. Bats also feed on the insects in the flowers as well as on the nectar.

Learn more! Visit <http://www.batcon.org/> and learn more about these misunderstood pollinators.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT SERVICES

Equipment Rental and Sales

The Dickinson County Conservation District provides conservation equipment rental service to area landowners. Contact Cindy Dooley at 785-263-2787 to schedule your rental.

Great Plains No Till Drill

Delivered: \$50 Delivery Fee + \$15/Acre ● First 1/2 Acre Free

Customer Pickup: \$15/Acre ● \$80 Minimum

Truax Grass Seed Drill

Delivered: \$40 Delivery Fee + \$11/Acre ● First 1 Acre Free

Customer Pickup: \$11/Acre ● \$40 Minimum

Drip Torch

\$100 Deposit ● \$5/Day 1st 3 Days ● \$25/Day After 3 Days

30" Wire Stem Marking Flags—Fluorescent Pink

100 for \$10.00 or 1000 for \$100.00 (\$10 minimum)

Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can change the world.

“A nation that destroys the soil destroys itself.” Theodore Roosevelt

Funding to produce this newsletter is provided in part by the Division of Conservation through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan.

The Dickinson County Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

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Looking for a contractor?

Contact us for a list of contractors that will help achieve all your conservation goals: earthwork, brush cleaning, burning, well-drilling, fence building, and more!

SEEDING DATES

Cool Season Grasses (brome, fescue)
 August 1 to October 1
 December 1 to April 15

WARM SEASON GRASSES (NATIVE MIX)

December 1 to May 15

PRESCRIBED BURN DATES

CRP—February 1 to April 15
 Rangeland—Late Winter to Green-Up



Dickinson County Farm Bureau

 Helping Feed the World

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

DICKINSON COUNTY SERVICE CENTER
328 NE 14TH STREET
ABILENE, KS 67410

The service center is open
Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
(except the following holidays)

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day

USDA Service Center

Conservation District

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Dickinson County Conservation District

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