



Collaborate | Educate | Implement

**This is the biannual newsletter for April 2026 from the
Kansas Association of Conservation Districts.**

Encourage others to [sign up!](#)

Collaboration Leads to High Impact Soil Health Workshop

In late February, the Conservation Districts of Morton, Stevens, and Seward Counties demonstrated the power of collaboration by hosting a dynamic Soil Health Workshop alongside the Management Unit's (MU) Local Workgroup meeting. By thoughtfully combining these two important events into a single, well-coordinated day, the conservation districts created a unique opportunity that maximized both attendance and impact.

The joint format proved to be a resounding success. The MU reported a noticeable increase in participation compared to previous stand-alone events, highlighting the value of bringing producers, partners, and stakeholders together under one umbrella. Attendees not only benefited from a full day of learning and discussion, but also enjoyed a catered meal and the chance to win door prizes—adding to the welcoming and engaging atmosphere.

Behind the scenes, collaboration was just as strong. District Managers within the MU worked closely together to design a program that was both informative and engaging, while costs were shared among the three Conservation Districts and supported in part by funding from the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD). This cooperative approach allowed for a high-quality event while making efficient use of available resources.

Continue Reading About This Successful Event



Cost-Share Program Offers Financial Assistance

Kansas landowners looking to improve their land while reducing costs are encouraged to explore opportunities through the State Cost-Share Program, administered locally by conservation districts across the state.

The program provides financial assistance to support a wide range of conservation practices that protect natural resources and enhance the long-term productivity of working lands. Through this voluntary program, landowners can implement projects that improve soil health, protect water quality, and strengthen agricultural operations.

Eligible practices may include erosion control measures such as terraces and grassed waterways, establishment of cover crops, livestock water systems, pasture improvements, streambank stabilization, and other conservation efforts. Specific practices and funding priorities vary by county, allowing local conservation districts to address the most pressing resource concerns in their communities.

[Learn More About State Cost Share](#)

Cost-Share Success in 2025

Each year, the state legislature allocates State Cost-Share Program funding to the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation, which then distributes those funds to all 105 conservation districts across the state using a formula established in statute. These funds are a vital resource that allow local conservation districts to partner with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as farmers and ranchers, to implement conservation practices that protect soil health, improve water quality, and

sustain Kansas' natural resources for future generations.

In Fiscal Year 2025, several districts successfully utilized more than 90% of their allocated funds—demonstrating strong local demand and a continued commitment to conservation efforts at the community level.

Congratulations to the District Managers and Boards in these conservation districts for their accomplishments:

Atchison 100%	Hodgeman 90.57%	Riley 96.68%
Cheyenne 93.73%	Pawnee 94.43%	Russell 95.82%
Decatur 91.04%	Jackson 93.40%	Sedgwick 98.46%
Ellis 95.5%	Jefferson 93.56%	Sheridan 97.48%
Ellsworth 95.21%	Kiowa 100%	Thomas 90.30%
Finney 91.48%	Lincoln 90.81%	Trego 95.51%
Ford 90.32%	Marshall 96.29%	
Hamilton 90.11%	Morris 91.39%	

[Learn What This Means for Landowners/Producers](#)

[Connect with Your Local Conservation District](#)

Website Connects Landowners to Conservation Programs

Implementing conservation practices on your land can be a daunting task. Conservation practices can be expensive and require expertise or planning that you may not have.

The Kansas Water Office, in cooperation with many entities and organizations has created the Kansas Conservation Assistance Directory. This directory is a tool that details financial and technical assistance programs available to producers and landowners interested in implementing conservation practices on their property.

This tool details the many governmental, non-profit, and private entities that can assist you and allows users to search by location, conservation goal and conservation program. The website is free to use and is accessible from the [resources page on the KACD website](#).

[Visit the Kansas Conservation Assistance Directory](#)

Nominations Open for

Leopold Conservation Award



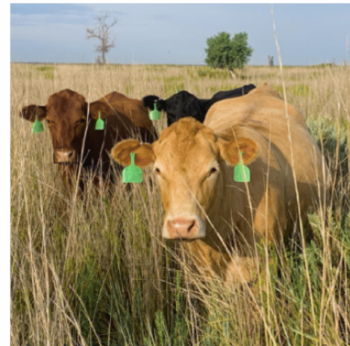
The Kansas award is presented in partnership with American Farmland Trust, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, Kansas Farm Bureau, and Ranchland Trust of Kansas. The application deadline is June 1, 2026.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor, American Farmland Trust, along with state partners, present the Leopold Conservation Awards to private landowners in 28 states.

The \$10,000 award honors farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on working land.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others to consider conservation opportunities on their land. In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold advocated for “a land ethic,” an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

[Kansas award applications](#) and Leopold Conservation Award details can be found at the [Sand County Foundation website](#).



State Conservation Commission Spotlight

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) plays a vital leadership role in guiding conservation policy across Kansas, working in close partnership with the Division of Conservation (DOC) to support local efforts that protect and enhance natural resources. Comprised of elected, appointed, and ex-officio members, the SCC reflects a collaborative approach that brings together producers, agencies, and conservation leaders.

Newly elected commissioners Roger Heier and Jason Kern join seasoned leadership with strong, hands-on experience in Kansas agriculture, each demonstrating a deep commitment to stewardship through practices like no-till, cover crops, rotational grazing, and invasive species management. Their shared focus on improving soil health, water quality, and long-term

sustainability highlights the importance of conservation-minded leadership in ensuring Kansas lands remain productive and resilient for future generations.



[Read Heier & Kern's Full Article](#)

KACD Responds to Southwest Kansas Wildfires

Even before the Southwest Kansas wildfires were fully contained early this spring, the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) was already coordinating response efforts with NRCS leadership. Within days of initial discussions, KACD contractors mobilized to assist with recovery efforts across several impacted areas, including the Ranger Road Fire, Andrew Lane Fire, Stevens Fire, and Dutchman Fire.

KACD contractors bring valuable, on-the-ground experience in fire recovery and land stewardship. Their work in these disaster areas is focused on helping producers assess damage and begin the path forward. Key areas of support include:

- Conducting burned area inventories, including structures, watering facilities, and removal of hazardous tree remnants
- Assessing fence damage and supporting repair or replacement planning
- Assisting with the development of post-burn grazing plans to support long-term land recovery

KACD Executive Director Dan Meyerhoff remains in regular communication with NRCS Acting State Conservationist Chad Volkman to ensure efforts are coordinated and responsive to evolving needs. This collaboration allows KACD contractors to step in where needed—either by expanding personnel in affected areas or shifting support—so NRCS staff can remain focused on delivering technical and financial assistance directly to farmers and ranchers.

This rapid response highlights the strength of partnership between local, state, and federal conservation entities, and underscores KACD's commitment to supporting Kansas producers through both immediate recovery and long-term resilience.

Conservation Leaders Visit State Capitol

Nearly 30 conservation district supervisors and staff from across Kansas recently gathered at the State Capitol in Topeka on February 12 to meet with state legislators and discuss key conservation priorities impacting local communities.

The group, representing conservation districts from throughout the state, spent the day visiting with lawmakers to highlight the importance of locally led conservation efforts and the continued need for state support. Discussions focused on funding for conservation programs, resource management challenges, and the vital role conservation districts play in protecting soil health, water quality, and other natural resources.

Coordinated in part by the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, the visit provided an opportunity for supervisors and staff to share firsthand experiences from their districts and emphasize how state investments translate into on-the-ground conservation success.

“Meeting with legislators gives conservation district supervisors and staff an opportunity to share the impact local conservation districts have protecting our local natural resources. KACD greatly appreciates our Kansas legislators support of local leadership to address natural resource concerns across Kansas,” said Dan Meyerhoff.

Events like this help strengthen the connection between local conservation leaders and state policymakers, ensuring that the voices of Kansas communities are heard when decisions are made that affect the state's natural resources.



Get Your Legislators Involved

Strong relationships with legislators are essential to advancing conservation across Kansas—and local conservation districts play a key role in building those connections.

By actively engaging legislators in district activities, counties can help ensure conservation efforts remain visible, supported, and prioritized at the state level. Whether it's inviting them to events, sharing local success stories, or providing updates on ongoing projects, these interactions help decision-makers better understand the real impact of conservation work in their communities.

When legislators see firsthand how conservation practices improve soil health, protect water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat, they are better equipped to support funding initiatives, champion relevant policies, and advocate for local needs. Ongoing communication also creates opportunities for collaboration, allowing conservation priorities to be incorporated into broader legislative discussions and solutions.

Keeping legislators informed and involved isn't just beneficial—it's essential. Consistent engagement helps ensure conservation remains a strong and actionable priority, both locally and across Kansas.

Jefferson County Hosts Conservation Leadership Event

The Jefferson County Conservation District recently hosted the Area IV Supervisor Meeting, bringing together conservation district leaders from across the region for a day of collaboration, learning, and connection.

Held at Supervisor Paul O'Trimble's family farm shop, the event provided a welcoming and practical setting that reflected the heart of conservation work. Attendees had the opportunity to experience an active agricultural operation firsthand, including a tour of the farm shop and equipment, adding a hands-on element to the day's discussions.

The meeting was led by John Wunder, Area IV Vice Chairman of the State Conservation Commission. The day began with introductions, where supervisors shared their experience in conservation leadership—ranging from newly elected members to those with more than 40 years of dedicated service. This diverse range of perspectives helped foster meaningful dialogue throughout the meeting.



[Read More About this Leadership Event](#)

Local Work Group Meetings

What's Next? Why Are They Important?

The 2026 Local Work Group (LWG) process is nearing a conclusion. To date, 36 LWG meetings have been held across the state. 23 of those meetings were held on a multi-county Management Unit basis, and 13 were held on a County specific basis. For those that attended a LWG meeting, we like to say “thank you” for your participation. The LWG process is successful because of the input received from local stakeholders.

Why are LWG meetings important? LWG meetings support the locally-led conservation process to address natural resource concerns by providing recommendations on local natural resource concerns & priorities, USDA conservation activities & programs, education & training needs, and local information & outreach needs.

What happens with the information gathered from LWG meetings? Once the LWG meetings are completed, a 2026 LWG State Summary report will be developed, which will summarize the LWG information captured in 2026. This report will be provided to NRCS leadership for consideration as they evaluate resource concern prioritization; program eligibility, ranking, funding, implementation decisions; staffing plans; and information and outreach needs. The information gathered through the LWG process is important not only to USDA but also to numerous other state, federal, and non-government entities that value this locally derived information.

Thanks again to each of the Conservation Districts and District Managers who planned, coordinated, and implemented the 2026 LWG meetings. Also, look for the 2026 LWG State report update on the [KACD website](#).

Continue to check the [workgroups](#) page for updates.



Memorial Scholarships Support Future Conservation Leaders

The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) Education & Youth Committee remains committed to supporting the next generation of conservation leaders through its Memorial Scholarship program. These scholarships assist college students pursuing careers in natural resources, conservation, and related fields, while honoring individuals who made lasting contributions to conservation and natural resource protection.

Conservation districts also have the opportunity to contribute to the KACD Scholarship Fund in memory of current or former supervisors, spouses or auxiliary members, or other conservation and agricultural leaders from their communities. This meaningful tribute not only honors their legacy but also helps invest in the future of conservation.

Each year, the KACD General Memorial Scholarship awards \$1,000 to college juniors and seniors majoring in natural resource-related fields. In addition, the Caroline and Don Peterson Memorial Scholarship supports upperclassmen pursuing degrees in agronomy, range management, or closely related disciplines.

KACD has announced an extension of the 2025 scholarship application deadline, giving students additional time to apply. The new deadline is April 30, 2026. Please share this scholarship opportunity with any college students you know of who may be interested in applying.

Students can learn more and find the full scholarship application online at [kacd/youth-scholarships](https://kacd.org/youth-scholarships).

**Hands-On Learning, Lifelong Impact
Range Youth Camp 2026**



The Kansas Range Youth Camp continues a long-standing tradition of engaging and educating the next generation of conservation leaders. Hosted annually by the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, this four-day immersive experience—scheduled for June 9–12, 2026—invites high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to explore the science and

stewardship of Kansas rangelands. With more than 50 years of history, the camp offers a unique opportunity for students interested in plants, livestock, and wildlife to deepen their understanding of natural resource management.

Participants gain hands-on experience in range plant identification, plant growth, stocking rate determination, livestock nutrition, and rangeland wildlife management. Learning extends beyond the classroom through field trips and interactive activities, creating a well-rounded educational environment that emphasizes both knowledge and application.

In addition to its educational value, the camp fosters connection and engagement through shared experiences like outdoor recreation, including canoeing, fishing, hiking, and more. Students are encouraged to contact their local Conservation Districts for potential scholarship opportunities, reinforcing the collaborative effort to support youth involvement in conservation. This event reflects a strong commitment to building future leaders who are equipped to care for and sustain Kansas natural resources.

In Memory of Our Conservation District Supervisors

We take a moment to honor and remember the conservation district supervisors from across the state whom we lost in 2025. These individuals dedicated their time, leadership, and passion to protecting our natural resources and strengthening their local communities. Their service leaves a lasting impact on the land and the people they served, and they will be deeply missed.

Supervisor	County	Years of Service
Dale G Roberds	Cherokee	2009-2021
Joseph "Joe" B Clark	Cowley	2003-2025
Wayne Kanzig	Johnson	1990-1999
Randall Kaufman	McPherson	2003-2012
Brad Shogren	McPherson	1999-2025
Jay Carswell	Osborne	2015-2025
Charles "DeWayne" Frank	Pottawatomie	1991-2024
James J Hurley	Republic	1971-2002
Frederick Barta	Rice	1971-1991
Victor Dumler	Russell	1971-1977
Charles E Musick	Wabaunsee	2012-2025
David J Andervich	Wyandotte	1987-2025

Kansas Envirothon

Kansas Envirothon participants have demonstrated remarkable dedication at regional competitions, showcasing their hard work and readiness for the upcoming state event. Although the regional competitions serve as crucial practice rounds rather than qualifiers, they provide essential preparation for the demanding state competition, where winners earn the honor to represent Kansas at the National Envirothon.

What is Envirothon?

Envirothon is North America's largest high school environmental education competition, designed to challenge students' knowledge and practical skills across five key environmental areas:

- Soils & Land Use
- Forestry
- Wildlife
- Aquatic Ecology
- Rangeland Management

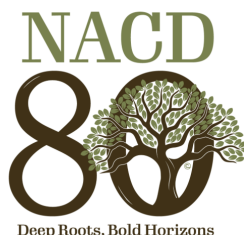
Additionally, teams must tackle a current environmental issue selected annually by the National Conservation Foundation's Envirothon Operating Committee.

This Year's Regional Envirothon Competitions will include teams from the following schools: Beloit, Centralia, Council Grove, Ellsworth, Hartford, Holton, Jackson Heights, Jefferson County North, Jefferson West, Lyndon, Manhattan, Mission Valley, Neodesha, Olathe North, Ottawa, Rock Creek, Royal Valley, Sebetha, St. John's Catholic, and Uniontown.

[Learn More About Envirothon](#)

[Follow Kansas Envirothon On Facebook](#)

Kansas Represented at National Conservation Events



Representatives from the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and the Employees Organization proudly attended the [NACD Spring Fly-In](#) in Washington D.C. This important event provided the opportunity for conservation leaders to meet directly with legislators, advocating for vital conservation policies and resources benefiting communities across the nation.

Kansas was well represented at the 80th Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts in San Antonio, Tx. The meeting included presentations and events hosted by the National Conservation District Employees Association, the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, the National Association of State Conservation Agencies, and the National Conservation Foundation. We hope to see a great crowd in [Las Vegas in 2027](#)

Conservation Contests for Kansas Students

Students across Kansas have an exciting opportunity to showcase their creativity while learning about the importance of protecting natural resources through local conservation-themed poster, limerick, essay, and photography contests. Hosted by the [KACD Education and Youth Committee](#) in partnership with local conservation districts, these annual contests engage students of all ages in exploring soil, water, wildlife, and agriculture through art, writing, and photography.

Designed to spark interest in conservation, the program encourages students to think critically about the environment and their role in protecting it. Many contests align with the national stewardship theme developed by the National Association of Conservation Districts, helping connect student projects to real-world conservation efforts and deepen their understanding of how these practices impact daily life.

Participants typically begin at the local level, where entries are judged within their community. Local winners may advance to state and even national competitions, gaining broader recognition for their work and creativity while representing their communities.

Open to public, private, and homeschool students, these contests provide a fun and educational way for youth to get involved in conservation. Local conservation districts encourage students, teachers, and parents to participate and reach out for contest details, offering young Kansans the chance to earn recognition while becoming part of the next generation of conservation leaders.

Job Opportunities

Interested in available jobs in Conservation?

Check out kacd.net/jobs to stay up-to-date on open positions across the state!

Upcoming Events

April 4 [Ag Tech Day](#) - Moundridge, KS
April 8 [Organic Farming Field Day](#) - Hiawatha, KS
April 14 [Using Compost Extracts to Build a Productive Soil Ecosystem](#) - Sabetha, KS
April 15 [Women in Agriculture](#) - Ottawa, KS
April 18 [Gardening for Soil Health Workshop](#) - Minneapolis, KS
April 28 [Green Cover Spring Field Day](#) - Moran, KS
April 30 [Green Cover Spring Field Day](#) - Moran, KS
[Nature Walk](#) - Salina, KS
[Kansas Soil Health Partnership Webinar](#) - Virtual
May 2 [Flint Hills Festival](#) - Manhattan, KS
May 12 [Women Landowners Leading Regeneration](#) - Manhattan KS
May 12-14 [Callery Pear Buyback Program](#) - Wichita, Ellsworth, Manhattan, KS
May 27-29 [Southern Plains Grasslands Summit](#) - Alva, OK
June 23 [Switzer/KSU Agriculture Camp for Youth](#) - Nicodemus, KS
July 8 [Enhancing Soil Health in Native Grass & Cropland](#) - Alma, KS
July 10-12 [Four State Farm Show](#) - Pittsburg, KS

Soil Health Events visit [Kansas Soil Health Alliance](#)

For upcoming KACD events, visit [KACD Events](#) on our website!

Connect With Us!

Follow along with us on our Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and website for information about upcoming events, program details, available resources, news and more!



Kansas Association of Conservation Districts

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"Providing local leadership to protect and improve Kansas Natural Resources through collaboration, education and implementation"



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