



Collaborate | Educate | Implement

**This is the quarterly newsletter for July 2025 from the
Kansas Association of Conservation Districts.**

Encourage others to [sign up!](#)

State Cost Share Update

Conservation districts, KACD, and our partners at NRCS are committed to providing technical assistance for the implementation of voluntary conservation to all landowners in Kansas. However, that technical assistance may look a little different moving forward due to recent reductions in federal staff.

Unfortunately, many field offices no longer have NRCS conservation technician on staff; in fact, there are currently 15+ counties in Kansas that have no full-time NRCS employees at all. While the situation continues to evolve, much of the design and engineering work is being assigned to available staff in other counties and to engineering staff at the area offices, who are doing their best to keep up with technical assistance requests. Projects under contract through EQIP and State Cost Share are a priority, but they are still taking longer to complete designs and paperwork.

The Division of Conservation has an agreement with KACD to provide technical assistance for state cost share projects. The agreement was created to alleviate wait times for technical assistance for both designs and checkouts. This assistance is available by request at no charge to conservation districts.

TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS (TSP)

To help reduce wait time, landowners are reminded that they have the option of hiring a private Technical Service Provider (TSP) for projects. TSPs are certified through USDA-NRCS and approved to design, lay out, and inspect practices for both federal and cost-share programs. To find a technical service provider or learn more about the process, visit the [NRCS Technical Service Providers](#) page.

Currently, through State Cost Share, there is no reimbursement specifically for the cost of hiring a TSP. Although the cost would be included in the receipts that landowners provide to the conservation district as part of their State Cost Share contract, the TSP cost would be added to the per-unit cost.

Lastly, if you are a contractor and would like to learn more about the TSP program, visit [How to Become a TSP](#). Here, you can find all the program information, an overview of the benefits of becoming a TSP, and even a step-by-step guide to begin

Learn More About State Cost
Share

Shaping Kansas Conservation

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



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Area I Commissioner



Jed Fleske
Area II Commissioner



Sam Sanders
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John H. Wunder
Area IV Commissioner,
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Rodney Vorhees
Area V Commissioner,
Chairperson



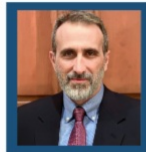
Susan Metzger
Appointed Commissioner



Peter J. Tomlinson
Appointed Commissioner



Terry Medley
Appointed Commissioner



David Doctorian
Appointed Commissioner



Understanding the Role and Structure of the State Conservation Commission

Protecting and improving Kansas's natural resources requires more than just passion—it demands informed leadership, structured policy, and cross-sector collaboration. At the heart of this effort is the State Conservation Commission (SCC), the policy board responsible for guiding conservation programming throughout the state.

What the SCC Does

The SCC, working closely with the Division of Conservation, plays a critical role in shaping the future of Kansas' natural resources. Together, they:

- Review and modify existing conservation programs,
- Develop new programs to address emerging environmental challenges, and
- Provide annual budget recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture.

No policy changes or funding shifts move forward without SCC review and concurrence—ensuring that decisions are informed, collaborative, and grounded in Kansas' unique ecological and agricultural realities.

A Foundation for Conservation Success

The structure and mandate of the SCC reflect a commitment to local leadership, informed decision-making, and cross-sector cooperation. As Kansas continues to navigate complex conservation challenges—from soil health to water availability—the SCC remains a cornerstone of the state's strategy to protect and enhance its natural resources.

KACD Announces 2025 Annual Convention Theme

The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts is proud to announce the theme for its 2025 Annual Convention:

"Embrace Change to Cultivate Growth"

This year's theme reflects the dynamic challenges and opportunities facing Kansas conservationists as they navigate evolving environmental, economic, and agricultural landscapes. By embracing innovation, fostering adaptability, and deepening community partnerships, the convention will focus on empowering local leaders to advance conservation with resilience and purpose.

Attendees can look forward to engaging sessions, collaborative discussions, and fresh perspectives—all centered on how embracing change today can lead to stronger, more sustainable outcomes for Kansas tomorrow.

KACD Welcomes New Soil Health Specialist



Candy Thomas

KACD Contractor
Retired NRCS

Candy Thomas brings decades of conservation experience—and a deep-rooted passion for healthy soils—to her role with the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD). As a soil

health specialist, Candy supports farmers and landowners across Kansas who are looking to implement regenerative agriculture practices.

Candy's journey in conservation began in 1994 with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Missouri. After transferring to Kansas in 2013, she continued her work with the NRCS until her retirement in 2025. Now, she continues to serve Kansas producers through her work with KACD, bringing a lifetime of practical knowledge, field experience, and genuine care for land stewardship.

When she's not working in Kansas fields, Candy splits her time between Salina and a family farm in Iowa, where she and her husband raise cattle and chickens using high-density rotational grazing methods. For over 28 years, their operation has incorporated multi-species grazing and soil-focused practices, giving Candy a valuable producer perspective that informs her outreach work.

Reach out to Candy at [\(614\) 223-1121](tel:6142231121) or by email at cjthomas1234@att.net to learn how she can assist your operation or local initiative.

Applications Now Open!

ADM re:generations™ Conservation Incentive Program

ADM has opened applications for its re:generations™ Conservation Incentive Program, which offers Kansas farmers financial rewards for adopting sustainable agricultural practices. The program supports conservation efforts like cover cropping, reduced tillage, and nutrient management across crops, including corn, soybeans, wheat, canola, and peanuts.

Aimed at improving soil health, cutting emissions, and preserving farm viability, the initiative is designed to be accessible, featuring no long-term contracts, no complex reporting, and support through local conservation district offices. Farmers can explore participation details at [ADM Initiatives](#) or contact ADM and KACD representatives directly.

Learn more or apply at [ADM re:generations™](#).

Local Work Group Report

In early 2025, 37 Local Work Group (LWG) meetings were held across Kansas to identify and prioritize natural resource concerns. The 2025 LWG process revealed strong grassroots support for improving soil health, managing grazing lands, conserving water, and enhancing habitat through better outreach, training, and financial support. Persistent themes included economic feasibility, absentee ownership, and the need for improved collaboration and education to address Kansas' natural resource challenges effectively.

Meetings occurred on both individual county and multi-county (Management Unit) bases, engaging 531 participants, including 22 virtual attendees. Feedback was documented in individualized reports, with summarized trends presented in detail in the full 2025 [KACD Local Work Group Report](#).

Jimmy Emmons Named NRCS Assistant Chief

Jimmy Emmons, a third-generation farmer and rancher from Dewey County, Oklahoma, has been appointed as the Assistant Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Emmons brings extensive experience in soil health and conservation, having implemented practices like no-till farming and



cover cropping on his 2,000-acre operation.

His leadership roles include serving on the board of the Dewey County Conservation District and as past president of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) praised his appointment, highlighting his deep understanding of conservation practices and commitment to sustainable agriculture. Emmons' practical experience and advocacy for soil health are

expected to enhance NRCS's mission of supporting voluntary, locally led conservation efforts across the nation.

Read more about Jimmy Emmons at [NACD.NET](https://www.nacd.net) or [High Plains Journal](https://www.highplainsjournal.com).

Soil Health Tours Offer In-Field Learning for Kansas Producers

Kansas producers have two exceptional opportunities this August to deepen their understanding of regenerative agriculture and improve their soil management strategies.

The Southwest Kansas Soil Health School, “Introduction to Cropping Considerations in a Semi-Arid Climate,” will be held **August 1–2 in Greensburg**. This one-and-a-half-day event combines classroom instruction with hands-on demonstrations, including paddock design, rainfall simulation, composting, and crop rotation planning tailored for dryland conditions. With expert speakers including Candy Thomas, David Doctorian, and Brice Custer, attendees will gain real-world tools to manage woody encroachment, integrate livestock, and improve economic outcomes through soil health.

Later in the month, producers can head to Beloit for “Healthy Soil, Healthy Herds: The Power of Nutrient Cycling and Managed Grazing,” hosted **August 21–22 at the Mitchell County Fairgrounds**. This event will explore the economics of soil health, interpreting soil tests, and practical approaches to grazing management. Attendees will hear directly from producers using non-synthetic fertilizers and rotational grazing strategies, followed by field tours showcasing warm-season cover crops, nitrogen trials, and grazed pastures.

With registration fees kept low and meals included, both events are ideal for landowners seeking to learn, connect, and implement conservation systems that work.

**Aug. 1-2 Greensburg Tour
Details**

**Aug. 21-22 Mitchell County
Tour Details**

KGLC Range Academy Registrations are Open!

The Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC) invites ranchers, landowners, and grazing professionals to its 2025 Adult Range Academies, offering immersive, hands-on learning experiences tailored to Kansas' diverse ecosystems. The **Tallgrass Academy will be held August 12–14 at Camp Wood in Elmdale**, and the **Shortgrass Academy is scheduled for August 26–28 at Camp Christy in Scott City**.



Each 2½-day session covers essential topics such as plant identification, stocking rate calculations, forage allocation, and vegetation monitoring. Participants will engage with expert panels featuring ranchers and natural resource professionals from NRCS and other organizations, focusing on adaptive, long-term grazing strategies to enhance rangeland health and livestock productivity.

Scholarships are available for landowners, operators, and ranch employees. Early registration is encouraged, as spots are limited.

To learn more or register, visit kglc.org.

Aug. 12-14 Tallgrass Academy

Aug. 26-28 Shortgrass Academy



Upcoming Events to Note



**BOTTOM LINE
CONFERENCE**

Profitability Through Soil & Water Conservation in a Dry Climate

The 2025 Bottom Line Conference is scheduled for **Thursday and Friday, August 21–22**. Conservation Districts from Kearny, Hamilton, Finney, Grant, Greeley, Wichita, Stanton, Haskell, Seward, Meade, Gray, and Scott counties have come together to host this event, uniting farmers and ranchers to explore the benefits of soil health and water conservation in arid climates.

This year's conference will offer an in-depth look at systems and strategies designed to enhance soil productivity, profitability, and overall bottom-line outcomes—especially relevant in the dry conditions of Southwest Kansas. Attendees will hear from a range of expert speakers, each bringing decades of practical experience and proven success. Now is the time to deepen our understanding of soil health and its vital role in sustainable agriculture.

For more details or to register, visit [Bottom Line Conference](#).

Planning for the Upcoming School Year?

The KACD Conservation Education and Youth Committee proudly announces the 2025 youth conservation contests. This exciting opportunity promotes stewardship and conservation education among Kansas youth, with county-level contests leading to state competitions.



2025 Contest Themes:

- Poster, Essay, and Limerick: "Home is Where the Habitat Is"
- Speech: "May the Forest Be With You Always"

County winners advance to state contests, with state champions recognized at the November Annual KACD Convention. Select winners may also represent Kansas at the national competitions hosted by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

Join us in encouraging youth participation and fostering tomorrow's conservation leaders! Ask your child's teacher to participate in [annual local conservation contests](#).

Soil Health & Cover Crop Field Tours



A Conservation Field Day Tour in Kansas offers participants an engaging educational experience to explore sustainable land management, conservation, and agriculture.

These events typically include educational workshops, guided tours of farms or conservation sites, hands-on conservation activities, and demonstrations of modern, sustainable agricultural practices.

Attendees have the chance to interact directly with experts, participate in Q&A sessions, and network with others interested in environmental stewardship. Materials and meals are often provided, and pre-registration is usually required.

For details on upcoming tours, [contact your local conservation district](#).

Farmer-to-Farmer Meetings

Farmers, ranchers, and producers across the

Farmer-to-Farmer Discussion

Collaborate & Discuss with Others!



state are encouraged to attend the Farmer-to-Farmer meetings in their area. These casual meetings are focused on the conservation and preservation of our state's natural resources.

Many counties hold a morning coffee or gather at a local seed shed with neighbors

just to talk conservation.

Learn more about your local Farmer-to-Farmer meetings by contacting your [local conservation district](#).



Have You Watched Our YouTube Channel?

Did you know that Kansas Association of Conservation Districts has a YouTube Channel?

Find a variety of informational and educational videos focused on conservation efforts, as well as producer Spotlight videos!

Don't wait, get subscribed today!



KACD YouTube

Educational Tools



Did you know that your county conservation district has Educational Tools available for programs in local classrooms?

Take a look at some of the resources available to educate your students about conservation of our natural resources on the kacd.net/educational-tools.

As you develop your lesson plans for the upcoming school year, be sure to contact your [local conservation district](#) to learn more about the educational programs they offer!



AR Sandbox



Earth Balloon



**NPS Watershed
Enviroscapes**



**Rainfall
Simulator**



Soil Tunnel



Stream Trailer



Job Opportunities

Interested in available jobs in Conservation? Check out kacd.net/jobs to stay up-to-date on open positions at across the state!

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Upcoming Events



- >> July 14th - [Annual Women in Ag](#) - Troy
- >> July 24 - [Nicodemus Soil Health & Organic Day](#) - Bogue
- >> Aug. 1-2 - [Cropping Considerations - Semi-Arid Climate](#) - Greensburg
- >> Aug. 6-8 - [High Plains Journal Live: From print to in-person](#) - Wichita
- >> Aug. 12 - [Soil Health Field Day](#) - Wells
- >> Aug. 12-14 - [KGLC Tallgrass Range Academy](#) - Elmdale
- >> Aug. 14 - [Ag Growth Summit 2025](#) - Manhattan
- >> Aug. 20 - [Growing Profitability with Cover Crops](#) - Soldier
- >> Aug. 21 - [Healthy Soil, Healthy Herds](#) - Beloit
- >> Aug. 21-22 - [Bottom Line Conference](#) - Lakin
- >> Aug. 26 - [KGLC Shortgrass Range Academy](#) - Scott City
- >> Aug. 27 - [Growing Profitability with Cover Crops](#) - Fredonia

>> Sept. 30-Oct. 1 - [Fuller Field School 2025](#) - Severy

>> Oct. 1 - [Ag Lenders Conference \(In-person/Virtual\)](#) - Manhattan

Kansas Soil Health Alliance provides a list of many of the [soil health events](#). If you are hosting a soil health event, please submit it to Jennifer at 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"

**Visit KACD
Website**



Content and email marketing provided by **Marketing Angle** for KACD.

Funded through a grant with **USDA-NRCS Kansas**.

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