

# Butler County Conservation District

## Our 80th Year!



### Rommey Farms LLC Conservation Innovation Award

A half-acre is all it took to create a small business founded on Don and Susan Rommelfanger's love of gardening, growing and preserving their own food.



Don lived in Cassoday before he and Susan got married. Don recalls the back yard of his home was large so he had a friend work up an area for a

small garden. Beets did very well the first year so he began planting other vegetables the next year. Susan's love of preserving from the garden began on her parent's farm north of Towanda; she credits her Mom for encouragement and inspiring her from a young age.

Before Don and Susan got married, they purchased their farm southwest of Cassoday. They received chickens as a wedding present; possibly a sign of a future providing food to others. They purchased and planted 9 apple trees from Stark Brothers Nursery (Susan's maternal grandfather formally had stock in the company). They borrowed a tractor to work up an area about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre in size that had been a cattle pen so that they could plant a garden. That was the start of their adventure of producing together using hoop houses (high tunnels) and gardening with a purpose, providing their community with locally grown produce and flowers. They also raise bees, have a cow-calf cattle operation and have laying hens on their farm.

### Hamilton/Roberts Family Grassland Award

Donnie and Debbie Hamilton, Danny and Yolanda

Hamilton and Dale Roberts and their families are the winners of the 2025 Grassland Award sponsored



by Sharp Brothers Seed Company and the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts.

In 1884 Monirah and Walter Willson bought 160 acres from Mary and George Diller for \$2,800. In 1903, their daughter, Bertha and her husband Benjamin Rector bought it from them. Bertha's daughter, Ola, was born on this homestead in 1900. In 1954, Ola and her husband Joel Hamilton inherited this land from Bertha. Ola and Joel had one son, Dale.

In the 60s, Dale and his wife Donna moved an old railroad depot a quarter of a mile east of the original homestead. This home is where Dale, Danny, and Donnie grew up.

Now, Matt (Dale), Melissa (Donnie), and Ryan (Danny), the 6th generation, are starting to run the operations. The original homestead is designated as a century farm with the Kansas Farm Bureau.

In 2011, the state cost share program was used to install a terrace in one of their cropland fields. In 2015, state cost share was provided for more terraces and an underground outlet. In 2019, state cost share was provided to drill a well for livestock water. In 2020, 15 acres of cropland was planted back to brome with assistance from the state cost share program.

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"Soil conservation IS wise!"

### Our Thanks to Butler County Banks for Sponsoring our Annual Meeting!

Next time you visit your bank—thank them for supporting agriculture in Butler County!

- ~ American Ag Credit ~
- ~ Citizens Bank of Kansas ~
- ~ Commerce Bank ~
- ~ Community National Bank ~
- ~ Emprise Bank ~
- ~ Equity Bank ~
- ~ Intrust Bank ~
- ~ RCB Bank ~
- ~ Vintage Bank Kansas ~
- ~ White Eagle Credit Union ~



Don and Susan began attending workshops and conferences such as the Farmers Market Workshop put on by Sedgwick County Extension, a workshop in Clay County on women in farming, Women Managing the Farm conference, a Growing Growers Conference in St. Joseph, Missouri, and other educational events to learn more about gardening with hoop houses and marketing and promoting their products. Susan became a Master Gardener through K-State Research and Extension. They networked with others in the business and gained valuable knowledge on the "dos" and "don'ts". They said it was refreshing to talk to people who were so willing to share information on what worked and what didn't work for their operations.

In 2016, Don and Susan established Rommey Farms. With the help of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), they built their first hoop house. Susan spent many hours learning how to use social media platforms to advertise and sell produce. A group of software engineers who just wanted to help others, saw her website and offered to get her hooked up to Shopify, free of charge; in 5 minutes they had Rommey Farms online. They hired someone to help them with name branding which proved to be a great investment to get their name recognized. Susan came up with the idea of providing recipes on how to use their products so customers could try different ways to prepare dishes.

Family members helped along the way too. Kids and grandkids came to help plant, weed and pick produce in the garden; others in the family helped with marketing, advertising or with hoop house construction. Even neighbors and others in the community came to help during their busy seasons. When they decided to add bees to their operation, a beekeeper from Marion County provided free advice and helped them get started.

Each year, they found better ways to improve productivity. As an example, instead of using soaker hoses which they had to move all the time, they switched to drip irrigation. During drought years, they learned to manage their water usage so their well could recharge naturally without them having to stop watering altogether. And rather than planting many different varieties of lettuce and other produce, they concentrated on just a few varieties.



Don and Susan participated in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. CSA's connect consumers with local farmers and ranchers on a subscription basis allowing members to pay for a season's worth of produce upfront providing the farmer or rancher with a predictable income. In their second year, Rommey Farms had 9 CSA members; in their biggest year they had 39 members. More recently, they have been selling their produce at their local farm stand, El Dorado Farm and Art Market and on online.

Susan is persistent when they need information or need more education. She'll call the experts or they'll talk to their mentors or ask questions of other producers. She's not afraid to ask for technical assistance, help or advice. She's been able to find cost share or grants to assist them with their operation. Each phone call or contact would lead to other opportunities and ideas. Don and Susan now are at a point where they are mentors and are giving advice to others. Don commented they have met some wonderful people along the way. He said it is rewarding to know they are making a difference and can now give back to their community.

Susan is past board member and employee of the Kansas Specialty Crop Growers Association. They are members of "From the Land of Kansas". They provide food to Quality Care Services Incorporated who partner with childcare providers across Kansas to ensure children receive healthy, nutritious meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. They received a grant through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program that brings daycare kids out to Rommey Farms to see where their food is being grown and to learn about pollinators through a story walk Don and Susan developed.



Rommey Farms now concentrates on selling transplants, eggs and honey. Susan recently attended a flower school. Now they provide cut and dried flowers for weddings, funerals and other special occasions.

Don and Susan support Butler County Rise (which provides refuge to those in need), the Butler County Safe House (for domestic violence victims) and are active in their church and community. Don works as the Grounds Supervisor on the El Dorado Campus of Butler Community College. He also served on Butler County Fire District #4 for many years. He currently serves as president of the Upper Walnut Watershed Joint District #33. Don and Susan established the Prairie Wellness Foundation Inc. whose mission is promoting a healthy way of life through education about growing and consuming locally grown, nutritious produce.

Family played a vital role in the success of Rommey Farms. The relationships the Rommelfangers built along the way with experts and mentors helped educate them and provided resources and input they needed on their journey. But it is the hard work, the persistence, the drive and the determination of Don and Susan who used their talents and love of gardening to bring locally grown food back to their community that make Rommey Farms a worthy recipient of the Conservation Innovation Award.

*Pictures provided by Rommey Farms unless otherwise noted.*



In 2022 and 2023, cost share was provided through the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts/Watershed Restoration and



Protection Strategy (WRAPS) for planting cover crops. Also in 2023, cost share was provided through the state cost share program for a watering facility which included well drilling, solar panels/pump and a tank.

In addition to state cost share funds, the Hamiltons have used the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). During the 2011 drought, a Drought Initiative was implemented through EQIP and the Hamiltons installed several solar watering systems through that program. Recently, they have participated in the Great Plains Grassland Initiative (GPGI). The greatest threat

to grasslands today is woody plant encroachment. GPGI addresses this by providing funds to ranchers to control trees and brush. The Hamiltons and Roberts completed brush management on 85 acres and implemented integrated pest management practices on 1,461 acres in 2022, 2023 and 2025. They hay some of their rangeland and run cattle on other rangeland acres.

Matt, Melissa, and Ryan lease portions of the grassland and care for feedlot cattle during the summer on a few thousand acres. During the droughts, solar watering systems have drastically improved cattle care. Melissa and Ryan work with Donnie during the brome and prairie hay seasons on a few thousand acres. Ryan takes care of the few hundred acres of crop land.



Donnie and Danny started the practice of burning pastures. Every pasture is burned once in a three year cycle, with burning several different pastures each year during the first few weeks of April.



Matt lives near Falun and manages his farmland, feeder cattle and a feedyard. He keeps his cow herd and replacement heifers at Cassoday during the summer. His two boys, Wesley and Tate, enjoy helping their dad farm and care for cattle at Cassoday.



Melissa keeps her cow herd and replacement heifers at Cassoday year round and calves at Donnie's home near Newton. She enjoys spending lots of time with her herd, and in keeping with Donnie's tradition, has tamed all her bulls to take pellets.



Ryan keeps his cow herd and replacement heifers at Cassoday year round and calves at Danny's home near Whitewater. He also farms the cropland at Cassoday.



**The 2025 Grassland Award is sponsored by the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts Grasslands Committee and Sharp Brothers Seed Company.**

*Pictures provided by the Hamilton/Roberts family unless otherwise noted.*

- ⇒ *Don't be afraid to stand for what you believe in, even if that means standing alone.*
- ⇒ *The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.*
- ⇒ *Your life doesn't get better by chance, it gets better by choice.*

## **Butler County Conservation District—80th Annual Meeting**

**Make reservations to attend Butler County Conservation District's 80th Annual Meeting at 6 PM on Thursday, February 12, 2026 at the Welcome Center on the Butler Community College (Clifford/Stone Room) El Dorado Campus. RSVP required! Please call 316-320-3549. Please RSVP before February 9, 2026.**

**RSVP**



## **Local Work Group Meeting Scheduled for February 25, 2026 at Wilbur Wiens Community Building, 315 Main Street, Towanda, Kansas—10 AM to Noon**

A Local Work Group (LWG) meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at the **Wilbur Wiens Community Building, 315 Main Street (just east of Gambino's Pizza), Towanda, Kansas—10 AM to Noon**; the meeting will last approximately 2 hours.

The purpose of this meeting is to make recommendations to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist and other state and local agencies related to addressing natural resource concerns at the local level.

"LWGs are important because they provide recommendations on local and state natural resource priorities and criteria for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation activities and programs. It is critical that the 'boots on the ground' have a voice in the process," said Dan Meyerhoff, Executive Director for the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts.

Contact the Conservation District at 316-320-3549 for more information.

## **How Does Kansas Agriculture Affect the Kansas Economy?**

Agriculture is the largest economic driver in Kansas, directly contributing \$62 billion and 143,522 jobs to the economy. Including indirect and induced effects, agriculture and agriculture-related sectors have a total impact of \$88 billion in output and 260,582 jobs. This impact translates to 14% of the state's total Gross Regional Product (GRP) and about 13% percent of the entire Kansas workforce tied to agriculture.

Agriculture in Kansas is not just about growing crops and raising animals. The Kansas agricultural economy includes renewable energy production, food processing, research and education, agribusiness services, animal health and more.

*~ Excerpts from the Kansas Department of Agriculture website, [www.agriculture.ks.gov](http://www.agriculture.ks.gov)*

## **Maximizing soil health is essential to maximizing profitability!**

A fully functioning soil produces the maximum amount of products at the least cost. Maximizing soil health is essential to maximizing profitability. Soil will not work for you if you abuse it.

Managing for soil health (improved soil function) is mostly a matter of maintaining suitable habitat for the myriad of creatures that comprise the soil food web. This can be accomplished by disturbing the soil as little as possible, growing as many different species of plants as practical, keeping living plants in the soil as often as possible, and keeping the soil covered all the time.

Manage More by Disturbing Soil Less—Soil disturbance can be the result of physical, chemical or biological activities. Physical soil disturbance, such as tillage, results in bare and/or compacted soil that is destructive and disruptive to soil microbes, and it creates a hostile environment for them to live. Misapplication of farm inputs can disrupt the symbiotic relationships between fungi, other microorganisms, and plant roots. Overgrazing, a form of biological disturbance, reduces root mass, increases runoff, and increases soil temperature. All forms of soil disturbance diminish habitat for soil microbes and result in a diminished soil food web.

*~ Excerpts from the NRCS website on soil health*

## What is Soil Health?

Soil health is, "the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans." (USDA, NRCS)

Principles of Soil Health include:

~Limited Disturbance, ~Soil Cover/Armor, ~Living Roots, Diversity, ~Livestock Integration

For More Information:

[www.kssoilhealth.org](http://www.kssoilhealth.org)

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/soil-health](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/soil-health)

## Rent the District's No-Till Drills!

The Conservation District has three Great Plains Model 1006NT No-till Drills for rent.



They are 13 feet wide with a 10 foot planting width. They have 2 seed boxes with the capability to drill seed crops, brome, native grass and small seed such as wildflowers.

The drills have a single hitch and hydraulic lift. A 70 horsepower tractor or bigger is recommended for pulling in the field. You can pull it behind your truck when you pick it up. These drills rent for \$10.50 an acre. Anything 10 acres or less will be charged a flat rate of \$125.00. Note: Must provide proof of insurance!

## Root Plow

Don't push out those hedge rows! We have a



root plow. There is a \$25 charge to use the root plow.

## U.S DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND CONSERVATION (HELC) AND WETLAND CONSERVATION (WC) CERTIFICATION

Landowners and/or Operators, if you are participating in government programs and are unsure if your land has an HEL determination or Wetland determination, you should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

If you have plans to create a new drainage system, do land leveling, filling, dredging or land clearing of trees, an AD-1026 form will need to be completed with the FSA office.

If there are questions regarding tree removal or hydric soil, check with NRCS while you are visiting with FSA.

The best plan is to have the HEL and Wetland determination completed before starting your projects.

A copy of Form AD-1026 can be found online at:

[www.fsa.usda.gov/ad1026form](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ad1026form)

## Butler County Conservation District Supervisors

Nathan Miller – Chairman

Russell Janzen—Vice Chairman

Richard Scott—Treasurer

Penny McNett—Secretary

John Taylor— Member

**Ham and Eggs: A day's work for a chicken, a lifetime commitment for a pig.**

## Geo—Textile Fabric

The Conservation District has geo-textile fabric for sale. The fabric comes in a 15 foot width and you can order as many feet as you need. It is \$2.80 per square yard.

## Marking Flags

If you need some flags we sell them for \$7.50/100 count. They come in white, blue and pink.



## DID YOU KNOW?

When you use the Conservation District's No Till Drills, Root Plow, or purchase geotextile or flags, that you help support our education & information programs?

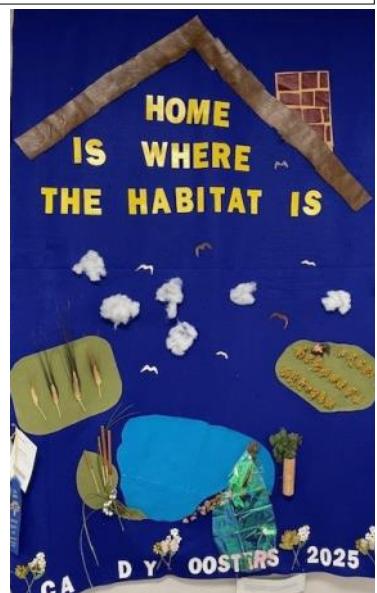
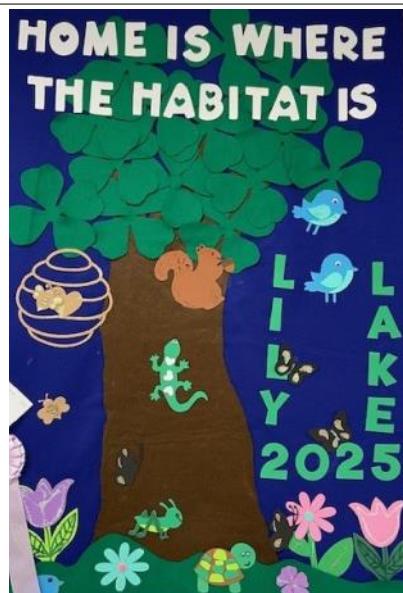
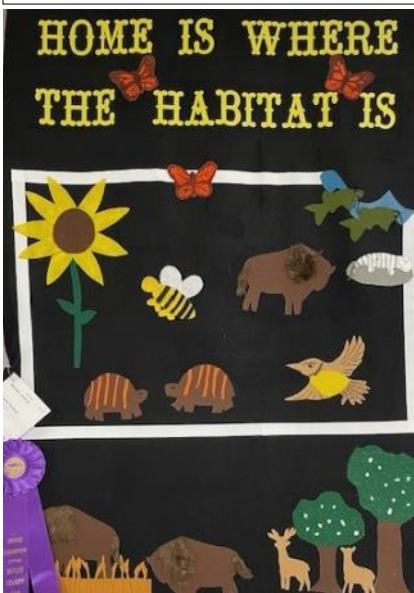
Thank you!

The older I get, the earlier it gets late.

## Educational Events/Activities Sponsored by the Conservation District

### 4-H Fair Conservation Banner Sponsored by the Conservation District

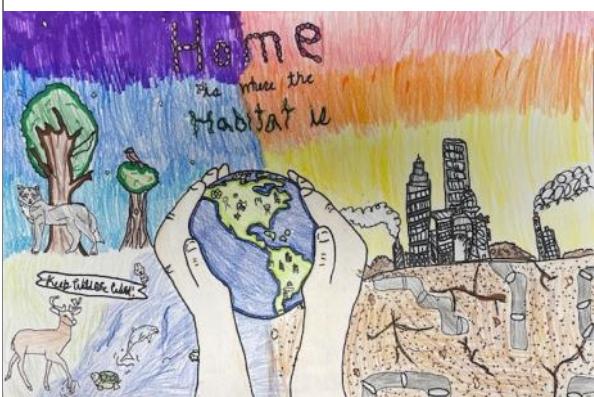
The Conservation District Sponsors the Conservation Banner Division at the Fair. We gave three awards this year. The Grand Champion banner was created by the Towanda Rustlers. The middle banner was created by Lily Lake 4H and was Reserve Grand Champion. The banner on the right received a blue ribbon and was created by the Cassoday Boosters.



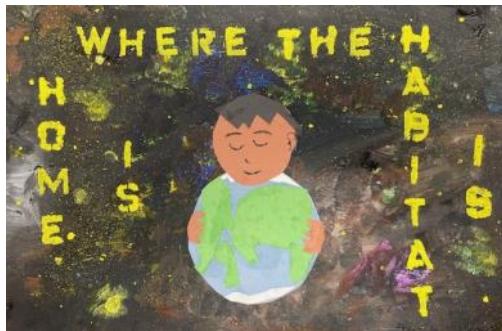
### 2025 Poster Contest

The theme for the 2025 Poster Contest was "Home is Where the Habitat Is."

These posters were first place winners in their division in Butler County's poster contest and were submitted to the State Poster Contest sponsored by the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts.



Scarlett Nickel, a 5th Grader from Robert Martin Elementary in Andover, placed second in the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts state poster contest in the Grade 4-6 category!



Albert Rudd, a 3rd Grader from Prairie Creek Elementary in Andover placed 1st in our local contest in the Grade 2-3 Division. His poster was also entered into the state contest.

**MARCH 2026 IS  
KANSAS  
AGRICULTURE  
MONTH!**



Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.

~ Mark Twain



## Conservation District 4-H Photo Contest

The Conservation District sponsors the Conservation Photo at the Butler County 4-H Fair.

Brynlie Nichols of the Benton Busy Bees received 1st place in the 2025 Conservation Photo Division.



**Our 2026 Poster, 4-H and  
Stewardship Theme is,  
“Soil—Where it all Begins”**

## 2025 POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

The 2025 Conservation Poster Contest theme was “Home is Where the Habitat Is”. Five schools and 21 teachers participated this year. We received 317 posters and paid out \$1,020.00 in prize money to students and \$2,100.00 in teacher incentives.

### Andover—Prairie Creek Elementary—Third Grade

- 1st Place — Albert Rud
- 2nd Place — Elayne Follmeyer
- 3rd Place — Ezree Reinhart
- Honorable Mention — Ari Combs

Albert Rud's poster was submitted to the KACD State Poster Contest

### Andover—Prairie Creek Elementary—Fourth Grade

- 1st Place — Manvik Naveen
- 2nd Place — Lauren McPherson
- 3rd Place — Harini Sundaram
- Honorable Mention — Stella Leary-Austin & Essa Fijo

### Andover—Prairie Creek Elementary—Fifth Grade

- 1st Place — Milah Andrade
- 2nd Place — Ariel Watts
- 3rd Place — Lia Griswold

Honorable Mention — Adleigh Rinehart & Cooper Shulz

### Andover—Robert Martin Elementary—Fifth Grade

- 1st Place — Scarlett Nickel
- Scarlet's poster was entered into the KACD State Poster Contest and placed second!
- 2nd Place — Ethan Meng, Ella Norman, Lauren Todd, Ellery Gandu
- 3rd Place — Hannah Lee, Amelie McNeil, Caroline Schlatter

Honorable Mentions — Brayden Matthews, Finn Jilka, Amira Labidi, Maila Draudvila, Finley Tilson, Brogan Graham, Hattie Landon, Benjamin Jobe, David Johnico, Canon Camacho, Aveline Girrens, Liam Jilka, Bristol Tilson, Isabella Cash, Olivia Ornelas, Keistyn Johnson

### Augusta—Garfield Elementary—Fourth Grade

- 1st Place — Ellis Lockamy
- 2nd Place — Bree Pennington
- 3rd Place — Jace Funk

Honorable Mention — Simmone Vittitow, Deason Burns

### Circle—Oil Hill—El Dorado—Third Grade

- 1st Place — Lyric Starllom
- 2nd Place — Presley Ehret
- 3rd Place — Kobe Andrus
- Honorable Mention — Ryleigh Goodnight

### Rose Hill Intermediate—Fourth Grade

- 1st Place — Nathanael Seib
- 2nd Place — Mason Uhlik, Kinsley Morrison, Emma Hendrick
- 3rd Place — Evan Kerr, Kinsley Wade

Honorable Mentions — Scarlett Dudley, McKenzie Webb, Lucas Robben, Marsten Kennemer, Audrie Baughman

### The following teachers received a \$100 incentive:

**Andover—Prairie Creek** — Sean Reazin, Megan Newton, Drennyn Ades, Isabella White, Emma Dirks, Emily Higgins, Ellen Schwartzbeck

**Andover—Robert Martin** — Cristie Karber, Jennifer Miller, Kaegen O'Donnell, Shanie Rucker

**Circle Oil Hill** — Taylor Hall, Kelsey Wuthrich

**Garfield—Augusta** — Jennifer Cody, Crystal Shepherd

**Rose Hill Intermediate** — Clinton Bextel, Samantha Cheek, Robyn Darbyshire, Nicole McCall, John Meyers, Kathryn Renfro

## Using the WEB SOIL SURVEY

The Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. Below are the four basic steps to get you started using WSS.

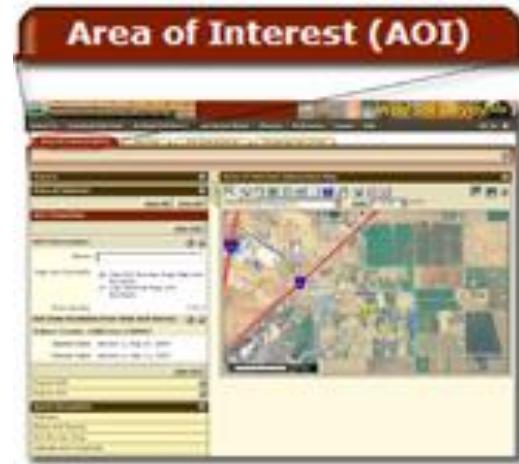


The simple yet powerful way to access and use soil data.

**1**

### Define.

Use the **Area of Interest** tab to define your area of interest. You can navigate to an area by zooming in on a map or by selecting from a Quick Navigation choice list. After you find the area, define it as the Area of Interest (AOI) by drawing a box around it using a map tool. You must complete this step before you can go on to the next two steps.

**2**

### View.

Click the **Soil Map** tab to view or print a map of the soils in your area and view a description of the soils, or click the **Soil Data Explorer** tab to access soil data for your area and determine the suitability of the soils for a particular use. The items you want saved in a report can be added to your shopping cart.

**3**

### Explore.

Click the **Soil Data Explorer** tab to access soil data for your area and determine the suitability of the soils for a particular use. The items you want saved in a report can be added to your shopping cart.



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**Using the WEB SOIL SURVEY (continued)****4 Check Out.**

Use the **Shopping Cart** tab to get your custom report immediately or download it later.



Call your local NRCS office for assistance, 316-321-5803.

**Kansas Rural Forestry Program**

Kansas is home to 2.5 million acres of rural forestland covering an estimated 5% of the state. These forests are 93% privately-owned. The goal of the Rural Forestry Program is the protection, management, and sustainability of forests, woodlands, and agroforestry resources (windbreaks and riparian forest buffers) in the rural landscapes of Kansas. The Rural Forestry Program encourages farmers, ranchers, and other landowners to actively manage and protect the forests, woodlands, and agroforestry resources on their property for wildlife, recreational, aesthetic, water quality, soil conservation, and forest product benefits. The Rural Forestry Program is guided by the Kansas Forest Action Plan which identifies natural resource issues, opportunities, strategies, and priority areas to accomplish program goals.

Rural District Foresters can assist you by making site visits to collect information and provide recommendations on forest and windbreak management, forest and windbreak health, and tree planting. They can make recommendations for tree planting, timber stand improvement, timber harvest, and protection of forest resources and they can develop Forest Stewardship Plans or forest management plans, provide forest stand improvement marking and give assistance with implementation of tree plantings, including access to tree-planting equipment. They can offer technical assistance on forestry-related projects and provide information and access to financial assistance for forestry projects.

Chris Mullins is the Rural District Forester for Butler County. He can be reached by email, [ctmull@ksu.edu](mailto:ctmull@ksu.edu) or by phone, Office: 620-921-3554, Cell: 785-473-6123.

*Excerpts from the Kansas Canopy, a Kansas Forest Service publication. For more forestry resources, go to [www.kansasforests.org](http://www.kansasforests.org).*

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation District Staff****NRCS Staff:**

Justin Edwards—District Conservationist

Andrew Hansen—Soil Conservation Technician

Spencer Heise—Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

**Conservation District Staff:**

Hannah Schrock—Conservation District Manager

Bart Hamilton—Conservation District Administrative Assistant

Sandy Koontz—Watershed District Manager

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

*Butler County Conservation District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

“Man shapes himself through decisions that shape his environment.”

~ Rene Dubos

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that really matter.”

~ Martin Luther King Jr

The grass may be greener on the other side but at least you don't have to mow it.



## **A Look Back**

**By: Justin Edwards—District Conservationist**

As I sit here typing this article in this brand-new year I look back at 2025 and realize it was a crazy year. A new administration came in and shuffled some things around. We lost a significant part of our staff across the state due to voluntary retirements and buyouts, some program funding was cut, and we were on furlough for six weeks this fall.

Mother nature paid us a visit in June with record rainfall and kept us wet into the fall delaying harvest and other practice implementation. Through all of that adversity we were able to hang on and still have a successful year here in the Butler County office.

Despite all of the hurdles that we faced last year we were still able to provide a little over \$200,000 in EQIP funds addressing various resource concerns around Butler County. We also were able to provide assistance for customers through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), State Cost Share programs and other general technical assistance questions.

If you have any questions about your land, please don't hesitate to call 316-321-5803. We would love to come out and visit with you on your land and help identify the resource concerns and come up with a plan to address them.

Below is a list of our common resource concerns in Butler County:

Plant Pest Pressure/Woody Invasion

Water Quality/Soil Erosion

Soil Health

The following are common practices used in Butler County to address resource concerns:

Brush Management/Pest Management

Terraces

Waterways

Cover Crops

Grazing Management

## **Kansas Range Youth Camp Scholarships Available!**

**Attention** upcoming high school sophomores, juniors and seniors with an interest in rangeland management, plants, livestock, or wildlife.

Each year the Conservation District offers scholarships to attend the week long Range Youth Camp sponsored by the Kansas Section Society for Range Management.

During this week long camp, students will learn to identify rangeland plants, determine plant growth and stocking rates, discuss livestock nutrition, rangeland wildlife management and much more!

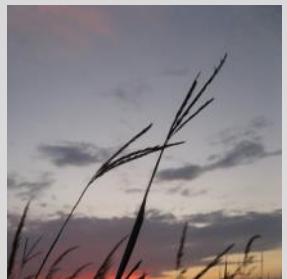
Fun activities are also scheduled and include swimming, fishing and hiking.

The Kansas Range Youth Camp is usually held in June.

Kansas Range Youth Camp has been educating Kansas youth for over 50 years.

The Conservation District offers full scholarships to students who attend from Butler County.

Contact the District Office for more information, 316-320-3549.



**Check out <https://kswildflower.org> for photos and identification information on over 1,000 species of forbs (wildflowers), grasses, sedges, rushes, trees and other woody plants commonly found growing in the State of Kansas.**



## **Sign Up Now for Financial Assistance in Implementing Conservation Practices on Your Farm or Ranch**

### **Cost Share Sign-Up—January 1 to April 30**

Controlling soil erosion on your farm or ranch can be expensive. That's why financial assistance is made available to local landowners through the Kansas Department of Agriculture/Division of Conservation. The Conservation District administers these funds for Butler County. Funds are provided to landowners who qualify based upon state criteria and local program requirements set forth by the Conservation District.

Landowners who are interested in receiving financial assistance need to fill out an application before April 30, 2026 to be considered for our next round of funding that we receive in July 2026. Applications received by April 30th are prioritized and ranked based on a number of factors. These include the type of practice to be implemented, whether the practice is located in a high priority watershed and location of practice to sensitive areas such as perennial or intermittent streams, wells or public water supplies. Applications that rank high are funded first.

Conservation practices eligible for cost share include: grassed waterways, terraces, underground outlets, diversions, pasture and hayland planting, range seeding, sediment control basins, wetland creation, filter strips, ponds, watering facilities, fencing, plugging abandoned water wells, upgrading livestock waste systems and repairing failing septic systems. A complete list of guidelines and eligible practices can be obtained at the conservation office.

All cost share practices must meet NRCS Standards and Specifications in order for cost share to be paid. A conservation plan is required as well; NRCS will work with you to develop your plan.

If you have some erosion issues, call us or stop by and talk to us. We can pull up a map on the computer to discuss areas in your field(s) that concern you and then come out to the field. With your help, we can determine the best way to solve an erosion problem. It costs you nothing to ask or have us come out and look. We can provide some estimates on cost so you can make a determination on whether you want to proceed with the project.

For more information on the cost share program, eligibility, or a complete list of practices that can be funded with cost share, contact the Conservation District office, 316-320-3549.

## **Controlling Noxious Weeds**

Kansas Noxious Weed Law requires that all people, including private landowners, state, counties, townships, cities, and their agencies, boards and departments, and any companies or corporations that own or manage land, control the spread of and eradicate any noxious weeds on any land they own or supervise, and to use the official methods approved and adopted by the secretary. These methods will be based on Integrated Weed Management, using the most current available science. Control and eradication methods include biological, chemical, cultural, and mechanical methods.

### **Official Noxious Weed Control Programs**

Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*); Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*); Sericea Lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*); Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*); Bur Ragweed (*Ambrosia grayii*); Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*); Hoary Cress (*Cardaria draba*); Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia virgate*); Kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*); Pignut (*Hoffmannseggia glauca*); Quackgrass (*Agropyron repens*); Russian Knapweed (*Rhaponticum repens*).



### **County Option Noxious Weeds**

Common Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*); Cut-Leaf Teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*); Caucasian Bluestem (*Bothriochloa bladhii*); Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*).

Butler County Conservation District  
2503 Enterprise, Suite B  
El Dorado, Kansas 67042  
316-320-3549



**Christopher (Chip) Redmond is the Guest Speaker at  
Conservation District's 80th Annual Meeting**

**Thursday, February 12, 2026—6:00 PM**

**Butler Community College Clifford/Stone Community Center, El Dorado Campus**

Chip Redmond is an Assistant Meteorologist and K-State Weather Data Library/Mesonet Manager. He has a diverse background in meteorology and atmospheric science. He graduated from Ohio University with a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology and Minors in Physics and Computer Science. He later earned a Master of Science in Atmospheric Science from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Redmond's expertise includes managing the Kansas Mesonet and providing predictive services for the Kansas Forest Service. He is also a wildland firefighter, a volunteer firefighter, and an Incident Meteorologist with a Rocky Mountain Area Type 2 Incident Management Team.

Chip's work extends to documenting tornadoes and spending time in nature, as well as enjoying the open roads of the Central Plains and lesser-known parts of the American countryside.

