



conserving
natural resources
for our future

Butler County Conservation District

78th Annual Edition

January 2024

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KANSAS BANKERS ASSOCIATION AWARD SOIL CONSERVATION

2023 Key Banker Award for Soil Conservation

**C & E Grain & Livestock
Carlen & Eric Busenitz**

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Eric, Lauren, Katie, Carlen Busenitz
Photo Courtesy Busenitz Family



Our Thanks to Butler County Banks for Sponsoring the Key Banker Award!

Next time you visit your bank, please thank them for supporting agriculture in Butler County.

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~ VINTAGE BANK KANSAS ~ WHITE EAGLE CREDIT UNION ~

Kansas Bankers Association 2023 Soil Conservation Award C & E Grain and Livestock—Carlen and Eric Busenitz

Carlen and Eric Busenitz of C & E Grain and Livestock are the winners of the 2023 Bankers Award for Soil Conservation. Their farm is located 2.5 miles south of Brainerd. Carlen and Eric are the 3rd generation to work the land in this location. Carlen now lives in the home he grew up in and where his Grandfather and Dad lived and worked. Eric and his wife and son live near Furley.

Carlen and Eric started farming together in 2010 after their dad passed away. Both Carlen and Eric grew up working on the farm but now the decision making was their responsibility. The partnership, necessary at that time to keep the farm operating, developed in the following years as life goals became clearer. They officially organized the farm as C & E Grain and Livestock five years later. They farm several hundred acres and run a beef stocker to finish feedlot operation. The manure from their feedlot is used to help fertilize their crops. They have been incorporating grid soil sampling into their operation and have seen the benefit of targeting fertilizer to where it is needed most in the field.

Their crop rotations consist of corn, beans, wheat and winter cover crops. Carlen and Eric have been using cover crops for several years now and are pleased with how they reduce weed pressure in addition to providing an additional feed source for the cattle in the winter.



**Waterway installed in
2022 through EQIP**

They have an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which provides a financial incentive to plant cover crops. They were using cover crops prior to signing up for EQIP.

They had to change their seeding mixes a bit to qualify, but it was not a big issue to meet those requirements. The use of cover crops also benefits soil health and they are seeing the benefits. They mentioned the drought of 2023 was the first year they saw a noticeable yield drag in soybeans following cover crops.

Carlen and Eric's Dad used the EQIP program years ago to assist in building a livestock waste system to meet changing water quality standards. Carlen and Eric used EQIP recently to install grade stabilization structures,



**Grade Stabilization Structures and Terraces
installed in 2022 through the EQIP Program.**

terraces and a waterway in a quarter section of ground they farm. They were able to do a lot of the work themselves, hiring help as needed to complete some of the concrete work. Their Dad had old forms they used for the concrete structures. This work was a family affair with several of the kids assisting during the concrete pours. They feel EQIP is a good program because it offers the incentive to complete conservation work for landowners who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford to do the work themselves.

Carlen and Eric do a lot of conservation work needed on the farm on their own, especially maintenance of conservation practices out in the field. They realize maintenance is an important aspect of conservation work and feel if the money is spent to improve the land, then those practices should be maintained to provide the benefit for as many years as possible, even though it takes some time to get it done. Last year they had a longer window of time in the fall to complete some maintenance projects as they had more dry weather into the fall and winter due to the drought.

Continued on page 3

Kansas Bankers Award—(continued from page 2)

Carlen and Eric incorporate strip tilling on their corn acres and no tilling on fields with beans, wheat and cover crops. Their Dad was open to trying these new techniques and Carlen mentioned they stripped tilled fields when their Dad was still farming.

One of the biggest changes they have seen over the years in farming is the retirement of the disk, cultivator and plow. They laughed about their kids not being able to skip school to come home to run the cultivator like they used to do. They still keep a disk around for maintenance work. Another change is they never had corn (unless it was grown for silage) and rarely grew soybeans when they were growing up, they usually had a wheat/milo rotation back then.

The Busenitz families attend Emmaus Church and are involved in many church activities. Eric is involved with the Butler Community College Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ). Carlen is on the Board of Directors of the Kansas Farm Management Association. They enjoy deer hunting on their land with their family.

The kids have guineas, chickens, bottle calves, ponies, horses and rabbits which keep them busy.

When asked if they had any words of wisdom or advice they'd like to pass on to others, Eric suggested individuals should just start with what they've been given and keep building from that. Carlen mentioned they have hired kids to help them in the summers who didn't live on farms and they were able to rent or purchase land and start farming themselves a few years later.

Both Carlen and Eric feel they have been entrusted with God-given resources and it is their job to be good stewards of the land and to take care of what they have been given.

The 2023 Bankers Award for Soil Conservation is sponsored by the Kansas Bankers Association.

Congratulations, C & E Grain and Livestock!

Eric Busenitz and Family
Lauren, Eric and Titus

Carlen Busenitz and Family
Front: Elsa, Asher, Anne, Clara
Back: Eben, Gideon, Katie, Carlen, Silas



Photo Courtesy Busenitz Family



Photo Courtesy Busenitz Family

Conservation District's 78th Annual Meeting



Make reservations now to attend Butler County Conservation District's 78th Annual Meeting at 6 PM on Thursday, February 8, 2024 at the Welcome Center on the Butler Community College El Dorado Campus. RSVP required! Please call 316-320-3549. Please RSVP before February 2, 2024.

Is CSP Right for Me?

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural and forest producers take their conservation efforts to the next level by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation. CSP is for producers who are passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.

If you own, rent or manage land (and maintain control for at least 5 years), such as cropland, rangeland, grassland or pasture and have already been doing conservation work on your operation and want to expand your existing conservation efforts, CSP may be right for you. Your land needs to comply with highly erodible land and wetland conservation determination provisions (if unsure, ask your local USDA Service Center).

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is for working lands and is the largest conservation program in the United States.

CSP can provide many benefits, including increased crop productivity, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques. For example, CSP can help you schedule timely planting and management of cover crops, develop a grazing plan that will improve your forage base, implement no-till to reduce erosion or manage forested areas in a way that benefits wildlife habitat.

CSP represents a genuine commitment to conservation. Contracts are for five years, with the opportunity to compete for a contract renewal if you successfully fulfill the initial contract and agree to achieve additional conservation objectives. There is no minimum acreage requirement. CSP enrolls your entire operation into the program, not just one specific field or tract. CSP offers annual payments for implementing these practices on your land and operating and maintaining existing conservation efforts. Want to take it a step further? CSP also offers bundles where you can select a suite of enhancements and receive a higher payment rate. CSP applicants must currently be meeting the stewardship threshold for at least two priority natural resource concerns on every land use included in the operation. Stewardship threshold is a term NRCS uses to determine if a CSP applicant is currently meeting or exceeding an adequate level of conservation criteria for a particular natural resource concern. They must also agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional resource concern by the end of the contract on at least one land use. NRCS will determine your stewardship threshold as you move through the contract process.

NRCS offers technical assistance at no cost. Technical Service Providers are also available. The first step in the process is to notify NRCS of your interest in CSP. If you are new to working with USDA, you will need to establish your Farm Record with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Establishing a Farm Record requires several forms and documents, so make an appointment with your FSA office as soon as possible. In addition to your Farm Record documents, you will also need to submit to NRCS: 1. NRCS CPA-1200 - Conservation Program Application 2. A map showing all land uses and acres in the operation. 3. A map or other documentation identifying any known ineligible land and associated acreage amounts. NRCS will assist you through this process, if needed.

A conservation planner will work closely with you throughout the entire contract process. They will schedule a visit to your property. During that visit, they will walk the land with you to discuss and review any resource concerns. Following the site visit, the conservation planner will develop a conservation plan that includes a variety of conservation practices, activities and enhancements to improve the level of conservation benefit and to address the resource concerns. Producers use that personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to make informed decisions about their land. Once you choose the conservation practices or activities that best fit, and you choose the conservation practices or activities that you want to implement, NRCS will rank your application to determine how well your current and future management system will address national, state, and local natural resource priorities. Applications are ranked against other similar eligible applications in the same ranking pool, with the highest scoring applications receiving contract offers first. If your application is selected for funding, CSP offers payments for implementing these practices on your land and operating and maintaining existing conservation efforts.

CSP Contract payments are based on three components. First, payments are made to maintain the existing level of conservation based on the land uses included in the contract and an NRCS assessment of existing stewardship at the time of enrollment; second, payments are made to implement additional conservation activities. Third, most participants will be eligible for a \$4000 minimum payment during any year that their total annual contract payment falls below the minimum payment amount. NRCS makes payments as soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous fiscal year and completed before September 30. All payments are considered taxable income; you will receive a Form 1099 to report CSP payments on your tax return.

***CSP contracts are for 5 years.
NRCS makes payments as soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for conservation practices/activities installed, maintained and/or completed before Sept 30th.***

Continued on page 5

Is CSP Right for Me?

Continued from page 4

The Inflation Reduction Act and the Conservation Stewardship Program - (CSP-IRA)

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with \$19.5 billion in additional funds over five years for its existing conservation programs, including the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); now funds are also available for CSP and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

CSP-IRA is intended to address Climate Smart, Carbon Sequestration and Air Quality concerns. The IRA directs NRCS to use these additional funds specifically for climate change mitigation, activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage. Examples include cover crops, reduced-till and no-till, nutrient management, grazing and pasture management practices, prescribed grazing, tree/shrub establishment and wetland restoration.

Participants should include their entire operation in their CSP-IRA application.

Applications for NRCS conservation programs are accepted on a continuous basis. However, application ranking dates are set at key times throughout the year.

Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, NRCS can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. CSP helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation.

For more information on CSP, please call the NRCS office at 316-321-5803, or stop by the El Dorado office at 2503 Enterprise, Suite B and visit with NRCS staff.

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Excerpts from a USDA NRCS Fact Sheet on the Conservation Stewardship Program; in your favorite browser, search USDA NRCS Kansas for more information.

Kansas Great Plains Grassland Initiative

Trees, trees, everywhere you look there are trees. Trees aren't a bad thing, if they are in the right place, but trees in the Flint Hills grasslands and other grazing regions of Kansas, are the greatest threat to those ecosystems.

Ranchers have new tools, science, and a funding opportunity to help address woody plant encroachment on targeted rangelands through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Woody plant encroachment puts pressure on working rangelands by decreasing livestock production and increasing wildfire risk as well as harming grassland biodiversity and increasing threat to animal species living in this biome.

New scientific tools now provide unprecedented opportunities to track woody encroachment and develop strategic approaches to combat it. When combined with landowner expertise, Kansas ranchers and NRCS can defend intact grasslands, reduce vulnerability to future encroachment, and cut long-term maintenance costs.

USDA NRCS is adopting a new approach to addressing this widespread threat through the Kansas Great Plains Grassland Initiative (GPGI). The initiative is part of the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) framework calling to conserve the last remaining iconic grassland regions in the Great Plains biome.

GPGI provides technical and financial resources to eligible ranchers in specific geographic rangelands to address woody plant encroachment. This initiative provides an opportunity for producers to reduce the vulnerability of Kansas core grasslands from woody encroachment. Core grasslands include, but are not limited to, the Flint Hills, Gypsum Hills, and Smoky Hills regions of Kansas. Treatment strategies will rely on an integrated pest management conservation system plan to manage woody species encroachment on identified planned land units within the core grassland areas.

Producers managing grasslands throughout Kansas can implement this new approach to combating woody encroachment. Refer to details of this new approach in Reducing Woody Encroachment in Grasslands (<https://wlfw.rangelands.app/great-plains/>).

Producers in targeted rangelands are eligible to receive Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding related to addressing woody plant encroachment.

For more information on the Great Plains Grassland Initiative, please call the NRCS office at 316-321-5803, or stop in at 2503 Enterprise, Suite B in El Dorado and visit with NRCS staff.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. Excerpts from the USDA NRCS Fact Sheet on GPGI.

Butler County Conservation District Supervisors



Back Row—Richard Scott, Justin Grunder, Russell Janzen
Front Row— Linda Klaassen, Walter Burress

Rent the District's No-Till Drills!



The Conservation District has four Great Plains Model 1006NT No-till Drills for rent. They are 13 feet wide with a 10 foot planting width. Three have 3 seed boxes and 1 has 2 seed boxes with 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.



Walter Burress and Linda Klaassen have chosen not to run for another term on the Conservation District Board.

We'd like to thank them both for their service!

Walter—17 years

Linda—5 years



Thanks to all past and present conservation district supervisors for your time and talents and your service and commitment to protecting our soil and water resources.

Mountaintops are for views and inspiration, but fruit is grown in the valleys.

—Billy Graham

Root Plow

Don't push out those hedge rows! We have a root plow. There is a \$25 charge to use the root plow.



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.

Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Determinations

Jeff Parks, DOC Technician
El Dorado Field Office

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

AD-1026
(10-30-14)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FarmServiceAgency

HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND CONSERVATION (HEL) AND WETLAND CONSERVATION (WC) CERTIFICATION

Soil Health

Resources and opportunities for education can be found on the Kansas Soil Health Alliance website, <https://kssoilhealth.org>. Kansas Soil Health Alliance is a farmer and rancher-led organization formed to provide practical information, resources and events on soil improvements/soil health that can be used on farms and ranches.

Financial Resources for Soil Health

Financial resources are available from a variety of resources and partnerships. There are many programs and initiatives available which include the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kansas Dept. of Agriculture - Division of Conservation, ADM Climate Smart Initiative, Ecosystem Services Market Consortium and Kansas WRAPS. Contact the Conservation District at 316-320-3549 for more information.

“Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

The real wealth of the Nation lies in the resources of the earth - soil, water, forests, minerals, and wildlife. To utilize them for present needs while insuring their preservation for future generations requires a delicately balanced and continuing program, based on the most extensive research. Their administration is not properly, and cannot be, a matter of politics.

– Rachel Carson

Monitor Soil Temperature and Soil Moisture
<https://mesonet.k-state.edu/agriculture/soiltemp/>

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, 2024 to be considered for our next round of funding that we receive in July 2024. 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 Sandy Koontz at the Conservation District office, 316-320-3549.

Ours was the first revolution in the history of mankind that truly reversed the course of government, and with three little words: 'We the people.' 'We the people' tell the government what to do, it doesn't tell us. 'We the people' are the driver, the government is the car. And we decide where it should go, and by what route, and how fast. Almost all the world's constitutions are documents in which governments tell the people what their privileges are. Our Constitution is a document in which 'We the people' tell the government what it is allowed to do. 'We the people' are free.

– Ronald Reagan

Kansas Range Youth Camp Scholarships Available!

Attention upcoming high school sophomores, juniors and seniors with an interest in rangeland management—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, canoeing, fishing and hiking.

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

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

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Conservation District Staff

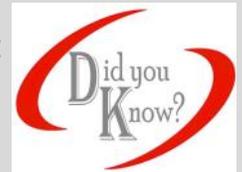
NRCS Staff:

- Justin Edwards—District Conservationist
 - Micajah (Cage) Goins—Soil Conservation Technician
 - Kathryn Gonzalez—Soil Conservationist
 - Jeff Parks—NRCS/Kansas Department of Agriculture/
Division of Conservation Technician
 - Holly Edmondson—NRCS/PBP Contract Clerk
- Conservation District Staff:
- Sandy Koontz—Conservation District Manager

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

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

DID YOU KNOW? When you use the Conservation District’s no till drills, root plow, or purchase geotextile or flags, you help support our education and information programs? Thank you!



What’s a Conservation Plan?

A conservation plan identifies the customer’s conservation objectives and assesses and analyzes the natural resources issues on that customer’s land related to soil, water, animals, plants, air, energy, and human interaction.

The conservation plan includes tools and resources customized specifically for each customer, like a land use map, soils information, photos, inventory of resources, economic costs and benefits, schedule of recommended practices, maintenance schedules, and engineering notes — all based on the producer’s goals and the resource needs.

The plan is written in a clear, step-by-step format that meets each individual customer’s needs. Customers choose options that suit their circumstances and time schedule. The conservation planning process is a collaboration between the conservation planner and the customer. Conservation planners are there every step of the way to assist customers with implementation as needed.

NRCS uses a nine-step planning process: These steps are: 1. Identify Problems and Opportunities—Planning can start with a problem, an opportunity, shared concerns, or a perceived threat. 2. Determine Objectives—During this step, the stakeholders identify their objectives. Objectives may need to be revised and modified as new information is gathered later in the process. 3. Inventory Resources—In this step, appropriate natural resource, economic and social information for the planning area is collected. The information will be used to further define the problems and opportunities. 4. Analyze Resource Data—This involves studying the resource data and clearly defining existing conditions for the natural resources, including limitations and potential for the desired use. This step is crucial to developing plans that will work for a landowner and their land. 5. Formulate Alternatives—With NRCS conservation planning, NRCS often can help landowners come up with alternatives based on financial assistance programs that help offset the financial expense of implementing conservation practices; 6. Evaluate Alternatives—Next is to evaluate the alternatives to determine their effectiveness in addressing the customer’s problems, opportunities and objectives. 7. Make Decisions—At this point, the landowner chooses which project or plan will work best for their situation. 8. Implement the Plan—Technical assistance is provided to help with the installation of adequate and properly designed conservation practices. 9. Evaluate the Plan—Conservation planning is an ongoing process that continues long after the implementation of a conservation practice. By evaluating the effectiveness of a conservation plan or a practice within a plan, stakeholders can decide whether to continue with other aspects of an overall area-wide plan.

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Local Work Group Meeting Scheduled for February 22, 2024 at Augusta Public Library, 10 AM to Noon

A Local Work Group (LWG) meeting is going to be held on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at the Augusta Public Library, 1609 State Street, starting at 10:00 AM; the meeting will last approximately 2 hours. This LWG meeting will be focusing on issues in the Howard Management Unit (Butler, Chautauqua, Cowley and Elk Counties).

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

According to Meyerhoff, the LWG should be diverse and focus on agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the community. We are looking for those who are agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area; owners of nonindustrial private forest land, representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations; and governmental agencies carrying out agricultural and natural resource conservation and activities. LWGs also take into account concerns of particular historically underserved groups and individuals including but not limited to women, persons with disabilities, socially disadvantaged, and limited resource groups.

Our LWG meeting will also have a virtual component to allow you to participate remotely if you wish. The Zoom link is provided below, or scan the QR code. You may also call the Conservation District at 316-320-3549 for more information.

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ZOOM LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82612490370?pwd=MGxMS1k0a0t3bFA4dnIvUG5zSytZUT09>



Monarch Butterfly Initiative

The monarch butterfly is one of the most iconic butterflies in North America and is known in part for its annual multi-generational migration from overwintering sites in central Mexico and coastal California to as far north as Canada. NRCS is working with America's farmers, ranchers, and forest managers on voluntary conservation efforts to combat the decline of monarchs on private lands by establishing new habitat and managing existing habitat for monarchs and pollinators.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners manage for monarch habitat on farms, ranches and forests. This assistance helps producers plan and implement a variety of conservation activities, or practices, that benefit the monarch, pollinators and many other wildlife species. Practices that benefit monarch butterflies and other insects also help reduce erosion, increase soil health, control invasive species, provide quality forage for livestock and make agricultural operations more resilient and productive.

Technical assistance is free to producers. NRCS and conservation partners work side-by-side with producers to develop a conservation plan. Each plan focuses on monarch habitat management and is tailored to the producer's property. NRCS worked with The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and butterfly experts across the United States to choose the best milkweed species and nectar producing plants to recommend for landowners. With financial assistance from NRCS, producers and conservation partners can plant milkweed and nectar-rich plants along field borders, in buffers along waterways or around wetlands, in pastures and other suitable locations.

More information is available at the NRCS office in El Dorado, call 316-321-5803 or stop in, 2503 Enterprise, Suite B.

Excerpts from the NRCS Working Lands for Monarchs Fact Sheet; search nrcs.usda.gov/monarchs.

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Educational Events/Activities Sponsored by the Conservation District

4-H Conservation Banner Sponsored by the Conservation District

This banner, created by the Lily Lake 4-H Club, received Grand Champion at the 2023 Butler County 4-H Fair. The Conservation District sponsors the Conservation Banner Division at the Fair.



Vickie Cikanek, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and Justin Edwards, NRCS DC, giving a wildlife presentation at the Andover Water Festival in October 2023

The theme for the 2023 Poster Contest and 4-H Banner at the Butler County Fair was "One Water"



2023 Poster Contest

The theme for the 2023 Poster Contest was "One Water".

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

The poster on top was created by Jasper Darlington, a first grader from Ewalt Elementary in Augusta.

The middle poster was created by Mariah Goldsmith, a third grader from Circle Oil Hill, El Dorado.

Mariah's poster received Honorable Mention at the State Contest.

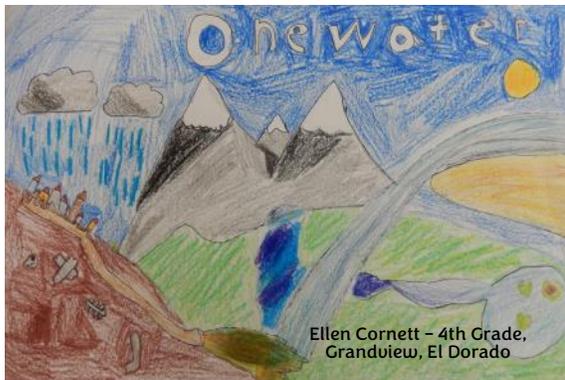
The bottom poster was created by Ellen Cornett, a fourth grader from Grandview Elementary in El Dorado.



Jasper Darlington
1st Grade,
Ewalt, Augusta



Mariah Goldsmith - 3rd Grade,
Circle Oil Hill, El Dorado



Ellen Cornett - 4th Grade,
Grandview, El Dorado



Conservation District 4-H Photo Contest

The Conservation District sponsors the Conservation Photo at the Butler County 4-H Fair. Kylee Barlett of Rose Hill Rustlers received 1st place in the 2023 Conservation Photo Division.

Poster Contest Winners

The 2023 Conservation Poster Contest theme was "One Water". Seven schools and 18 teachers participated this year. We received 406 posters and paid out \$870.00 in prize money to students and \$1,800.00 in teacher incentives.



2023 POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

Andover—Robert Martin Elementary—Fifth Grade

1st Place — Navy Ressel

2nd Place — Titus Angell

3rd Place — Parker Kuhlmann

Honorable Mentions—Caitlyn Gehrler, Trey Schneweis, Brooklyn Rusch, Melissa de Carvalnosiva, Beau Steel, Madison Mosher, Spoorthi Kiran and Charlotte Wunderlich

Augusta—Ewalt Elementary—First Grade

1st Place — Jasper Darlington

2nd Place — Norah Lusby

3rd Place — Boone Schneider

Honorable Mention—Avery Gulick

Jasper's poster was submitted to the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts State Contest

Augusta—Garfield Elementary—Fourth Grade

1st Place — Aaron Eastham Jr.

2nd Place — Kinsley Kenyon

3rd Place — Lucy Tatom

Honorable Mention—Bronson Crum

Circle—Oil Hill—El Dorado—Third Grade

1st Place — Mariah Goldsmith

2nd Place — Heidi Pickering

3rd Place — Ava West

Honorable Mention—Katelyn Cheever

Mariah's poster was submitted to the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts State Contest and received an Honorable Mention

El Dorado—Grandview Elementary—Fourth Grade

1st Place — Ellen Cornett

2nd Place — Piper Keplinger

3rd Place — Knox Parker

Honorable Mentions—Ellis McVay and Kinley Morgan

Ellen's poster was submitted to the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts State Contest

Leon—Bluestem Elementary—Third Grade

1st Place — Scarlett Bartel

2nd Place — Miren Neal

3rd Place — Tucker Taylor

Leon—Bluestem Elementary—Fifth Grade

1st Place — Blakely Jones

2nd Place — Azalea Jones

3rd Place — Paxon Gomez

Honorable Mentions—Savannah Vice and Tyller Arnold

Rose Hill Intermediate—Fourth Grade

1st Place — Taylor Shipley

2nd Place — Cash Hottovy

3rd Place — Harper Dalinghaus

Honorable Mentions—Penelope Solorio, Brielle Dold, Claire Maxwell, DeVante Warren, Emmalyn Akers, Kymree Kocher, Hannah Weber and Caden Huelsman

TEACHER AWARDS

Each teacher received a \$100 incentive for participating in our contest:

Andover—Robert Martin Elementary

Shanie Rucker, Cristie Karber, Kelsi Barlow, Kaegen O'Donnell

Augusta—Ewalt Elementary

Lauren Maska, Kristy Watkins

Augusta—Garfield Elementary

Jennifer Cody & Jennifer Husselman

Circle Oil Hill

Sara Martin & Taylor Hall

El Dorado—Grandview Elementary

Jim Shum & Linda Barker

Leon Bluestem Elementary

Barb McCaffree

Rose Hill Intermediate

Tammie Classen, Nicole McCall, Mr. Meyers, Ms. Cheek
Kathryn Renfro

Thank you for teaching environmental education in your classrooms!

Congratulations to All!



Our 2024 Poster, 4-H and Stewardship Theme is, "May the Forest be with you Always"

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.

- Chinese Proverb

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



**Butler Community College Welcome Center
(Clifford/Stone Room), El Dorado Campus, is the site for
the Conservation District's 78th Annual Meeting to be held
Thursday, February 8, 2023—6:00 PM**

Check out Butler County Conservation District's Website:
www.butlercountyconservationdistrictks.com

**2023
Key Banker Award for
Soil Conservation**

***C & E Grain and Livestock
Carlen and Eric Busenitz***



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