



Healthy Soils are Full of Life is the stewardship theme for 2017. Special, hands-on educational activities are available to schools and groups interested in learning more about this most important natural resource... SOIL!

Upcoming Events

Jan 10-13 - National No-Till Conference in St. Louis, Mo. is a premier learning and networking opportunity for farmers currently practicing or considering conversion to no-till farming. Scholarships available for Hillsdale watershed producers (first-time attendees).

Jan 17 - Annual Meeting

Jan 23-24 - No-Till on the Plains Conference in Salina, Ks. Scholarships available for first-time attendees/producers.

March 10 - Soil Health Workshop Learn from local producers employing no-till/cover crop techniques to improve overall soil health. Tour to follow.

April 20 - Miami County Earth Day County 5th graders participate in hands-on environmental education activities at the fairgrounds.

May 4 - Pasture and Pond Management Learn how to manage your small acreage for forage productivity and water quality. Healthier land and water means healthier horses and cattle!

Mark Peters, Advisor

Fansy Bigley, Member

Merle Kaiser, Member

Dwayne Beckford, Treasurer

John Nichols, Vice-Chair

Lyle Wobker, Chair

Board of Supervisors

100 Angela Street, Ste 3
Paola, KS 66071



WATER WISDOM

"The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively: the land... In short, a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for the community as such." - Aldo Leopold

2017 Annual Meeting

January 17 - 6:00 PM at Town Square in Paola

County residents are invited to attend the 71st Annual Conservation District Meeting and Dinner. Agenda items include:

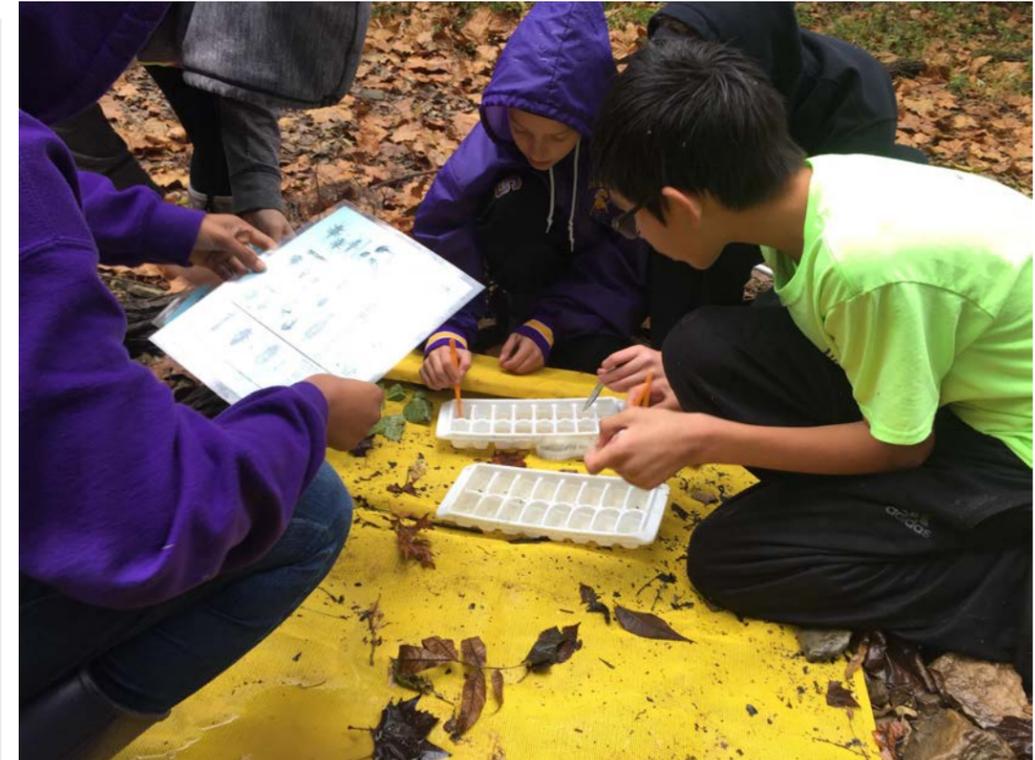
- 2016 Annual Report
- Conservation Awards
- Election of New Board Members
- Hillsdale Watershed Project Presentation

The district is requesting a \$5.00 donation, per person, to offset the cost of dinner. **RSVP to 913-294-3751 Ext. 3 no later than Wednesday, January 11.**

District Welcomes New Staff



Cheryl Reynolds accepted the position of Office Assistant in September. She works mornings in the office and is quickly becoming a go-to person for drill rental, seed orders and cost-share applications. Please stop in, meet her and welcome her to the conservation district world.



Spring Hill students collect, sort and identify macroinvertebrates in watershed streams to assess water quality.

Hillsdale Watershed Restoration

The conservation district was awarded the Hillsdale Watershed and Restoration Protection Strategy (WRAPS) grant in July, a \$387,152 investment in conservation and education aiming to improve water quality in the lake. The lake is currently impaired due to excess nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment entering the waterways from croplands, pastures and urbanizing areas.

A leadership team of landowners, farmers, cities/counties and water suppliers meet quarterly to develop cost-share programs, which are now underway, and to set the course for the project. Up to 70% of project costs are available for high efficiency conservation practices in Bull Creek and Rock Creek subsheds. Possibilities include: conversion from conventional tillage to no-till systems, cover cropping in conjunction with continuous no-till, establishment of permanent vegetation and off-stream watering systems for livestock. (cont)

District and NRCS Staff Contacts

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District Products and Services

10 Foot No-Till Drill (\$35 check out fee; \$10 per acre; Operator seeding starts at \$32/acre)

300 Bushel Manure Spreader (\$75 per day)

Construction Fabric (\$2.50 per linear ft)

Survey Flags (\$10 per 100)

Seed: Native grass and forbes, cover crop mixes, species-specific habitat mixes. (Prices vary)

Soil Testing and Nutrient Analysis (no charge, through extension)

Field Soil and Water Testing (no charge)

Conservation Trees and Shrubs (Call for pricing/availability)

Hillsdale (cont.)

The team has approved several excellent watershed projects, and many members volunteered extensively in the first of many watershed education programs.

This fall, 220 Spring Hill students participated in a watershed streams unit, consisting of in-class lessons on watershed systems, water chemistry and threats/strategies for clean water. In half-day field sessions, students assessed stream health throughout the watershed by measuring dissolved oxygen and nitrogen levels, turbidity, temperature and pH. They derived water quality scores for their streams by combining the water quality parameters with macroinvertebrate data. It was a meaningful learning experience for students and adult volunteers. Spring Hill would like to repeat the streams in the spring. The unit will become available for additional schools in Johnson and Miami counties Fall 2017.

Also in 2017, the district will roll out a watershed website, where all project activities will be shared and documented. Potential applicants can apply online, request technical assistance, sign up for workshops and learn about the watershed. Keep an eye out for a soil health workshop in March and a small pasture workshop in May. Call the office for details or to be added to a mailing list.

Spring Hill science teacher Travis Brown leads a field station on Rock Creek to measure the levels of dissolved oxygen and chlorides in the water. Students considered many parameters of stream health, including a visual assessment, judging the quality of the riparian buffers, amount of streambank erosion and adjacent land uses.

Eastern Kansas Prescribed Burn Association (EK-PBA)

Burn associations exist in Kansas to assist landowners with effective management of grasslands, and the prevention of encroachment of woody and invasive species. This formalized version of "neighbors helping neighbors" provides members with access to shared equipment such as water tanks, torches and shovels. It also opens the door to ongoing education, training and technical assistance from the state-wide Kansas Prescribed Burn Association.

This May, landowners in Miami County came together to form the EK-PBA. The first annual meeting of the group is February 7. Any burns planned for this spring will be discussed and planned. There will be a short educational session on burn safety and a potluck dinner. Contact Al Lozier for more details at amlozier55@gmail.com.

The Franklin County Extension is hosting a Prescribed Burn Workshop Feb. 22. Topics include: Reasons to Burn; Weather Conditions; Equipment, Planning and Conducting a Burn; Fire Behavior, Hazards and Precautions; Liability; Local Regulations; and CRP Rules. To register, call 785-828-4438.



2017 Cost-Share
 Sign up in May
 Clear brush
 Fence streams
 Off-stream water

Annual Meeting
January 17
 RSVP by Jan. 11
 913-294-3751 Ext. 3
 \$5.00 Donation Requested

RURAL LIVING SERIES

FEBRUARY 2
AG LEASES & LAWS: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Classes will be held at 6:30 pm at the Marais des Cygnes Extension District Office
 104 S. Brayman, Paola

MARCH 2
RURAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Please RSVP to 913-294-4306 at least 5 days prior to each class.

MARCH 23
LAND MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION

APRIL 11
FARM FINANCES & GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

For more information & class descriptions, call 913-294-4306 or visit www.maraisdescygn.es.ksu.edu

MAY 4
POND & PASTURE MANAGEMENT
 * ON FARM, LOCATION TBA

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