

## Kansas Highlights

December 2003

### EMPLOYEES EARN CPR/FIRST AID CERTIFICATION

This fall, employees in Area 1 were given the opportunity to receive American Red Cross Adult CPR and First Aid Training. Gretchen Cheatum, Office Assistant, NRCS State Office, Salina, provided this valuable training to the employees. Gretchen is a certified instructor for the North Central Kansas Chapter of the American Red Cross. Approximately 20 employees completed the course and earned their certifications.

Participants agreed the training was an excellent opportunity to gain life-saving skills and should be recommended for everyone. The skill cards used as visual aids during the training were recently obtained from the American Red Cross and were provided to all field offices in Area 1 as a quick reference tool to use in case of an emergency.

A special thanks to Gretchen for taking time from her regular duties to perform this valuable service.  
*Submitted by Jan Klaus, Office Assistant, Hays Area Office*



Darrel Beougher, District Conservationist, Stockton FO and Dan Worcester, Soil Conservation Technician, Hill City, demonstrate the techniques to use in applying first aid to Galen Thyfault, Buffer Coordinator, Hill City and Daniel Moore, District

### ABANDONED WELL DEMO



One of several thousand abandoned water wells in Greenwood County was the site of a well plugging demonstration this past September in Eureka. Hazards, liability issues, water quality, and proper plugging techniques were stressed at this event sponsored by Greenwood County Conservation District, Greenwood County Farm Bureau, and K-State Research and Extension Service. The contractor, Booth Construction of Eureka, donated time and equipment to help bring attention to address this safety and water quality concern. *Submitted by Greenwood County Conservation District, Eureka*

### LOCAL BIRDS: INCA DOVE

One of the favorite backyard birds for many people is the "dove." Most people recognize the mournful "coo" of the common Mourning Dove, also known locally as the "Turtle Dove." How many people realize that we have other species of "doves" in Meade County?

For the past several years, a small population of Inca Doves in Meade has made quite a stir. People from across the state have made special trips to Meade to add this small dove to their life lists.

Inca Doves are typically a southern and southwestern species. Until recently, they were considered as accidental or as a casual rare bird in Kansas. Almost all sightings were in the winter and of single birds at feeders. Sightings were few and far between, often skipping many years between viewings. During the winter of 1956 through 1957, a group of three Inca Doves stayed at the Meade Fish Hatchery until they were killed in a blizzard. This represented the only multi-bird sighting until very recently.

How times have changed! Today, Inca Doves are a regular nesting bird in the town of Meade while remaining rare elsewhere in the state. Although the population fluctuates, at one time there were as many as 15 birds coming to a feeder in Meade! One banded bird has been recaptured three years running.

Inca Doves are told from the more common Mourning Dove by their small size, “scaly” appearance to the feathers and white outer tail feathers. When they fly, their wings produce a distinctive quiet, dry rattle, similar in sound to a Bobwhite Quail taking flight.



The call of the Inca Dove, which can be heard all year is “OH NO” or “NO HOPE” repeated monotonously over and over again.

This bird is also known as a “love bird.” Often the birds huddle closely together on a branch or wire like two lovers on a park bench. Usually you can approach them very closely before they fly away.

You can travel to Mexico to see an Inca Dove, or simply come to Meade County to catch a view of a “zootie”! (A “zootie” is a life bird or an exciting bird in bird watching circles.) Submitted by Tom Flowers, District Conservationist, Meade Field Office

## **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SPONSORED**

The Leavenworth County Conservation District and NRCS sponsored an Outdoor Classroom in September at Hawthorn Park in Leavenworth. The classroom was for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and was attended by 200 students from four schools. Students went through four stations: Streambank Trailer, presented by Mel Theno, Soil Conservation Technician, Leavenworth; Rainfall Simulator, presented by Johnnie Freeman, Soil Conservationist, Leavenworth; Skins and Skulls, presented by Gary Rader, District Conservationist, Leavenworth; and Soils, by Bruce Evans, Soil Survey Project Leader, Lawrence. Outdoor classrooms give the Leavenworth County Conservation District and NRCS a chance to educate the students on our natural resources and fit into the schools' science curriculum. Submitted by Gary Rader, District Conservationist, Leavenworth Field Office

## **DRY FIRE HYDRANTS INSTALLED**

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel from the Mound City Field Office assisted the Linn County Rural Fire Department (LCRFD) to install seven dry fire hydrants in August and September. The goal of the LCRFD is to have 30 dry hydrants scattered around the county to lower the fire insurance rating from nine to eight. This will result in a savings of about 30 percent on rural residential fire insurance. So far, 17 hydrants have been installed with six more planned in the near future. NRCS involvement includes a site survey, layout, and checkout of the installation. Submitted by Barbara Jasper, Office Assistant, Emporia Area Office

## **STREAM STABILIZATION PROJECT**

In western Kansas, three different stabilization methods are being tried to prevent stream erosion. Each method creates either *vanes* or *weirs*. These methods are designed to push the faster moving water away from the bank and slow the water's velocity. By slowing down the water and creating a center

channel away from the banks, streambank erosion is prevented and stream stability is improved.

One type of stabilization method being used is *positioning* the existing clean concrete and rubble rock already on site into rock vanes and weirs. Vanes and weirs are put into the stream at an angle pointing up stream. This is used to keep water flow stabilized and away from the bank.

Another type of stabilization is the *drift fence*. This is built using recycled plastic that is formed into lumber. This fence is constructed of 6 x 6 foot fence posts which are placed in the streambank and then 2 x 6 foot boards are screwed onto the front side spaced accordingly. This method slows the water down while allowing water to pass through. Sediment is dumped at the site of the drift fence.

The newest type of technology in stabilization is the continuous *berm*.

The vane or weir is constructed by using a textile fabric which comes in a 250-foot roll and is run through the berm machine forming a U. This material is then filled with sand from the stream's existing sand bar. These sand bags are then sealed and cut down to a size as long as 25 feet. Once the sand bags are constructed, they are placed in a pyramid formation in the stream, either as a vane or weir.

The public can view any of the projects being constructed. The location of the construction is four to five miles east of Lakin, Kansas. This property is located on the south side of the road. Signs will be posted to direct interested persons to the exact location. *Submitted by Julie Jones, Conservation District Manager, Lakin Field Office*



*Continuous berms (CB) were constructed to serve as the material for four weirs on one of three sites on Bob Price's stream restoration project in Kearny County. Sand from the stream channel served as the fill material in the bags. The CB bags were cut to length and tied off, then placed in stacks with a spreader bar on the backhoe. Once the weirs were built, they were covered with soil, willow sprigs planted, and they should be anchored for use. Photo by Tim Christian*

## **FORT RILEY AGREEMENT**

It's been 10 years since the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) entered into an agreement with Fort Riley. In this agreement, NRCS agrees to provide technical assistance to the Army's Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) program to address land management concerns and provide materials and equipment to apply land practices. The goal is to keep Fort Riley training areas maintained and in a usable condition.

Erosion areas occur along roadways where tanks drive in the ditches during their exercises. NRCS designed the installation of riprap to stop erosion from occurring. NRCS designed fill areas and built diversions to divert water away from "washout areas" created by prior maneuver damage and water erosion. Another concern is holes created by Army personnel in this training area. These holes are large enough to hide a person or even larger, a full-size army tank! These holes can become a safety hazard to other traffic in the area. Once all the dirt work is completed, the areas are seeded to native grasses and mulched with native hay.

Mike Fengel, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician, is in charge of the technical management of Fort Riley land management practices. Ken Hoffman, Assistant State Conservationist, Manhattan is acting principal of this agreement for NRCS and Phil Woodford, ITAM Coordinator, Fort Riley.

*Submitted by Michael Fengel, Civil Engineering Technician, Fort Riley*

## **WACKY DAY 2003**

Last September, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from across the five North Central Kansas counties and their teachers participated in a Wildlife, Agriculture, Conservation Knowledge for Youth (W.A.C.K.Y.) Day at the Dane G. Hansen Boy Scout Camp south of Kirwin.

Students from Rooks, Phillips, Smith, Graham, and Norton counties rotated through a series of stations dealing with the appropriate themes for the day.



Over the lunch hour, students participated in a W.A.C.K.Y. carnival with 15 games - complete with small prizes. Games such as Agricultural Wheel of Fortune, Recycled Pop Bottle Bowling, and Natural Resources Conservation Plinko entertained students while providing more information on the themes of the day.

At the end of the day, all those participating were given W.A.C.K.Y. T-shirts listing sponsors of the day and water bottles courtesy of Kansas Wildscape - Outdoor Kansas Kids.

This was the second year for W.A.C.K.Y. Day with overall numbers up from 199 students last year to 325 students this year. Last year, 80 volunteers participated with the number this year increasing to 100 which included the Northern Valley, Hill City,

and Stockton FFA chapters. They worked as group leaders and helped at booths at the carnival. W.A.C.K.Y. Day is a joint effort between the Rooks, Philips, Smith, Graham, and Norton County Conservation Districts and is funded entirely from grants and local donations.

If you are interested in helping with W.A.C.K.Y. Day 2004, please contact Jean Stapel at 785-543-2518. *Submitted by Jean L. Stapel, District Manager, Phillips County Conservation District, Phillipsburg*



*Larry Stones, Wildlife Conservation Officer, KDWP, shows off his wildlife skins skulls.*

## **SHADOW 7 RANCH PROJECT**

Folks from K-State Extension and Kansas Rural Center and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees and volunteers completed the 2003 fall inventory for Shadow 7 Ranch located in Greenwood and Butler counties. The five-year project consists of monitoring the effects of grazing wild horses in the Flint Hills of Kansas. Forty monitoring sites on 40,000 acres were located for recording species composition, taking photos, and determining production, and grazing preference on six different range sites. The group collected photographs, estimates of production, and coordinates of the permanent transects using the Global Positioning System. *Submitted by Douglas Spencer, District Conservationist, Eureka*



*Photo points were captured for monitoring purposes along permanent line transects.*

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**December 25 – Holiday** - Christmas Day

**January 1, 2004 – Holiday** - New Year's Day

**6 – 7** – The Farmers Agriculture, Conservation and Technology Conference (FACT), Liberal

**11 - 13** – Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association (KLICA), Topeka

**19 – Holiday** - Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday

**22 – 23** – State Association of Kansas Watersheds (SAKW), Topeka

**26 – 27** – No-Till on the Plains Winter Meeting, Salina

**February 17, 18, 19** – All Employees NRCS Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Wichita

**March 14-20** – National Agriculture Week with March 21 as Ag Day

**April 22** – Earth Day

Kansas Highlights is issued three times a year. For more information on how to submit a story, comments about Kansas Highlights, contact Sheila Forrester, NRCS Visual Information Specialist, at 785-823-4572, or at [sheila.forrester@ks.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:sheila.forrester@ks.nrcs.usda.gov).

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## *Holiday Greetings 2003*

*Through the hazy clouds, the moon danced into sight,*

*Bathing the earth below in its heavenly light.*

*A snowman bravely faced the cold December night,*

*Cheered by the colorfully lit tree, sparkling and bright.*

*Inside love and laughter were shared 'round the fire's warm glow*

*As smoke curling from the chimney melted the snow.*

*It's our warmest wish to you, special friends we hold dear,*

*That you are blessed with health and happiness in the coming new year.*

The Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service  
State Office Employees Association