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Jenny Jasper        District Manager  
 Stacy Maimer-Johnson    Project Coordinator

**NRCS**

Gary Bruner        District Conservationist  
 Bob Allen           Conservation Technician

Sept 2007

Auxiliary Advisors: Annalee Nelson, Dolly McCallop, Nettie Vickers, Suzie Shay, Carol Bartlett

**ADDITIONAL NRCS STAFF**

Effective October 1, 2007, the merging of the Johnson/Wyandotte NRCS Office with the Miami County Office became official. Debbie Sumner, District Conservationist and Alan Gentry, Civil Engineering Technician joins Gary Bruner and Bob Allen in providing conservation technical assistance for all three counties.

Assisting the producers of Miami County in addressing their natural resource concerns will remain Gary and Bob's primary responsibility.

Alan has worked for NRCS for 23 years. His assigned duties include providing technical assistance to Douglas, Johnson, and Wyandotte

Counties. On a temporary basis, Alan is providing assistance, as needed, to Osage County until such time as a Soil Conservation Technician is assigned to that county.

Debbie has just completed 30 years of service with NRCS. You may remember her as she was the District Conservationist for Miami County from 1990 to 1995. Her duties include the administrative responsibilities for all three counties and providing conservation planning assistance to Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.

Although each one of the NRCS staff has their assigned duties, all will be available to assist the producers of Johnson, Miami and Wyandotte counties as needed.

**No Till Drill**

The district has purchased a new Truax No-Till Drill, it has a 10.7 foot planting width. The drill will be available to rent in the near future, there has been some changes in our rental policy due to the expense of the drill and we will no longer have the capability to deliver and set the drill up. The drill will, however, be available to be picked up in Paola after contacting the Conservation District. It can be towed with a vehicle with the capacity to haul 5100 pounds. A conservation district employee will be there to check the drill in and out and answer any questions that you may have. This drill has the capability to drill small grains, native grasses, and cool season grasses. We are very excited to be able to offer this service to you again. We want to keep the rental rates low, and as you can imagine the cost of the drill has substantially increased since the purchase of our last drill.

Please contact Jenny or Stacy at 913-294-3751 ext. 3 to put your name on a list for the drill, we will let you know as soon as possible when it will be ready to rent out.

## Buffer Maintenance

Buffers are effective at reducing non-point source pollution in streams. However, to maintain their effectiveness they must be managed and maintained. Regularly scheduled maintenance is needed starting right after the buffer has been planted. It is also important to carefully inspect your buffer annually or after major storm events for any damage or problems that may have occurred. Repairs should be done as soon as possible to maintain proper buffer functions. There are four major maintenance procedures outlined in this article. These four procedures are energy intensive and must be done at specific times during the growing season.

### Mowing

Both the woody and native grass zones in a riparian buffer can benefit from mowing during the early years of establishment. Native prairie grasses and forbs are often slow growing above ground during the first year or two after establishment because much of their energy is put into producing a root system. During this time annual weeds rapidly become established and provide competition to the establishing native plants. Mowing needs to occur before weeds get higher than 18" high.



#### SOME TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING TO MOW:

- Mowing twice during the season is usually enough.
- Mow just before annual weeds produce seed to keep the seed from maturing.
- Mow high - 8-12 inches or more above the ground to minimize cutting the slow-growing native plants.
- Use a flail chopper or brush-hog to minimize windrows of cut material that can cover and choke out young prairie plants.
- Plan the last mowing to allow re-growth of enough plants to fuel a spring burn.

### Spraying

Spraying is an important part of buffer maintenance. The first 3-5 years after establishment is very critical, during this time period water, nutrients, and light are crucial for survival and development. There can also be a lot of below-ground competition for water and nutrients in a newly established buffer, so keeping weeds to a minimum is suggested.

### PRESCRIBED BURNING

Fire is a good maintenance tool for native grass plantings in buffers or filter strips. To reduce weed competition during the year, prescribed burns are usually performed early in the spring. During this time, many of the competing cool-season grasses, weeds, and woody plants begin growing while the native prairie plants are still dormant. **Always develop a prescribed burn plan prior to burning. Assistance is available through NRCS.**

While different burning frequencies may be used, an annual spring-burn for the first three or four years is recommended. Following establishment of a good stand of desired grasses and forbs, a burning cycle of once every three to four years can be used.

A burn requires numerous people, careful planning, attention to fuel sources and amounts, and attention to wind. Using a small, slow backfire (a fire that burns into the wind) helps to keep the fire more controlled while it is close to neighboring shrubs and trees. A fire break is often mowed or raked between the shrubs and/or trees and the native prairie component. This fire break can be wetted if the fuel is dry. A good strategy is to burn when steady wind (10-15 mph) is blowing into the buffer toward the stream. This way, a backfire can be started with a drip torch along the mowed break and allowed to burn into the prairie filter. The fire moves slowly because it is burning into a prevailing wind.



Consideration should be given to the influence of burning on nesting birds. Ideally, you should burn in sections; burn only one side of the creek or break a prairie stand into three or four sections and burn one each year. Fall burns eliminate winter cover and late spring burns can destroy nests. However, fire helps to maintain native plant health. Most native prairie plants will grow more vigorously, produce more flowers, and produce more seeds after a fire. The active growing points of most prairie plants are below the soil surface, and are therefore unaffected as the fire rapidly passes over. After the fire, these plants are stimulated by warmth of the blackened ground and the nutrients that were released from burned plant material.

## CUT OFF DATE FOR EQIP

**November 2, 2007**  
is the cutoff date for  
applications to be  
considered for Fiscal  
Year 2008 funding.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is one of the largest programs in the 2002 Farm Bill. It is a voluntary conservation program that promotes environmental quality and assists producers in meeting local, state, and federal regulations. November 2, 2007 is the cutoff date for applications to be considered for Fiscal Year 2008 funding.

The following have been identified as the eligible priority natural resource concerns for Kansas:

Forestland Health – Productivity, Health, Vigor

Grazing Lands Health – Productivity, Health, Vigor; Noxious or Invasive Plants; and Inadequate Stock water

Soil Condition – Organic Matter Depletion

Livestock Waste – Water Quality and Air Quality

Water Quality – Nutrients/Pesticides/Suspended Sediment

Water Quantity – Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land; Aquifer Overdraft; Insufficient Water Flows in Water Course

The Kansas EQIP Self-Assessment Worksheet will be required to be filled out by the farmer or rancher again this year. These worksheets provide information to the pro-

ducer about the program and assist NRCS in obtaining information for ranking the application.

After November 2, 2007, NRCS State staff will begin evaluating applications received in Kansas. All approved contracts will be signed and obligated with producers by January 25, 2008. The NRCS will evaluate each application and give higher priority to those applications that use cost-effective conservation practices; treat multiple resource concerns; address national, state, or local priorities; and provide the most environmental benefits.

EQIP is available to help address the unique circumstances and concerns of limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers, who have natural resource concerns that need to be addressed on their land. In Kansas limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers may receive a higher payment rate through EQIP for structural and vegetative practices.

Agricultural producers interested in participating in EQIP can apply at any time at the NRCS/Miami County Conservation District office. Information about the 2008 EQIP is available on the Web site at [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2008](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2008). The Kansas EQIP fact sheet; Self-Assessment Worksheet; an application form; a list of eligible practices and payment rates and specifics on Kansas's rank-

### Equipment Available:

The Miami County Conservation District has a 400 bushel manure spreader available for rent by Miami County landowners. The district provides this equipment as a service to landowners. Proper waste utilization is important to protect water quality and our natural resources. Please contact us at 913-294-3751 Ext 101 to schedule a time to use the spreader.

## Miami County Conservation District

Miami County Conservation District  
100 N Angela Ste. 3  
Paola, Ks 66071

Phone: 913-294-3751 Ext. 101  
Fax: 913-294-3386  
E-mail: [jenny.jasper@ks.nacdnet.net](mailto:jenny.jasper@ks.nacdnet.net)

### It's Your District!

The Miami County Conservation District is a tax supported subdivision of State Government. The service it provides is governed by the board of supervisors elected by you, the voting public.



**Miami County  
Conservation District**

*Friends of the Earth!*

*"Water Wisdom" is financed by a grant from the State Conservation Commission Non Point Source Pollution Control Fund and the State Water Plan Fund.*

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## Did you Know...

- Glass beverage containers can be recycled over and over again. But they can also be used for other things you may not expect. Like roads. Marbles. Decorative tiles. Surfboards. And a host of other products and materials.
- In 1995, the recycling of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles reached a new high. 34% of all the bottles produced were being recycled. These bottles are turned into everything from rugs to goggles, park benches and fences to fiber for filling ski jackets.
- Steel and aluminum cans can be easily recycled for use in other steel and aluminum products. This not only conserves mineral resources, but the recycling process also uses about 75% less energy than using virgin materials. Recycled steel and aluminum finds its way into new cars, bikes, appliances, cookware, and a whole lot more.
- John Deere began his career as a blacksmith. Upon moving from Vermont to Illinois in search of better economic opportunities, he found that cast iron plows brought from the East were too flimsy for farming the Midwest soil. In 1837, using a broken saw blade, he fashioned a steel plow that proved to be perfect for prairie needs. His small blacksmith shop grew into the industrial giant that today serves more than 160 countries.