

H2info

www.cheneylakewatershed.org



Cheney Lake Watershed, Inc.

Winter 2006-2007

Our Mission: To provide water quality education and funding for cost effective clean water projects that improve the North Fork Ninnescah Watershed which feeds Cheney Lake.

Meet the Citizen's Management Committee - Norman Hildebrand

Norman Hildebrand, Stafford County farmer, has been on the Citizens' Management Committee of the Cheney Lake Watershed since 2001. After graduating from Kansas State University in 1962 with a degree in Ag Education, Norman taught Vo-Ag Class in Pratt for 10 years. Norman and his wife, Mary, began their farming career 40 years ago when they purchased the farm and house where they live today. Norman farms with his older brother, Arnold. Together they operate 5,000 acres of wheat, corn, soybeans and alfalfa in Stafford and Pratt Counties. They use a mix of tillage methods on their farm with 800 acres under irrigation. Norman and his youngest son, Jason, have over 500 head of cattle which include 250 cows in partnership with each other.

Family is important to Norman. He enjoys spending time with the 12 grandchildren that his children Randall, Janelle and Jason have given him. Norman says that water is critical to agriculture and he believes it's important to be involved in groups that are looking at the both the quantity and quality of water.



Norman Hildebrand

Thanks, Norman, for the leadership you have provided for the CMC for the past 6 years. we look forward to your service

Maintaining Conservation Practices

Howard Miller



Once conservation practices are installed many of us tend to give little attention to maintaining the function of the practices we implemented. Routine maintenance of conservation practices is much like changing the oil and checking the pressure in the tires on our farm vehicles. We wouldn't think of waiting 10,000 miles to change the oil or check the tire pressure and yet some of us are content to neglect conservation practices for years and wonder why they failed. In many cases cost share dollars from either federal, state or local governments are invested to install the practices. So we all

have a responsibility to each other to make sure that our taxpayer dollars invested on our farms reach their goal of improving water or air quality.

Some ways we can maintain the effectiveness of conservation practices is to till and plant along the contours of terraces rather than going up and over the terrace ridge. Plowing dirt up on the terrace ridge to maintain the proper height will allow the terraces to remain effective longer. Observe concrete outlet structures and spot spray or remove any trees that are growing around them to maintain the integrity of the terrace system. Another thing we can do is observe the waterways we built and remove trees and other woody vegetation while they are small and easy to remove. Also repair any developing gullies in waterways and reseed them to prevent further erosion. If we use either no-till or minimum till in the fields above waterways it allows them to remain effective for longer by reducing the amount of soil washing into the waterway.

Agitating the effluent in our livestock waste lagoons as we pump them out will help us avoid costly removal of sludge that has built up. If we need to remove the sludge with heavy equipment we may need to re-line the lagoon with a clay, bentonite or vinyl liner after the cleanout to insure a proper seal. Keeping the banks of our lagoon free of trees and other woody vegetation by spot spraying the trees when they are small, will help us to prevent a breach in our banks that can lead to bank failure. Maintaining our fence to exclude livestock will also help us insure the integrity of the bank.

It's easy to understand the importance of maintaining structural practices. It's equally important to maintain management practices that we received incentive payments to implement. Applying only the nutrients, whether from commercial fertilizer or manure, that the growing crop needs, makes economical sense even without incentive payments. Grazing our pasture land with proper stocking rates in a rotation will continue to improve our grass stand and ultimately lead to more productive pastures.

Each of us bears part of the responsibility to maintain the conservation practices that we either installed or implemented on our land. As we all do our part to maintain the conservation practices, we insure that the dollars directed to our farm reach their ultimate goal of improving water or air quality. Maintaining them is good stewardship of our natural resources.

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K-State Team to Study Cheney Watershed

Lisa French

A team of Kansas State University engineers, agronomists, sociologists and economists will be working in partnership with watershed producers and the Citizen's Management Committee over the next three years. K-State recently announced the receipt of a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to study the effect of conservation practices in Cheney Lake Watershed.

"This research will help determine the water quality benefits, economic impacts, and social aspects of conservation implementation," said Nathan Nelson, principal investigator on the project.

Water quality data from Goose Creek and Red Rock Creek will be analyzed to determine the effects of current conservation practices, said Nelson, who is a soil scientist with K-State Research and Extension. The results will be compared with water quality improvements predicted by computer models simulating strategic conservation practice implementation.

The project will use field monitoring, computer modeling, producer interviews, and historical data to answer three questions: 1) how do the timing, location, and array of conservation practices affect water quality at the watershed scale; 2) How do social and economic factors affect conservation practice implementation; and 3) What is the optimal placement and suite of conservation practices for this watershed?



Funds for the project, which will run from October 2006 through September 2009, came through a U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Effects Assessment Project (USDA/CEAP) grant. The grant is part of a nationwide watershed initiative to evaluate the effects of conservation practices. The KSU study will complement an Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) study of the watershed funded by USDA/CEAP from 2004-2007. (Photos show NRCS stream-bank assessment in December 2006)

Other K-State researchers on the project include biological and agricultural engineers Kyle Mankin and Phil Barnes, agricultural economist Michael Langemeier, agronomists Dan Devlin and Bill Hargrove, and sociologist Theresa Selfa.

New Cost Share Opportunities

Lisa French

Watershed producers who have land nearest to Cheney Reservoir are eligible for new cost share opportunities in 2007. The Citizen's Management Committee (CMC) has recently completed an agreement with the City of Wichita to provide incentive payments of \$200 per acre for new contracts in the Continuous Sign-up Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Practices eligible for the incentive payment include grassed waterways, grass filter strips, contour grass strips on terraces, farmable wetlands, and other partial field enrollments that will protect water quality. The acres that usually qualify for these types of practices tend to be the less productive parts of a cropfield with more potential for erosion. The Wichita incentive payment is in addition to annual CRP payments and other incentive payments.

In addition, a new cost share program has been established to assist producers who are converting cropland to permanent forages. For watershed acres nearest to the Reservoir, the City of Wichita will provide 50% cost share for up to two miles of perimeter fence on cropland that is converted to perennial native grasses. The producer must develop a grazing management plan and agree to maintain the practice for 10 years.

The CMC has designated subwatersheds nearest the lake for these incentives and cost share opportunities, including land in Ninnescah, Sumner, Haven, and part of Albion township in Reno County. Also included is Evan township in Kingman County. Producers who have an interest in either of these opportunities should call the Project Office at 665-0231.



**No-Till on the Plains - January 30-31, 2007
Bicentennial Center, 800 The Midway,
Kenwood Park, Salina, KS**

- The CMC will be offering scholarships to 1st time participants who attend the largest No-till Conference in North America. Scholarships of 1/2 of the registration fee will be offered to producers who farm in the Cheney Lake Watershed and are attending the conference for the first time.
- Registration opens at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, January 30th.
- Tuesday's session will begin at 1:00 p.m.
- Walk-in registration is \$200.00.
- Please present your registration receipt to the Cheney Lake Watershed Project Office as soon as possible after the conference for your scholarship reimbursement.

HOLIDAY TIP #37



NEVER CATCH SNOWFLAKES
WITH YOUR TONGUE
UNTIL ALL THE BIRDS
HAVE GONE SOUTH
FOR THE WINTER.

AHAJOKES.COM

This newsletter is published by the Citizens' Management Committee (CMC) of the Cheney Lake Watershed, Inc. and the Reno County Conservation District with funding provided by a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Section 319 non-point source pollution grant through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

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Watershed Residents Recruited to Record Rainfall

Lisa French

With current drought conditions in south central Kansas, there doesn't appear to be much need for anyone to have a rain gauge. But the rain will eventually come and we want to record it. Current and upcoming research projects in the watershed indicate a lack of historical data on rainfall.

There are a few data collection points for precipitation within the watershed but in order to capture the wide variation in spring and summer storms, the Watershed office is working to establish a network of residents who collect rainfall data.

The project office has contacted nearly 30 individuals scattered from eastern Reno County to the City of Stafford to participate in the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network (COCORAHS). Funding from Kansas State University will provide the participants with a rain gauge capable of measuring rain, snow, and hail to the hundredths of an inch. Records will be filed with the state climatologist. Other residents who are interested in keeping rainfall records can purchase the COCORAHS rain gauge for \$25 through the Watershed Project office or at www.cocorahs.org.



TOP TEN SIGNS THAT YOU MIGHT BE A WEATHER NUT...



(10) ...YOU SPEND MORE THAN THREE HOURS A DAY WATCHING THE WEATHER CHANNEL.



(9) ...YOU DRIVE AROUND TOWN WITH A DOPPLER RADAR ATTACHED TO THE ROOF OF YOUR CAR.



(8) ...YOU HAVE EVER BEEN IN AN ARGUMENT WITH SOMEONE OVER A TRIVIAL WEATHER FACT.



(7) ...YOU WERE LATE TO YOUR SISTER'S WEDDING BECAUSE YOU WERE OUT CHASING A THUNDERSTORM.



(6) ...YOU NAMED YOUR CAT "BLIZZARD" AND YOUR DOG "STORMCHASER."



(5) ...INSTEAD OF RUNNING FOR THE BASEMENT WHEN A TORNADO IS SPOTTED, YOU RUN FOR THE VIDEO CAMERA.



(4) ...YOU KNOW THE NAMES OF AT LEAST FIVE PEOPLE ON THE WEATHER CHANNEL.



(3) ...YOU'VE CALCULATED THAT YOUR BACK DOOR PRODUCES A WIND CHILL EVERY TIME IT IS OPENED TOO FAST.



(2) ...YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY IS GROUNDHOG DAY.



(1) ...YOU HATED THE MOVIE "TWISTER" BECAUSE OF ITS UNREALISTIC POTRAYAL OF STORM CHASING, BUT YOU'VE SEEN IT AT LEAST SIX TIMES.

