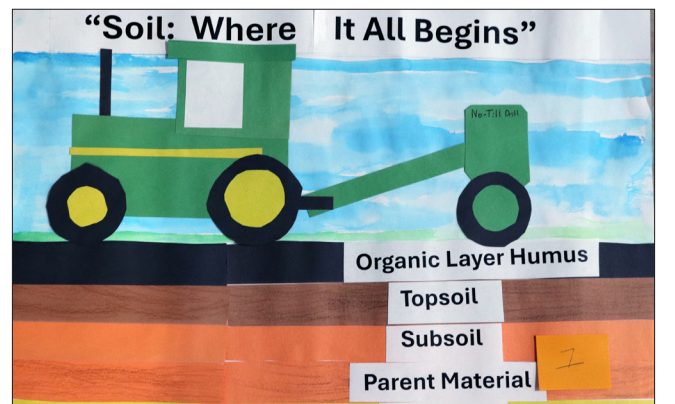


LINCOLN COUNTY

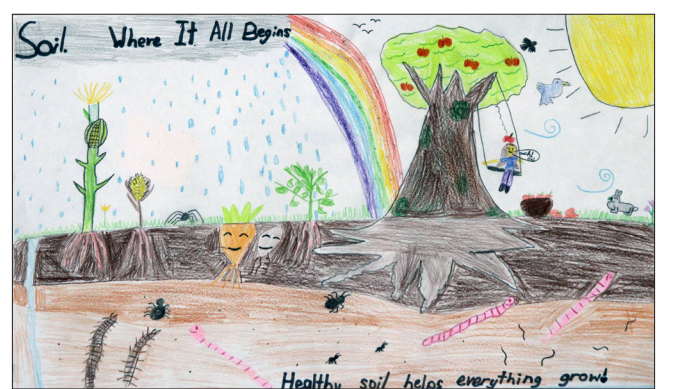
2026 Soil Conservation Edition



1st Grade Poster Winners: First Place Theo Bean (left), Second Place Halston Johnson (middle) and Third Place Daxton Meyer (right).



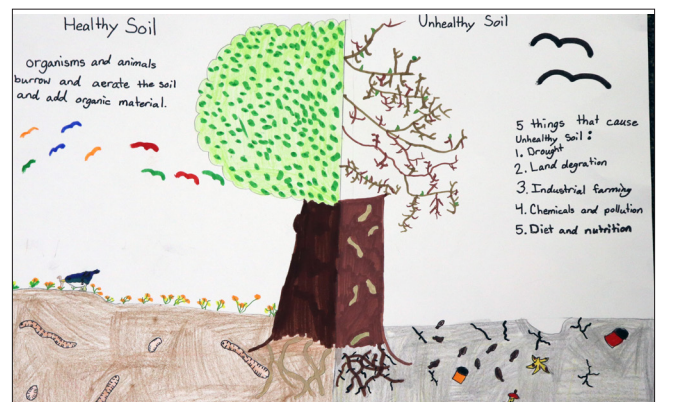
2nd Grade Poster Winners: First Place Jed Coover (left), Second Place Emery Aufdemberge (right) and Third Place Aubrie Hamel (middle).



3rd Grade Poster Winners: First Place Aiden Sulsar (left), Second Place Luna Falcon (middle) and Third Place Ronin Norman (right).



4th Grade Poster Winners: First Place Scarlett LeBien (left), Second Place Tia Mueller (right) and Third Place Reid Meitler (not pictured).



District hosts Annual Meeting



Brady Coover, chairman of the Lincoln County Conservation District board, addresses attendees during the district's annual banquet and meeting Feb. 7 at Lincoln Jr./Sr. High School. (Photo by Becky Rathbun)



Brady Coover presents Morgan Nitsch with a photo in recognition of her six years of service to the Lincoln County Conservation District board. (Photo by Becky Rathbun)

Lincoln County Conservation District: Beyond the Annual Banquet

The Lincoln County Conservation District honored local conservation efforts at its annual banquet and meeting on Feb. 7 at Lincoln Jr./Sr. High School.

The event honored Rodney, Beverly, Nathan and Joel McCosh for the Kansas Banker Award for Soil Conservation, along with youth poster and essay winners.

The Lincoln County Conservation District does much more than host the annual banquet – it's the county's resource center for soil and water conservation.

According to the state conservation commission, conservation districts are a product of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Drought conditions led to severe issues with soil erosion during the Dust Bowl days. This prompted passage of the

conservation district law by the Kansas Legislature in 1937. The passage of that bill led to the eventual formation of Kansas conservation districts. The first district was in Labette County in 1938. The most recently formed district is Shawnee County in 1954. All 105 conservation districts in the state – one in each county – provide local leadership by helping assess local natural resource needs.

The conservation district is also the primary local unit of government responsible for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources within each county's boundary. The districts are political subdivisions of state government charged with this vital role. Funding comes from county and state allocations, with some districts generating funds by providing conservation goods and ser-

VICES.

The district's governing board is comprised of five elected local citizens, known as supervisors. Together they establish local priorities, set policy and administer non-regulatory conservation programs during monthly board meetings. The supervisors, although serving as public officials, do not draw a salary; their services are strictly on a voluntary basis. The supervisors hire conservation district employees to provide day-to-day coordination of district activities. Each conservation district has an annual meeting either in January or February where the public is invited to attend, learning of the district's accomplishments and locally offered programs. An election is conducted to fill the three-year terms of the supervisor's positions. Every qualified elector residing

in the county is eligible to vote in this election.

Conservation districts address a wide range of environmental concerns including agricultural and urban erosion and sediment control, water quality and quantity, range and pasture management, fish and wildlife habitat and other natural resource management issues. They collaborate cooperatively with local citizens to solve local conservation problems, benefiting not only the agricultural community, but the entire county. Clean water and fertile soil are basic to the quality of life now and in the future.

Because conservation

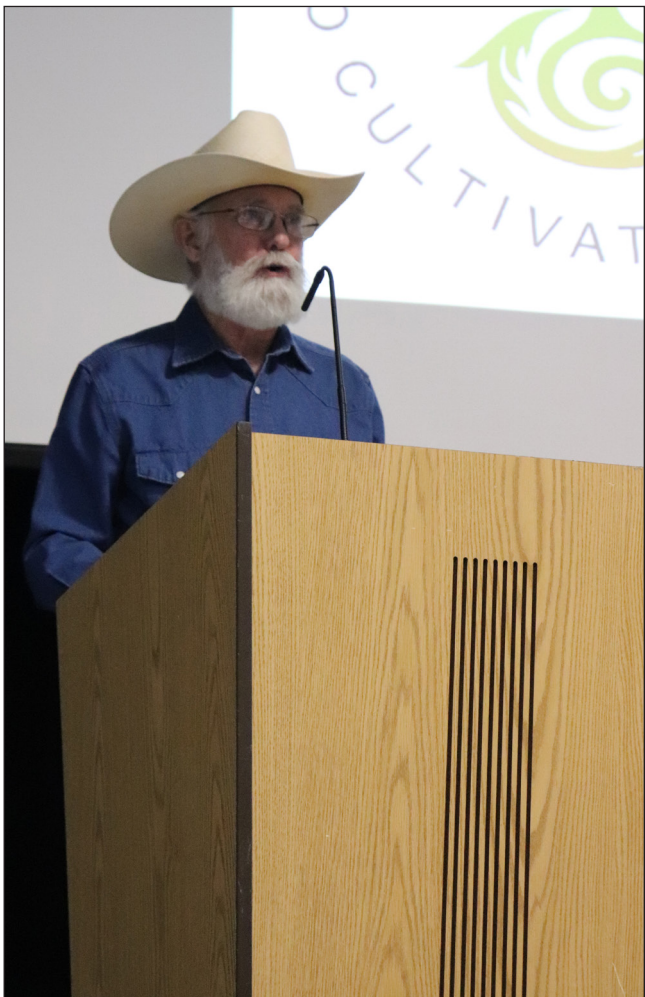
districts are citizen-directed organizations, they are practical partners in the coordination of local, state, and federal initiatives to protect natural resources and enhance water quality. In addition to local programs, conservation districts administer the state cost-share programs which provide financial assistance to landowners to install conservation practices. Conservation district employees work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and cooperate with other federal and state agencies to help protect and conserve natural resources in Kansas.

Conservation districts

also provide information and education to landowners, schools and the public regarding soil and water conservation issues. Some districts offer conservation related items for sale, such as grass seed and trees. Many districts have equipment available to rent that promotes conservation by preventing erosion and improving water quality like grass drills, tree planters and no-till seeders. Services and activities vary with each conservation district.

For more information about local conservation district services, contact the Lincoln County Natural Resource Conservation Service at (785) 524-4482.

Cowboy Poetry Brings Laughter to Conservation Banquet



Cowboy poet Hank Letourneau entertains the crowd during the Lincoln County Conservation District banquet. (Photo by Becky Rathbun)

Guests at the Lincoln County Conservation District banquet were treated to an evening of humor and storytelling by cowboy poet Hank Letourneau.

Born and raised in rural Kansas, Letourneau has spent his life surrounded by agriculture and livestock. He and his wife live in the country with a herd of cattle, a dog, a horse, chickens and a few barn cats. Together they have four grown children and a dozen grandchildren.

Letourneau began his career with the Soil Conservation Service in 1987, serving 17 years in Cloud County followed by 16 years in Ottawa County. Drawing from decades of experiences on the land, he has long written poems about rural life, though only recently has he begun sharing them publicly.

During the banquet he entertained the crowd with his original cowboy poetry and also had books available for purchase following the program.

Lincoln County Conservation District

Advocating Soil and Water Conservation

The Lincoln County Conservation District is proud to help ag producers and rural property owners conserve our natural resources for future generations with the following services:

Cost-Share Practices:

- Grassed Waterway Construction
- Terrace New/Rebuilds
- Pipelines for livestock
- Failed Septic Systems
- Water Well livestock
- Plugging Abandoned Wells
- Ponds
- Cover Crops
- Rangeland Management
- Pumping Plant Systems

Rental Equipment:

- Holcomb Scraper
- Elston Gopher Plow
- Two Great Plains No-Till Drills
- Root Plow
- Tree Planter
- Fabric Machine
- Baker Disc Plow

Education Activities:

- Envirothon
- Speech / Essay / Photo Contest Local
- Field Day to Watersheds
- Gurley Salt Marsh
- Kansas Range Youth Camp
- Fourth Grade Ag Day for All Students in Lincoln County
- Earth Day Activities
- Annual Meeting
- Local Work Group
- Soil Health Meetings

Items for Resale:

- Seed
- Marking Flags
- Weed Barrier Fabric
- Trees

McCosh Family Farm Receives 2025 Kansas Banker

The Lincoln County Conservation District and the Lincoln County Key Bankers Association have named McCosh Family Farm — operated by Rodney and Beverly McCosh along with their sons Nathan and Joel — as the recipient of the 2025 Kansas Banker Award for Soil Conservation.

The annual award recognizes farmers and ranchers who demonstrate outstanding progress in establishing and carrying out a complete soil and water conservation plan that works in harmony with the capability of their land.

Rodney McCosh continues a family legacy that stretches back decades. His father, Ron McCosh, moved from Dickinson County to Lincoln County in 1965 and farmed the land until retirement. Today, the family still farms some of Ron's father's original acreage in Dickinson County while maintaining the majority of their operation in the Beverly and Shady Bend areas of Lincoln County.

After graduating high school, Rodney served five years in the United States Navy before returning home to help his father on the family farm. Over time he assumed full responsibility for the operation and now farms alongside his sons, Nathan and Joel, continuing the multi-generational tradition.

The McCosh family raises wheat, milo and soybeans in rotation and incorporates cover crops when possible. They frequently use no-till planting methods, leaving crop residue on the surface to protect soil from wind and water erosion. This practice improves water infiltration, increases water-holding capacity, enhances soil health and reduces sediment runoff into waterways while also limiting carbon release into the atmosphere.



(L-R) Beverly McCosh and Rod McCosh accept the 2025 Kansas Banker Award for Soil Conservation on behalf of McCosh Family Farm from Kimberly Meyer and Brady Coover. (Photo by Becky Rathbun)

They have also partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to construct and maintain terraces on portions of their land. Terracing slows rainfall runoff, allowing water to soak into the soil rather than wash it away — a key component of long-term conservation. When asked why soil conservation matters to him, Rodney offered a simple explanation: "The next generation needs something to farm, and it maintains soil health." That straightforward philosophy reflects the values behind the award. Through stewardship, practical conservation practices and commitment to future generations, the McCosh family exemplifies responsible land management in Lincoln County agriculture.

The Lincoln County Conservation District and Lincoln County Key Bankers Association proudly recognize Rodney, Beverly, Nathan and Joel McCosh as the 2025 Kansas Banker Award for Soil Conservation recipients.

Congratulations Conservation

Award Winners!

We support conservation through:

- Soil Testing
- Fertilizer Recommendations
- Conservation Trees
- Plant Disease Diagnosis
- Insect & Weed Identification
- No-Till Information
- Crop & Livestock Information

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Agler is 2026 essay contest winner



Emma Agler earned first place in the essay contest with her piece “Soil: Where it all Begins,” highlighting conservation practices such as cover crops, crop rotation and responsible land management. (Photo by Becky Rathbun)

1st Place Essay

Emma Agler

Soil:

Where it all begins

Healthy soil is important to successful agriculture. One way to help with soil conservation is to use conservation cover. Conservation cover is when you establish and maintain permanent vegetative cover. Conservation cover helps with soil erosion. It improves water and air quality. It also enhances plant diversity. It increases soil organic matter and overall soil health, and manages plant pests.

You can use crop rotation to help with soil conservation. Crop rotation is when you grow a series of different types of crops in the same area across a sequence of growing sea-

sons. Crop rotation helps with reducing soil erosion, it also reduces pesticide costs. It adds biological diversity to the soil. It improves water quality. Manure management also helps with soil conservation. Manure management is when you manage manure runoff by storing and containing it until conditions are appropriate for field application. Manure management helps by protecting water quality, it also cuts fertilizer costs. It also helps reduce nutrient loss.

You can also use prescribed burning. Prescribed burning is when you apply fire to manage grasslands, forests, pasture, wildlife areas, or hayland within a prescribed set of conditions,

and dates with appropriate safety precautions. Prescribed burning helps with controlling undesirable vegetation and it helps control plant disease. It also helps enhance seed production. You can use pest management to help with soil conservation. Pest management is when you follow integrated management practices to reduce crop and environmental damages from insects, weeds, and diseases. Pest management helps by reducing over-application, it helps improve air quality when precautions are taken to keep chemicals in the field. Those are some of the ways you can improve soil conservation.

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You can use pest management to help with soil conservation. Pest management is when you follow integrated management practices to reduce crop and environmental damages from insects, weeds, and diseases. Pest management helps by reducing over-application, it helps improve air quality when precautions are taken to keep chemicals in the field.

Those are some of the ways you can improve soil conservation.

2025 KACO State Winners



Mallory Dobrinski (left) was honored for a third-place photo finish at the state level. Wyatt Farney (right) was recognized with honorable mention in the 2nd-3rd grade conservation poster contest at the state level. (Photo by Becky Rathbun)



Samuel Heller received honorable mention at the state level in the essay contest. (Photo courtesy of USD 299)

Congratulations to all farmers and ranchers. Your hard work and dedication is appreciated.



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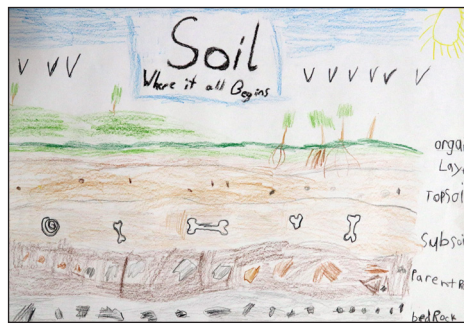


Elizabeth Howard

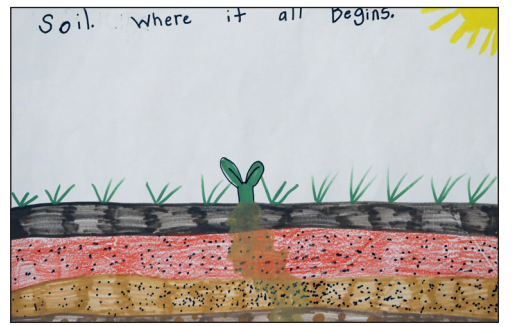


Kamryn Palmer

3rd Place Posters



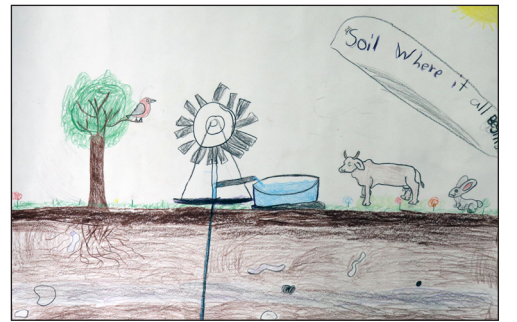
Daxton Meyer - 1st Grade



Emery Aufdemberge - 2nd Grade



Ronin Norman - 3rd Grade



Reid Meitler - 4th Grade



Hayley Wiebke - 5th Grade

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Planting Native Grass for Wildlife

James Svaty, District Wildlife Biologist

Anyone who has hunted upland birds or spent time observing them, knows you will likely find them near a good patch of native grass. Native grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass and indiangrass are much better wildlife habitat than the cool season non-native grasses such as smooth brome and tall fescue. This is because the native grasses grow in clumps, which create an open structure at ground level allowing small or young wildlife to move around easily while staying hidden from predators. These grass clumps are also ideal nesting habitat for ground nesting birds. Unlike non-native grasses, most native grasses remain standing throughout the

winter months, creating better protection from snow and harsh winter winds. Many farms have areas that could benefit by being planted back to native grass. These don't necessarily have to be whole fields and in many cases, it's just an unproductive corner or specific area of a field. In that instance, the continuous CRP program would be a good fit. That program allows a portion of the field (the unproductive part) to be enrolled into CRP while allowing the rest of the field to continue in agricultural production. This is a win-win scenario for the producer and the wildlife that may use the land as the producer still receives income from those unproduction areas and the wildlife benefit from the newly created

habitat. Native grasses are best planted using a grass drill specifically designed to handle the light, fluffy seed. Planting into a firm seedbed that is relatively free from weed competition is important, as is the timing of the planting. Winter is the best time to plant native grasses, as the freeze/thaw cycle activates many of the forb seeds that are in the native grass mixes. Your local wildlife biologist and conservation district have native grass drills available for loan and can assist you with seed mixes and other technical assistance. There aren't too many things that benefit wildlife more than planting native grasses in the right area. The pheasants and quail will appreciate your efforts!



Conservation Accomplishments in 2025:

State Cost-Share Assistance

Grassed Waterway	11.4 acres	\$42,378.59
Terrace Restoration	7330 Linear Foot	\$14,806.60
Critical Area Planting	- 8.2 acres -	\$2594.00
On-Site Waste System	6 systems -	\$15,000.00
Pumping Plant for water Supply	1 complete	\$6,013.19
Grazing Land Enhancement program	-	\$25,000.00
Kansas Soil Health Alliance - Soil Health Program	-	\$1,000.00

2024 Conservation Education

Regional Envirothon, Wilson Lake80 Students
4th Grade Ag Day, Sylvan Fair Grounds56 Students/7 stations
Gurley Salt Marsh DayRescheduled for spring 2026
Farm Bureau - Day on the Farm95 Students/9 stations
Lincoln County Speech Contest	-15 students
Photo Contest4-H entry open class division
Poster/Essay through NACD & KACDUSD 298 & 299 Students

Attended as District representative:

The National Conservation District Employee Association - Northern Plains Area

A meeting was held in Salina, this past October 2025.

Kansas Association of Conservation District State Convention.

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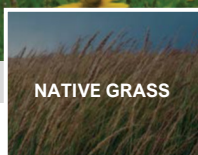
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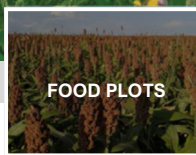
DOES YOUR SEED HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?



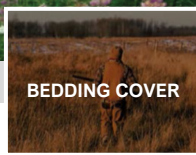
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2026 Enterprises & Actions Plans

Priorities directed toward excessive soil erosion, water quality, and quantities within Lincoln County, Kansas

Action 1: All Kansas State Water Resources and Non-Point Source Pollution Control cost-share programs are promoted and utilized to reduce excessive soil erosion and to improve water quality. Along with Federal (EQIP, ACEP, CCRP, and CRP) programs.

Responsibility: District Personnel
Target Date: Ongoing

Action 2: The Conservation District makes available for rent to producers the following equipment:

2 no-till grass drills, 1 tree planter/weed barrier

machine, root plows, an 8-yard scraper, a terrace plow, a gopher plow, and a land grader blade. This equipment is rented for a nominal fee and has contributed immensely to the conservation of all the natural resources in Lincoln County. Weed barrier fabric is available for a minimal fee per roll, running foot or 4x4 square. Marking flags and wildlife escape ramps are also available.

Responsibility: District personnel
Target Date: Ongoing
Increase Efficiency and Effectiveness of District Operations

Action 1: Memorandums of Understanding are reviewed yearly at a monthly meeting between the Lincoln

County Conservation District, State of Kansas Conservation Districts, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Responsibility: District personnel
Target Date: Spring 2026

Action 2: Monthly board meeting is held the first Thursday of each month in the USDA Service Center conference room, unless otherwise posted, Meeting is held at 7:30 a.m. Meetings are open to the public.

Responsibility: District Personnel and Board Members
Target Date: Ongoing

Promote Conservation Education and Public Awareness

Action 1: The District Manager will visit the state county

schools, non-accredited private schools, and encourage students to enter the Poster, Essay Contest, Photo Contest, Envirothon by providing necessary information to students

Responsibility: District Manager
Target date: Fall school year.

Action 2: A Contractor's Meeting will be held as needed to provide updates concerning changes in design criteria, checkout procedures, staffing changes and cost-share programs.

Responsibility: District Manager and Board members
Target Date: as needed in winter/spring

Action 3: The conservation district will partner with Lincoln County Farm Bureau Association with agriculture related education activities for elementary students (Day on the Farm). A 4th Grade Conservation Field Day will be held in the spring

for students who attend Lincoln Elementary School and Lucas-Sylvan Grove Elementary School or Home Educated school-aged children. Stations are strategically placed for the students to learn about many ways in which the land benefits all life. Earth Day will be promoted by delivering presentations to all students. The field day will involve other USDA agencies and partners of agriculture.

Responsibility: District Manager
Target Date: Fall school year

Non-Point Source Pollution Program (NPS) And Water Resource Work Plan

Action 1: The Water Resource and Non-Point Service Plan will be reviewed annually before submission to the Division of Conservation for the upcoming cost-share year. All program project types will be offered yearly from the

funding available on July 1st

Responsibility: District Conservationist, Board members, District Personnel
Target Date: Spring 2026

Action 2: The District Manager/ Non-Point Services Coordinator is expected to take advantage of available training sessions and educational opportunities. These workshops are provided to help the NPS coordinator better serve the public.

Responsibility: District Personnel
Target Date: Ongoing

The Lincoln County Conservation District board of supervisors has reviewed and made a motion to accept the 2026 Annual Work Plan as presented. Lincoln County Conservation District Annual Work Plan is officially approved on October 2nd, 2025, filed with the District of Conservation.

Congratulations to Rodney, Beverly, Nathan and Joel from McCosh Family Farms on your well deserved award for your dedication to conservation!



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Soil Tunnel Brings Conservation Lessons to Lincoln Elementary



Lincoln County Conservation District members brought the soil tunnel educational exhibit to Lincoln Elementary, giving students a hands-on look at the creatures living beneath the soil while helping inspire ideas for their conservation posters. (Photo courtesy of Lincoln County Conservation District facebook page)



Soil Health Workshop

Learn how to regenerate soil...

Health, Function & Productivity

Join us for lunch and learn!
 Speaker Clint Cox will discuss integrating biologicals and livestock to improve soil health

11:30 a.m.
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 RSVPs appreciated by March 2, 785-472-3161

Lincoln County Conservation District Opens Cost-Share Sign-Up Through May 1, 2026

The Lincoln County Conservation District has announced its first-round sign-up period for the State Funded Cost-Share Program, now open through May 1, 2026. Both the Water Resources Program and the Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) Program will be available to landowners this year, although final funding allocations from the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) have not yet been determined. The programs help offset the cost of conservation practices designed to protect soil and water resources. Eligible projects may include new or rebuilt terraces, new or restored waterways, pit ponds, live-

stock wells and developments, fencing, solar livestock watering systems, septic systems (NPS only), abandoned well plugging, livestock waste systems and other approved conservation improvements. Funding will follow statewide practice cost guidelines for Fiscal Year 2027, with individual landowner limits expected to be announced by July 1, 2026. Applications are not processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Instead, each application is ranked using a state and county prioritization system developed specifically for Lincoln County by the district's board of supervisors. First-round applications will be

considered for funding in July, and any remaining funds will be distributed throughout the year as they become available. Landowners should note that projects may not begin until the state contract has been approved, ranked and signed, and a design or layout has been completed by a Conservation District or NRCS technician. Anyone interested in applying can visit the Lincoln County Conservation District office at 112 E. Court Street in Lincoln or call (785) 524-2648 for more information. Applications can be mailed, or staff can provide curbside service for those stopping by the office.

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June 9-12, 2026 COST: \$300

Contact your local Conservation District for scholarship opportunities!

Contact:
 Ethan Walker
 KS Youth Range Camp Chair
 620-451-1011
 ethan.walker@usda.gov

Sponsored by:
 Kansas Section, Society for Range Management

Thank you to all area farmers involved in the conservation effort!

farmwaycu.com

The Lincoln County Farm Bureau commends farmers who utilize conservation practices to preserve our natural resources for future generations.

Congratulations to this year's award winners!

Lincoln County Farm Bureau®

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