

WETLAND PROGRAM PLAN FOR KANSAS

Introduction and Background

The Kansas Water Office is designated by the governor of the state as the coordinating agency for wetland programs. Five state agencies have substantial roles in wetland protection, restoration, research and monitoring. These agencies and their primary role(s) are:

- Kansas Water Office (KWO). Coordinates programs and establishes policy on wetland resources.
- Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism (KDWPT). Responsible for management of state owned wetlands. Acquisition of additional wetlands to be held in public trust. Manages the threatened and endangered species program for the state, including wetland issues. Member of Interagency Review Team. Collects data on stream systems.
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Manages the water quality monitoring network that includes wetlands and provides reports on status and trends annually. Oversees financial assistance programs to protect, enhance and restore wetlands associated with Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) programs. Responsible for 401 certifications for proposed impacts to wetlands during land alteration activities. Member of Interagency Review Team.
- Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture (DoC). Administers financial and technical assistance programs to improve, protect, enhance and restore wetlands.
- Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture (DWR). Regulates dams, stream modifications, levees and floodplain fills for the protection of life, property and public safety; also provides technical assistance and coordination to local communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Kansas Biological Survey (KBS). Performs wetland research and assessment including special projects across EPA Region 7. Maintains database of findings.

Additional state agencies and federal, local and non-profits are also involved in wetland conservation programs. Each agency and entity has its own set of rules, regulations and policies that govern programs and activities. Efforts are made to maximize activities for multiple benefits and to leverage available funding for wetland projects. Over time a coordinating group called the WARP (Wetland and Aquatic Resources Plan) Team has emerged that meets several times a year as needed to discuss activities and establish priorities. The WARP team has representation from federal, state, local and non-profit entities.

The Wetland Program Plan (WPP) presented below was developed in consultation with the state agencies having responsibility for wetland programs and the broader WARP Team, in addition to numerous other informal presentations. It represents a compilation of recommendations made for wetland conservation over the past 25 years by representative entities. The entire slate of previous recommendations is included as an appendix to this document. Discussions about what to include in this WPP for the next three to five years involved identification of highest priority needs, realistic assessment of what could actually be

accomplished and recognition of the financial and political climate facing the state during this time frame. From these discussions, four primary areas of focus were identified:

1. Kansas has developed the Topographic Wetland Identification Process (TWIP), a landscape level LiDAR based tool that identifies potential areas for wetland protection, restoration and enhancement. We plan to continue acquisition of LiDAR statewide and to use the TWIP to enhance and target our exiting wetland programs on a watershed scale to accomplish broad wetland conservation while restoring and protecting our priority watersheds across the state.
2. Continued information and education to encourage wetland conservation is another important priority and we plan to greatly enhance the availability and quality of information available on a dedicated wetland webpage on the KWO website.
3. We recognize the need to gain greater understanding of our wetland resources through continued monitoring, assessment and evaluation of function and condition.
4. Our playa lake resources in the western part of the state require additional attention for conservation and management.

The **Vision** of the Wetland Program Plan for Kansas is to *protect, enhance and restore our wetland resources to be able to support the wealth of services that wetlands provide to the citizens and visitors of Kansas.*

The following **Goals** support this vision (not in a prioritized order).

Goal 1. Increase the knowledge base about Kansas' wetland systems through surveying, monitoring, research, and assessment to establish wetland condition, identify trends, and the causes and sources affecting wetland change. (EPA Monitoring and Assessment Core Element)

Goal 2. Promote public awareness about the value and importance of wetlands through coordinated programs of education and information. (EPA Voluntary Restoration Core Element)

Goal 3. Develop and maintain a wetland program, including a geospatial database, to track historic wetland loss, new wetland gain, wetland compensation and other wetland areas, and use the database to assess and evaluate progress. (EPA Monitoring and Assessment Core Element)

Goal 4. Identify and protect important wetland systems through fee acquisition, conservation easements, or other tools for long term conservation. (EPA Voluntary Restoration Core Element)

Goal 5. Provide effective and responsible levels of protection and restoration of Kansas' wetlands through continued implementation of the existing regulatory program. (EPA Regulatory Core Element)

LIST OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES BY CORE ELEMENT AND STATE GOALS
(SEE LAST PAGE FOR KEY TO ACRONYMS)

Core Element: Voluntary Restoration

Goal 2. Promote public awareness about the value and importance of wetlands through coordinated programs of education and information.

Goal 4. Identify and protect important wetland systems through fee acquisition, conservation easements or other tools for long term conservation.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING
Provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for protecting, enhancing or restoring wetlands									
	KWO, KDHE	Utilize expertise of the Environmental Finance Center to explore sustainable financing for wetland and riparian projects.	X	X				DoC, N. C. EFC	None Required
	KWO, KDHE, DoC, KDWPT	Continue coordination among federal, state, local and private entities responsible for wetland stewardship to provide coordinated technical assistance to private landowners.	X	X	X	X	X	EPA, NRCS, COE, NGOs	None Required
	KWO, NRCS, Contractor	Complete 2012 WPDG and evaluation of past wetland restoration projects. Develop a guide for future restoration of Kansas wetlands and post to wetland website.	X	X	X			EPA, NGOs	EPA WPDG 2012
Identify and characterize high quality heritage wetlands.									
	KWO, KDHE, KFS, Contractor	Finish the 2011 WPDG activities that include evaluation of the relationship between high quality wetlands and high quality streams.	X	X				PLOs	EPA WPDG 2011
Attain no net loss of remaining wetland									

resource considering acreage, function and values									
	KWO, KDHE	Use a watershed approach to protect and restore wetlands by integrating wetland goals into WRAPs 9-Element plans.	X	X	X	X	X	CDs, NRCS, NGOs	SWPF, 319
	DoC	Promote wetland restoration and protection through implementation of Nutrient Reduction CREP		X	X	X	X	KWO, KDHE, WRAPS	NRCS
	Interagency Review Team	Continue efforts to establish high quality functional wetland and stream mitigation banks by continued participation on interagency review team.	X	X	X	X	X	COE	None Required
Update state wetland information and provide on a website for public education and information to gain support for wetland protection and restoration.									
	KWO	Updates are in progress. The following documents are being updated: <i>Wetland and Riparian Areas in Kansas: Resources in Need of Conservation</i> ; <i>Classification of Wetland and Riparian Areas in Kansas</i> ; <i>Kansas Wetland and Riparian Resources: Conservation Goals and Strategies</i> ; <i>Local Planning Guide for Wetland and Riparian Areas in Kansas</i> ; <i>Management Practices for Wetlands and Riparian Areas</i> ; and <i>Wetland and Riparian Areas Program Manual</i>	X	X				EPA, KDHE, KFS, DoC, PLJV	EPA WPDG 2011
Support development of Best Management Practices to protect and restore wetlands.									
	KWO	Update “ <i>Management Practices for Wetlands and</i>	X	X				Doc, PLJV,	EPA

		<i>Riparian Areas</i> ” document and post to wetland website.						KDHE	WPDG 2011
	WRAPS, DoC, NGOs	Plan and implement demonstration projects for management practices on wetland areas.	X	X	X	X	X	CDs, NGOs, NRCS, PLJV	WRAPS, SWPF
Optimize sustainable and multipurpose uses of wetland areas.									
	KWO	Update “ <i>Local Planning Guide for Wetland and Riparian Areas</i> ” document and post to wetland website.	X	X				DoC, KDHE, PLJV, KACPZO, KC APA	EPA WPDG 2011
Continue Support of Playa Lakes Joint Venture efforts to gain more understanding about the role of Playa Lakes.									
	PLJV	Continue support of and participation in PLJV development of Decision Support Systems.	X	X	X	X	X	NRCS, NGOs, KWO	PLJV
	KWO, KBS, PLJV	Support PLJV efforts to improve playa watershed delineation by applying TWIP to playas when LiDAR data are available.	X	X	X	X	X	PLOs	PLJV, WPDG
	KWO, KU	Support PLJV efforts to assess historic impacts to playas and determine their current condition.	X	X	X	X	X	PLOs KGS, USGS	PLJV
	KWO	Support PLJV efforts to promote ecosystem services provided by playas, especially aquifer recharge.	X	X	X	X	X	USGS, KGS, KU	PLJV
Increase Efforts to Protect Playa Wetlands Through Partnership with Playa Lakes Joint Venture and others.									
	KWO	Support PLJV efforts to develop Local Conservation	X	X	X	X	X	NGOs	NGOs,

		Partnerships within playa priority areas, especially in areas with biological priorities.							PLJV
	USFWS, KWO	Participate in efforts to develop suggested guidance for proper best management practices and mitigation for specific playa impacts, especially from energy development activities.	x	x				EDEs	USFWS

Core Element: Monitoring and Assessment

Goal 1. Increase the knowledge base about Kansas' wetland systems through surveying, monitoring, research and assessment to establish wetland condition, identify trends, and the causes and sources affecting wetland change

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCE
Implement a Statewide Inventory System to Identify, Monitor and Evaluate the Status and Trends of Existing Wetlands									
	KWO	Complete LiDAR Acquisition and apply TWIP to watersheds by state priority.	X	X	X			KBS, USGS, NRCS, COE	USGS, NRCS, COE
Utilize potential wetland area locations in WRAPS watersheds to achieve TMDL and other WRAPS goals; direct resources to priority areas									
	KWO, KDHE	Overlay TWIP Potential Wetland Areas (PWAs) with watershed restoration needs. Work with WRAPS groups to include wetland protection, enhancement and restoration into 9-Element plans.	X	X	X	X	X	WRAPS	WRAPS
	DoC	Use TWIP to locate PWAs for Nutrient Reduction		X	X	X	X	KDHE,	NRCS

		CREP implementation						KWO, PLOs	
Establish baseline condition of public and private wetlands.									
	KWO	Complete 2011 WPDG. Compile water quality and functional assessments in database started with 2009 WPDG.	X	X	X			KDHE	KDHE

Goal 3. Develop and maintain a wetland program, including a geospatial database, to track historic wetland loss, new wetland gain, wetland compensation and other wetland areas placed in permanent conservation, and use the database to assess and evaluate progress.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCE
Integrate wetland information into the state geographic information system to facilitate use of these databases with other natural resource information									
	KWO	Work with Kansas Data Access and Support Center (DASC) to establish and implement system	X	X	X	X	X	DASC	SWPF, WRAPS
	KWO	Continue compiling information about past wetland projects accomplished by all entities into a GIS system	X	X	X			KDHE, DoC, USFWS, KDWPT, NRCS	None Required

Core Element: Regulatory

Goal 5. Provide effective and responsible levels of protection and restoration of Kansas' wetlands through continued coordination and implementation of the existing regulatory program.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCE
Use existing authorities to protect wetland areas									
	DWR	Emphasize protection of natural wetland resources impacted by water development projects through the Water Projects Environmental Coordination Act.	X	X	X	X	X	ICT	None Required
	DWR	Consider impacts to wetland resources in the administration and enforcement of the Water Appropriation Act.	X	X	X	X	X	ICT	None Required
	KWO, KDHE	Work cooperatively with federal agencies to improve effectiveness of federal wetland regulatory programs through participation on the 404 Interagency Coordination Team.	X	X	X	X	X	ICT	None Required
	KDHE	Continue 401 certifications for projects that impact wetlands with emphasis on avoidance, minimization and mitigation.	X	X	X	X	X	ICT; KACPZO, KCAPA, LPZA	None Required
Support and encourage local planning efforts affecting wetlands									
	KWO, KDHE	Encourage incorporation of the conservation of valuable wetland areas into local comprehensive land use plans and utilization of existing planning and zoning regulatory measures as appropriate to implement the plan.	X	X	X	X	X	KCAPA, KACPZO, LPZA, CD	None Required

Core Element: Water Quality Standards

Goal 5. Provide effective and responsible levels of protection and restoration of Kansas' wetlands through continued implementation of the existing regulatory program.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCE
Continue to compile data from public and private wetlands to be available as reference data should the state decide to develop wetland specific water quality standards.									
	KWO, KDHE, Contractor	Samples from eight to twelve wetlands in impacted and least impacted private wetlands will be collected during 2013.	X	X				PLOs	WPDG 2011
	KWO	Seek opportunities to collect additional water quality samples in private wetlands and public wetlands not currently sampled.	X	X	X	X	X	PLOs	EPA WPDG
	KDHE	Continue to sample public wetlands in the state water quality monitoring network.	X	X	X	X	X		EPA WPDG
Continue to protect wetlands through existing water quality standards and designated uses and develop TMDLs as necessary									
	KDHE	TMDLs revisions will begin in 2013	X	X	X	X	X	KWO, WRAPS, DoC	None Required

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Agency/Program
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
CD	Conservation Districts
COE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
DoC	Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation
DASC	Data Access and Support Center
EDE	Energy Development Entities
KBS	Kansas Biological Survey
ICT	Interagency Coordination Team
KACPZO	Kansas Association of County Planning and Zoning Officials
KCAPA	Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association
KDWPT	Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
KGS	Kansas Geological Survey
KDHE	Kansas Department of Health and Environment
KU	University of Kansas
KWO	Kansas Water Office
KFS	Kansas Forest Service
LPZA	Local Planning and Zoning Authorities
NC EFC	North Carolina Environmental Finance Center
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
PLJV	Playa Lakes Joint Venture
PLO	Private Land Owners
SWPF	State Water Plan Fund
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WPDG	Wetland Program Development Grants
WRAPS	Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies
319	Clean Water Act Section 319 grant funds