

Kickapoo Wetlands Protection Program

2020 - 2024

**Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas
Kickapoo Environmental Office**

**US Environmental Protection Agency- Region VII
Wetland Program Development Grant
Project Period: 2020-2024**

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Introduction

This report details a conservation plan for the wetlands within the boundaries of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas Reservation. Historically the Kickapoo have been deeply connected with the Tribe's land and water resources. Wetlands fill a unique niche in Tribal lore because of the plant and animal diversity that can be used for medicinal and ceremonial purposes.

Outside of being culturally significant wetlands also have major benefits affecting water quality and wildlife habitat that are also valuable to the Tribe. Most important of these are the water quality benefits, because the Tribe gathers its drinking water directly from the water flowing in the Delaware River.

Because of wetlands cultural, water quality, and habitat benefits, it is necessary to protect the remaining wetlands and to restore lost or damaged wetlands where possible. To meet this need the Tribe's wetland conservation goal is to achieve *a no net loss of remaining wetlands and, to the extent possible, increase the quantity and quality of the Tribe's wetland resource.*

The core elements that the Kickapoo Environmental Office (KEO) will address with the implementation of this Wetland Program Plan are:

1. Monitoring and Assessment
2. Wetland Restoration and Protection
3. Wetland Water Quality Standards
4. Wetland Regulatory

Past activities

In 1994 the Kickapoo Tribe engaged in wetland program plan development; an outside contractor was hired to create a Phase I plan for the Tribe. In 1996 another contractor White, Martin & Associates, Inc. then prepared the Phase II Wetland Conservation Plan and also completed an inventory of wetlands on tribal owned land at that time. Approximately 123 wetlands were found to fall within Tribally owned properties. Of the 123 probable wetlands, approximately 35 emergent wetlands found of which only 9 were considered to have minimal impacts from human development/use. In addition to the emergent wetlands there were also

approximately 24 forested wetland areas. These areas fared better as only half the wetlands were impacted by human development. Lastly there were 2 shrub scrub wetlands found on the Reservation's eastern edge.

The previous Wetland Coordinator for the tribe was in the process of carrying out the Wetland Conservation Plan and had several projects in the development stage. One of the planned projects called for a 196ft dike that would create a 12-acre wetland area. The area the dike would be built is currently listed as a 1.2-acre freshwater pond and .6-acre emergent vegetation wetland. The site though does show signs that on a significantly wetter year it could expand to the 12-acre size but doesn't because a large portion of it has been drained.

Much of the other past information that was found looks as if there were other small projects and assessments in progress. However, information is scattered and incomplete and it is unknown exactly what was done and what was only planned.

Goals

1. Gain a greater understanding of the functionality and condition of wetland systems within the Reservation boundary by way of wetland monitoring and condition assessment. (**Monitoring and Assessment**)
2. Work to improve wetland condition and functionality through coordinating resources and collaborating with landowners and partners. (**Voluntary Restoration**)
3. Promote public interest and knowledge of wetlands through education and information distribution. (**Voluntary Restoration**)
4. Maintain a comprehensive inventory of wetlands. (**Monitoring and Assessment, Wetland Water Quality Standards**)
5. Develop and enforce wetland definitions and regulations to further protect the land and its' resources. (**Wetland Regulatory**)

Core Element: Monitoring and Assessment

Goal 1- Gain a greater understanding of the functionality and condition of wetland systems within the Reservation boundary by way of monitoring and wetland condition assessment.

Goal 4- Maintain a comprehensive inventory of wetlands.

Action (ESTP CEF Objective/Action)	Activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Monitor Wetland resources as specified in strategy (Obj 2, Action b)								
	Track selected monitoring sites	X	X	X	X	X	NEC	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Update wetland inventory to monitor acreage and condition		X		X		COE, NRCS, HINU	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Evaluate wetland function for BMP recommendations		X	X	X	X	NRCS, HINU, KDWPT, KFS, KWO	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Evaluate monitoring and assessment strategies to ensure they meet long term wetland resource goals	X		X		X	NRCS, HINU, KDWPT, KFS, KWO	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
Track monitoring data in a system that is accessible, updated on a timely basis, and integrated with other state or tribal water quality data (Obj 2, Action b)								
	Integrate NWCA data with other water quality data systems (e.g., state watershed planning databases)	X	X	X	X	X	KEO, AWQMS	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC

Core Element: Voluntary Restoration

Goal 2- Improve wetland condition and functionality through coordinating resources and collaborating with landowners and partners.

Goal 3- Promote public interest and knowledge of wetlands through education and information distribution.

Action (ESTP CEF Objective/Action)	Activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Consider watershed planning, wildlife habitat, and other objectives when selecting restoration/ protection sites (Obj 1, Action b)								
	Share priorities with other water quality protection programs, e.g., identify riparian restoration projects that would reduce sediment and nutrient loadings to streams and implement TMDLs	X	X	X	X	X	KEO, region 7 tribes	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Identify rare, vulnerable, or important wetlands and prioritize for restoration/protection		X		X		AWSM, HINU, KDWPT, NRCS	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
Clearly and consistently define restoration and protection goals throughout state or tribal territory (Obj 1, Action c)								
	Develop restoration and management guidance specific to wetland types and location (e.g. urban vs. rural)		X		X		WRAPS, ASWM, CD, HINU, KFS, NRCS	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Establish measures of restoration success, e.g., adopt functional and/or condition indicators and field methods		X		X		WRAPS, ASWM, CD, HINU, KFS, NRCS	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC

Establish and Institutionalize long term protection, using mechanisms such as incentives, purchase of land title or easements to protect wetlands (Obj 2, Action b)								
	Develop management plans for protected wetlands. Consider Tracking: acres of wetlands protected, acres of vulnerable wetlands protected	X	X	X	X	X	WRAPS, ASWM, CD, HINU, KFS, NRCS	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
Increase wetland acreage through restoration (reestablishment) (Obj 3, Action a)								
	Develop restoration and management plans for reestablished wetlands consistent with restoration guidance. Consider Tracking: Acres of wetlands re-established, restoration sites using techniques that comply with guidance, level of function/condition based on indicators	X	X	X	X	X	WRAPS, ASWM, CD, HINU, KFS, NRCS	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC

Core Element: Wetland Water Quality Standards

Goal 3- Maintain a comprehensive inventory of wetlands.

Action (ESTP CEF Objective/Action)	Activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Compile wetland data to use as reference should the Tribe decide to develop wetland specific water quality standards (Obj 2, Action a)								
	Continually search for additional sites that can be used to gather more wetland water quality data	X	X	X	X	X	KEO	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Continue to sample selected tribal wetlands	X	X	X	X	X	Other KEO programs	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Create appropriate wetland water quality standards to better manage the Tribe's wetland resources	X	X	X	X	X	KEO, KWO, KDHE	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC

Core Element: Wetland Regulatory

Goal 5- Develop and enforce wetland definitions, regulations to further protect the land and its' resources.

Action (ESTP CEF Objective/Action)	Activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Develop definitions and jurisdictional scope in case the Tribe decides to develop wetland specific regulatory program (Obj 1, Action a)								
	Develop a working definition of what the Tribe considers a wetland	X					KDHE, KWO, region 7 tribes	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Develop definitions involving Tribal waters	X					Other KTIK programs, region 7 tribes	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
Perform public education and outreach about wetland protection, regulated waters and activities, and authorization process (Obj 3, Action e)								
	Distribute brochures, flyers etc. at community events	X	X	X	X	X	Local community	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Present at local schools or community events on the importance and functions of wetlands	X	X	X	X	X	KNS, Local schools	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC
	Utilize the Kickapoo website to share information on wetlands and projects	X	X	X	X	X	KTIK	PPG, GAP, 319, 5 star, NLC

Note: At this time, the political climate, funding, and capacity surrounding the Kickapoo Tribe may not allow progress towards creating wetland water quality standards or implement wetland regulation at this time. The Tribe does desire to pursue this at a later date if circumstances shift and give the KEO the opportunity.

List of Acronyms

ASWM	Association of State Wetland Managers
AQWMS	Ambient Water Quality Monitoring System
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CD	Conservation Districts
COE	Corps of Engineers
DU	Ducks Unlimited
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentive Program
NEC	Norman Ecological Consulting
HINU	Haskell Indian Nation's University
KAWS	Kansas Alliance for Wetlands & Streams
KBS	Kansas Biological Survey
KDHE	Kansas Department of Health and Environment
KDWPT	Kansas Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
KEO	Kickapoo Environmental Office
KFS	Kansas Forest Service
KNS	Kickapoo Nation School
KWO	Kansas Water Office
NLC	Network for Landscape Conservation
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
PF	Pheasants Forever
WTI	Wetland Training Institute Inc.
WRAPS	Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy