

USDA State Technical Committee Virtual Meeting
January 19, 2023, 9:00am

Amanda Mathis, Acting State Conservationist: Opened meeting at 9:00 a.m., welcomed everyone. Talked about available resources. Feedback to improve things and to address Oklahoma priorities. Gave overview of agenda. Talked about what NRCS is focusing on for this FY2023; equity and Inclusion is one of our Chief's priorities. Dialogue is important, we have to make sure we are reaching everyone with our services. Urban conservation is another priority: spoke about Urban Planners. There will be \$3B available nationwide on partners to implement conservation practices. The third priority is our Partnership for Climate Smart Commodity. These projects are largely led by partnership organization and are going to have a positive impact for producers. There will be additional funding for producers through the Inflation Reduction Act. Talked about funding for CSP and EQIP and existing programs. Discussed the implementation of climate smart practices. Another priority is training. More in person training. Covid did hinder training for our new hires. State Con position has not been filled. Amanda Mathis will be done with her detail as Acting State Con in late Jan and we will have another acting.

- Matt Smith, PLIV: Can we use Inflation Reduction Act money for if there is a change to the current farm bill?
- Amanda-Need to check

RMA-James "Jim" Bellmon- Spoke about the crop insurance program. Public/private partnership with independent insurance company. Responsible for claims etc. Stated that if producers have questions to reach out to their insurance agents first before reaching out directly to them at RMA. Located in OKC, this office covers OK, TX and NM. FY2022 sold almost 19,000 policies for crop insurance for annual forage, traditional forage, and revenue crops. They want to address the food shortage by increasing the food supply with double cropping. The state has been divided into areas, which has reduced the requirements in some areas. Blanket written agreements; companies will process them. Relay cropping, go through a written agreement as well. There is an interest in Climate Smart Ag for producers.

NASS-Troy Marshall- We are in the middle of our Census of Agriculture; letters were mailed out with online instructions first and then the paper booklet was sent as a follow up. This data is used to help with the upcoming Farm Bill. First due date for response back on census is February 6th. Several ways to assist with the outreach on this; canned information is already prepared and available for all of us to share including social media posts. Good way to reach producers or potential producers. To Amanda, we appreciate all of your efforts and support.

- Amanda- Thank you, I appreciate that!

APHIS-no one available

ARS- Andres Cibils-Southern Plains Climate Hub. Currently working a project partnering with the NRCS and OSU and we are calling it climate conversation over 5 regional water conservation districts to help us understand the climate needs. We need field office employees.

RD-Joel Mease-nothing to present. Attending for Kenneth Corn, State Director. Any questions?

OCC-Trey Lam-State Emergency Drought program -24.5 million dollars. Hoping to have the program paid out quickly. Paid out about 4.5 million dollars in December, practices must be implemented in the first week of February, these folks can also file for an extension. The OCC made some rules and then had to go back and modify them to be able to help the producers on the payout. RCPP is in outreach and has possible permits coming. Open position for a Nutrient Management for the Poultry Industry. Poultry Industry in Eastern Oklahoma has lot of open permits and farms about to come online. The judge ruled in favor of the state from the 2005 lawsuit on Jan 18th, 2023, entities have until March to come up with a plan. With the partnership with NRCS, OCC has 5 conservation planner positions open across the state. Unpaved Roads program, where we train county commissioners on how to prevent water pollution with

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run off on roads: the pilot program went great in Lincoln County. Grants are available for other counties to sign up to address their water erosion issues. Training will be available for all county commissioners to address specific erosion problems. We have technicians and Consultants to help get producers involved in Soil Health. General Mills is partnering with OCC with grants to promote soil health and is helping with the mentor/ mentee program. There is funding for a program to plant cover crops and also to do test strip planting to see if roll crimper or pesticides work better to terminate cover crops. Legislation on cedar eradication to be proposed for different 2 different cedar types. We want to work with prescribed burn associations to educate producers and landowner while partnering with US Fish & Wildlife and NRCS lowering cost programs for cedar eradication. Marijuana farms are a big concern. We need to require the growers to clean up while growing and after they sell/leave. We want to implement consultation and rehabilitation programs for the land. Would like your assistance to promote the state association of conservation districts annual meeting. We will have more exhibits; breakout sessions and the 2nd day will be focused on Soil health. We would like partners to be there to talk about their programs and would love to have the public involved especially on the 2nd day. Would the IRA fund the Drought program possibly? Glad to have continued interest in the program.

ODWC, Kyle Johnson- 2022 Youth Control Hunt on Private lands. Generous landowners allow youth to enter into drawings through an online process to hunt on their land. We have two more landowners bringing the total lands for hunting this way to 12 private landowners. Seventy youth got to hunt this past season with at least 35 young hunters getting one deer each, most were their first deer. They have dropped the acre limit from 1,000 to 320 so more landowners can sign up for the program. For the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, the cutoff for application was Dec 31st and 86 applications were submitted. That was a good increase from last year's 65 applications. The funding for this project is through a partnership with Fish & Wildlife Service.

- Trey Lam- asked for discussion about Lesser Prairie Chicken being listed again and the impact on grazing plans.

Josh Richardson, ODWC- Prairie Chicken has gone through a period of listing/de-listing. In December was the official announcement for LPC listing which will happen on January 24, 2023. Grazing not covered, only way to be allowed if landowner has a grazing plan by an approved writer (not sure who this will be, could be service personnel). With the tight timelines from announcing in December to going into effect next week we are not sure how it will occur. CCAA enrollment is still open, Brett Cooper has the applications if you know of anyone interested.

- Robert Perez, Oaks Joint Venture-Wildlife Habitat Program, what is the distribution of those applications?
- Josh Richardson- No big shift in locations, the applications and numbers are as follows: 18 in Northwest, 7 in Southwest, 18 in North Central, 27 Northeast, and 22 Southeast

Jeff Tibbits, ODWC, OIAP Biologist- We leased 100,000 acres across the state. We are changing leasing strategy from general open enrollment-"staff check" to obtain more participation in these conservation programs and give better opportunities to the public. Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever. (Benefiting conservation efforts for staffing checks?) CRP safe enrollment to get playas and reach out to help get conservation ahead.

- Steve Glasgow (NRCS) - LPC initiative- There is still a lot we don't know and understand. There will be third parties to write these grazing plans, any work done through NRCS programs with this program still covered under working lands. We are not on a list to be an approved third party to write the grazing plans involving LPC, but we might be able to apply.

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- Josh Richardson- My understanding is not to end grazing but to document, record, and plan to show how many livestock is on the ground. They want to know the level of activity on the land not reduce the livestock. . How are you grazing? What is the plan going forward?
- Trey Lam- What is the process to be approved? We will share the information on the requirements.
- Jordan Menge- CRP contract management and how those effects LPC-technical assistance? How big of a concern is this?
- Zane Fleming, FSA- No updates yet. Glasgow will update on the technical side. Mid-contract management was discussed to operate as normal.
- Steve Glasgow-Expanding on mid-contracts, the 4D rule covers everything. If FSA has an update, then it can change. There is no change at this time for contract management that I can see. What is FSA doing nationally? Anything different with their biological opinion.
- Marla Peek, Oklahoma Farm Bureau- What Josh said about plans the Fish & Wildlife Service hasn't said what is needed but to have one. Can NRCS possibly be a plan writer? With all agencies working together?

OSU Extension- no one available

US FWS- Doug Schoeling- I heard yesterday of one approved plan writer in Kansas. Clay Nichols, his number is 817-471-6372 or email clay_nichols@fish.gov. Partnering with OCC, we received \$50,000 for prescribed burns and have managed about 25 out of the 59 landowners to have successful prescribed burns. The burn bans are hindering efforts, but we are planning on burning this year unless we have more bans. Haven't gotten official budget yet, expecting it to be about 400,000, that hasn't really changed. Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program-if you know anyone interested, please reach out and contact me.

ODAFF-no one available

Shalonda Guy, USDA Partnerships and Public Engagement- The 1890 and 1994 scholarships are in the open application period which is Jan 15th – March 15th. [USDA 1890 National Scholars Program](#) | [USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program](#) | [USDA](#) I encourage all agencies to look at these pages. I am here to answer any questions, please call 202-536-6441 or email shalonda.guy@usda.gov

Kim Schneider, FSA- Zane will present for us today but I wanted to say we are excited about the SAFE Migratory Bird, Butterfly and Pollinator Program that will develop playa lakes in the panhandle. We will be going to Dallas for some in person disaster training next month and more counties have applied for the emergency drought assistance.

Zane Fleming-FSA-COVID is still being monitored closely. State Director has been active in office visits and outreach efforts. Outreach continues to go strong with employee engagement The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. The PLC Program provides payments when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price. The total Oklahoma contract enrollment is 46,499 contracts for 2022. ARCPLC 2021 program year payments were made in October 2022. No PLC Payments in 2021. The 2018 Farm Bill requires a unanimous election to obtain PLC or ARC-CO on a covered commodity-by-commodity basis that will remain in effect for the 2019 through 2023 crop years. An election of ARC-IC in any year will apply to all covered commodities on the farm. Starting with the 2021 crop year, and each crop year thereafter through 2023, the producers on a farm may change the election of PLC or ARC on a year-to-year basis. These cannot change until after 2023. Enrollment for 2023 began October 2022 & runs through March 15, 2023. [ARC/PLC Program Data \(usda.gov\)](#) Discussed AGI process. Oklahoma was allotted 25% of the total acres of hay, pasture, and rangeland in the state. This gave us a total of 4,871,188 eligible acres for our Grassland priority zone in 11 counties. The zone we determined will be used to provide additional points to producers in these areas for the 2023 Grassland CRP sign-up.

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Oklahoma has been given the opportunity to be included in a pilot program for a Multi-State SAFE sign-up for Migratory Birds, Butterflies and Pollinators with Kansas and Nebraska. The SAFE practice will be CP38B. This specific SAFE sign-up is targeting producers in Cimarron, Texas, and Beaver counties. The map below (attached) shows the SAFE area that is eligible to offer acreage in this sign-up. With this sign-up producers will work with NRCS and FSA to offer acreage for wetland restoration. These areas are known as Playas. The sign-up was set to begin December 5th but due to the 2023 Soil Rental Rates (SRR) needing to be reviewed it has been pushed back. Sign-up is currently underway. It began on January 3rd and will run through March 17th. Producers are to have their initial offer completed by February 17th. In this Pilot program the producers will be able to bid their offers. They will be restricted a range of SRR's between the irrigated and dryland rates for their counties. For example, the estimated range will be between \$64 and \$15. The producer can bid their offer at any number that falls in that range. The rates are based off of NASS data. The SAFE Counties are Beaver County has 1,163,243 acres with 2,570 Playa acres; Cimarron County has 1,178,370 acres with 3,848 Playa acres and Texas County has 1,311,110 acres with 6,747 Playa acres. Hope to get more producers into this program, very beneficial due to the level of drought this year the amount of Emergency haying and grazing was rather high. There was a total of 90,557.94 acres that were either utilized for emergency haying or grazing. For comparison the amount of reported emergency haying and grazing for 2021 was 323.3 acres.

Farm Loans: As of December 13, 2022, \$64,816,295.00 total funds have been made available to Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers for FY23. Approximately 359 loans have been made across the state. The breakout is as follows: Direct Loans- 331 loans totaling \$50,373,730.00, Guaranteed Loans- 28 totaling \$14,442,565.00.

Expanding on LPC-waiting to hear nationally if there are going to be any changes, doing what we've always done right now. We couldn't do emergency haying and grazing in these areas without it.

- Jeff Tibbits, OWDC-OLAP Biologist- OLAP lease rates for CRP-SAFE an additional \$10-30/Acre per year (depending on wetland size)
- Practices for Playa Lakes Program? Wetland restoration practice. Still learning the technical side of it. Sediment removal, breaking a terrace to move water.... will let Matt Smith discuss further.

Mike Carter, Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV)- We will have capacity challenges, fund raising challenges. Will be hearing a lot more from them. Migratory B, B, & P we are excited about this program. Thank you to all of the agencies that have assisted and supported us.

Matt Smith, PLJV- It was our 7th year for Playa workshop, and we had a great group from OK came up. Playas are recharged wetlands that are geared towards wildlife. Playas are small, temporary recharge wetlands, found mostly on private land at the lowest point in a closed watershed (no inflow or outflow) and collect rainfall and runoff. The clay basin allows the water in through cracks until it seals and then the water flows in through the sides. Higher quality water is created through playas. Playas are Keystone Ecosystems-Biodiversity centers that have 185 species of birds, 350 plants, 37 mammals and 13 amphibian species. They are a migratory stopover habitat in the Central Flyway and is critically important for waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds. Nearly 80,000 playas are located in the high plains. Discussed Ogallala Aquifer and what recharge rates are. This program takes a little different approach, asking producer "what will it take for you to implement this program?". Project goal is to improve habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and water birds and butterflies and pollinators. Restoration plan: Minimum acres – 2, with no maximum acre's size; Max. Buffer ratio of 4:1; hydrology restored to the maximum extent possible; diverse native seed mixes established and no certified wetland determination. February 17th is the sign-up deadline!! [Playas Work for Kansas](#) Please reach out. Discussed outreach for the playas, what they've done and what they would like to do (fact sheets, newsletters etc.). Discussed NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant in Kansas & Oklahoma Counties: Beaver, Woods, and Roger Mills. There will be three focus groups in OK the week of Feb. 6th.

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- Shawn Lepard (Panhandle Irrigation) - Can we share the presentation from Playa Lakes?
- Mike Smith- Absolutely.
- Marla Peeks- The CRP in the LPC areas, is it possible that the expiring contracts are going to go back to croplands?
- Mike Smith- They have the ability to do that, but they successfully applied for the program because of the natural flooding that prevented good crops. I don't believe many will, but they do have the ability.

Stacy Riley, EQIP-CIC-(introduced in the 2018 farm bill). First offered in OK in 2022 with 19 contracts awarded \$2.4 million covering 8,440 acres. This program provides stewardship opportunities for producers through EQIP. Based on land use and must address at least one priority resource concern (PRC) within an identified High Priority Area (HPA). Program designed to be a steppingstone between EQIP and CSP. This program allows producers to implement elements of CSP on a smaller scale and does not require the producers to include all eligible land like in CSP. Had quite a bit of interest in the first year, funded about 25% of apps that came in. EQIP CIC can attain additional levels of conservation by providing two types of Incentive Practice Payments. Payments for adopting practices like structural, vegetative, or management practices which will be paid after completion and certification. As well as payments for managing, maintaining, and improving incentive practices, these are paid once certified after Oct 1st and may not occur every year. The EQIP CIC Payment Limitation per person or legal entity is \$200,000 and it does not count toward EQIP 'Classic' limitation of \$450,000.00. The assistance process includes working with the producer, assessment, planning, application, and eligibility, ranking and selection and approved for funding, same as EQIP and CSP. Person and Land Eligibility must be established to participant in program. Recommendations for OK NRCS include High Priority Area- Oklahoma State boundary; Land Use (New for 2023)- Crop, Pasture and Range; and Priority Resource Concerns- Soil Quality Limitations, like crop management practices, at least one is required, and pasture and range practices required. 20% of EQIP's allocations must be used for CIC, that makes \$3M for this program and we will request additional funds if we receive a lot of applications. Expecting to roll it out to the public within the next week. If producers aren't ready for CSP they might be ready for CIC.

Stacy Riley, Payment Rates for Programs- To see payment rates for all states for 2023 can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/payment-schedules> Payment Rates for 2024 is determined by these factors: Materials (Labor and Acquisition of Tech Knowledge) and Equipment Installation (Mobilization and Foregone Income). Payment Rate is set at the lowest level of 50% that still allows adoption of the practice by the customer. Oklahoma has done this historically. Maximum allowable by Farm Bill Regulation is 75% and 90% for Historically Underserved of the Regional Average Cost of the practice. Some practices were at max percentages, those that producers didn't want to change because of the cost. Pay attention to your customers, we need their feedback! We have a lot of complaints that the cost rate is too low. We understand that cost of materials is going up significantly, making it hard to offer assistance. We had a few COVID related programs to help support payments on the high-cost practices as materials increased in the past few years. There is talk that this could be extended. Texas is the other part of our region. We have flexibility within our own region, do not compare the cost to other states out of our region. Keep your eyes and ears open for different kinds of data/opinions/complaints so that we can try to remedy the situation or try to find a way that helps to adapt to the changes more easily in costs.

- Amanda Mathis-Please let us know if there is a practice that is being avoided so we can try to overcome the issue.

Amanda: We are open to questions outside topics or introductions of people who attended today that are new.

- Chris Stoner, NRCS State Engineer- We have a new State Ag engineer, Rachel Schlais.
 - Rachel Schlais- It is great to put faces with names. Thank you.

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- Robert Perez- We would love to have training opportunities. We would assist and collaborate for trainings in Sulphur Oklahoma, pull workshops together in Tulsa in the spring/ early summer on migratory birds. Consider as FY23 rolls out increasing the funds to work with producers in OK.
- Amanda Mathis- We love our key partners, boots on the ground training that is also picking up as COVID is becoming manageable and Steve Glasgow can get with you on those.
- Marla Peek-talked about the lawsuit for Illinois river and that they do not agree with the findings, gave opinion on the lawsuit that was filed in 2005. The decision was based on old facts, 18 years. We want to keep poultry producers in business and feel that our state has done well on conservation planning. Feral hog management is being taken care of on Wildlife management areas. We want to have conversations about Feral Hogs with other folks.
- Trey Lam- Local working groups, do we compile that information in some kind of database or report? And if so, can it be shared? Do they decide local priorities?
- Amanda Mathis- They are all locally led.
- Stacy Riley-Local Led groups process. We are sharing as much info as we possibly can. The Conservation District is the lead agency according to the Farm Bill and the decision maker. NRCS uses it at this level for our fund pools so we can base the proper payments on the information based on local work group priorities. Oaks Joint Venture was funded this way. We may need to revamp and revisit how we figure our local lead process and make sure we are meeting all of our legal requirements as well.
- Trey Lam- Feral Hogs program was originally a 5 yr. project. Hopefully with the new farm bill, congress will be looking at these pilots to see about extending them. Finding which way to exterminate them was the best and put them into future programs. We would like to partner again in the future on feral hog programs.

Amanda Mathis-We appreciate your engagement and feedback. Sincere thanks and for the opportunity to work alongside all of you. I am excited to take these great ideas back to Arkansas. Our door is always open, please feel free to reach out and ask questions. Thank you.

Meeting adjourned at 11:17am



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STAC January 2023 Meeting

TEAMs Virtual Presentations 1/19/2023

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Conservation Incentive
Contracts (CIC)

 **EQIP-CIC**



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EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts- Purpose

To provide stewardship opportunities for producers through EQIP:

- Based on land use
- Must address at least one Priority Resource Concern (PRC)
- Within an identified High Priority Area (HPA)
- Steppingstone for producers from EQIP to CSP
 - Allows producers to implement elements of CSP on a smaller scale
 - Do not have to include all eligible land like in CSP

First offered in 2022 for Oklahoma with 19 contracts awarded worth \$2.4 million covering 8440 acres

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EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts- Major Features

EQIP CIC can attain additional levels of conservation by providing two types of Incentive Practice Payments:

- Payments for adopting practices
 - Structural, Vegetative, Management Practices
 - Paid after completion and certification
- Payments for managing, maintaining, and improving the incentive practices
 - Paid once certified after October 1
 - May not occur every year
- EQIP CIC Payment Limitation:
 - \$200K Payment Limitation, separate from EQIP 'Classic'

Payment Cap
per person or
legal entity is
\$200,000.
Does NOT
count toward
EQIP limitation
of \$450,000



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EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts- How it Works

Assistance Process: the same as EQIP and CSP

- Work with producer
- Assessment
- Planning
- Application and eligibility
- Ranking and Selection
- Approved for Funding

Person and
Land Eligibility
must be
established to
participate in
program



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EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts- Priority Area Defined Discussions

Oklahoma NRCS Recommendation for Implementation in 2023:

1. High Priority Area- Oklahoma State boundary
2. Land Use- Crop, Pasture, and Range
3. Priority Resource Concern- Soil Quality Limitations
 - Crop Management Practice(s) At least one required
 - Conservation Crop Rotation
 - Residue and Tillage Management
 - Cover Crop
 - Pasture and Range Practice Required
 - Prescribed Grazing

In 2022, same
priority
resource
concern and
boundary but
only crop for
land use.
Adding land
uses for 2023



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All Programs

State Payment Rates for 2024



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State Payment Rates for 2023

All States 2023 Payment Rates can be found at this website:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/payment-schedules>



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State Payment Rates for 2024

- **Payment Rate is set at the lowest level that still allows the adoption of the practice by the customer**
- **Maximum allowable by Farm Bill Regulation is 75% and 90% for Historically Underserved of the Regional Average Cost of the Practice**
- **Payment Rate for Practices is determined by these factors:**

Materials	Equipment Installation
Labor	Mobilization
Acquisition of Tech Knowledge	Foregone Income





Discrimination Statement



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FSA Agency report –

ADMIN Section –

Masking mandates still being monitored weekly. COVID cases/exposure has been very limited. State Director has been active in office visits and outreach efforts. Outreach continues to go strong with employee engagement. Current continue resolution (CR) runs until December 16th.

Production and Payment Eligibility Programs (PPE) Section -

ARC/PLC:

*The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. The PLC Program provides payments when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price. The total Oklahoma contract enrollment is 46,499 contracts for 2022. ARCPLC 2021 program year payments were made in October 2022.

2021 PLC Payment Rates for Wheat, Barley, and Oats

Item	Wheat	Barley	Oats
	Dollars Per Bushel		
Reference Price	5.50	4.95	2.40
National Loan Rate	3.38	2.50	2.00
Marketing Year Average (MYA) Price	7.63	5.31	4.55
Higher of Loan Rate or MYA Price	7.63	5.31	4.55
PLC Payment Rate	0.00	0.00	0.00

The 2021 Final Corn, Grain Sorghum, Soybean PLC Payment rate is \$0.00 per bushel, Seed Cotton is \$0.000 per pound and Peanuts is \$0.0245 per pound.

Elections and Enrollment:

*The 2018 Farm Bill requires a unanimous election to obtain PLC or ARC-CO on a covered commodity-by-commodity basis that will remain in effect for the 2019 through 2023 crop years. An election of ARC-IC in any year will apply to all covered commodities on the farm. Starting with the 2021 crop year, and each crop year thereafter through 2023, the producers on a farm may change the election of PLC or ARC on a year-to-year basis.

Enrollment for 2023 began October 2022 & runs through March 15, 2023.

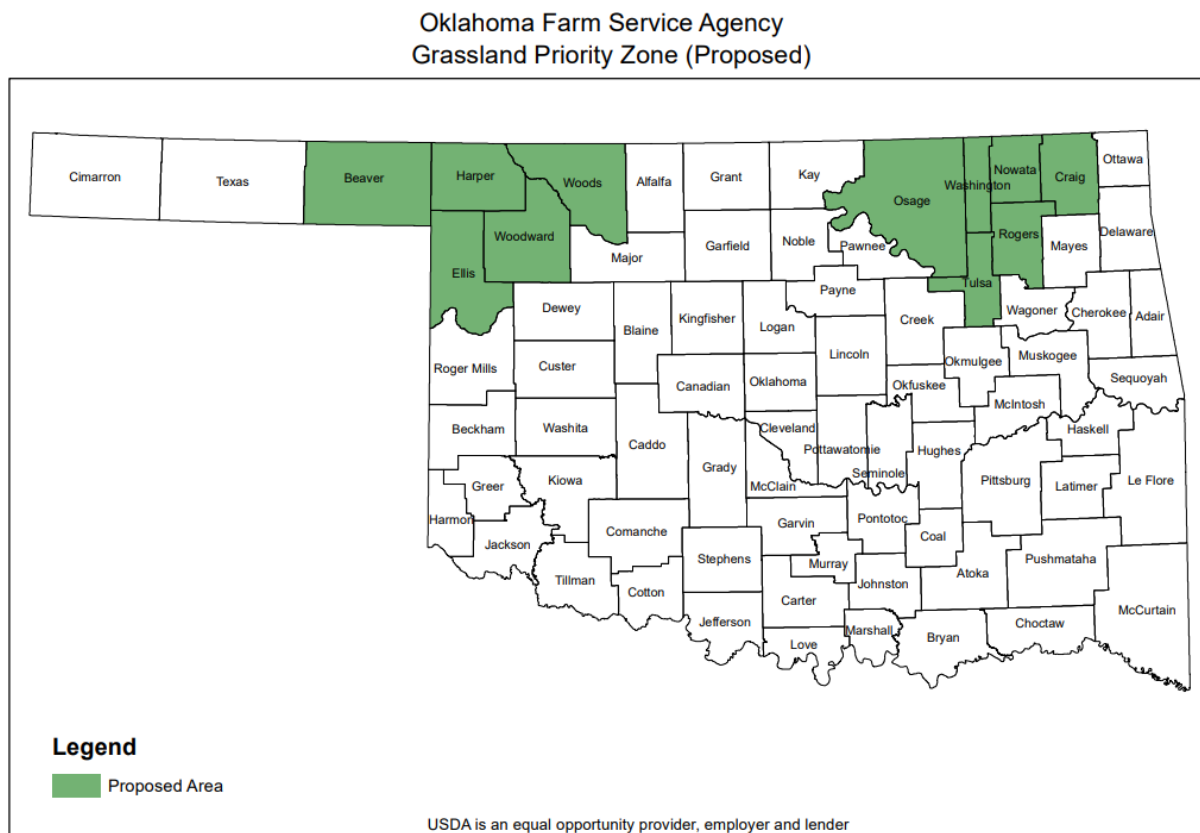
Program Specific Data: Program year and Crop specific data can be found at [ARC/PLC Program Data \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/arc-plc-program-data)

AGI:

*The 2018 Farm Bill requires the implementation of an average adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation for payment eligibility for the 2019 through 2023 program years. The AGI limitation provision applies to most programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Recent process changes to the AGI process will allow the IRS to process AGI's sooner alleviating additional workload on the county offices.

CONSERVATION Section –

National notice CRP-980 provided policy on Establishing, Reviewing, and Modifying State Grassland Priority Zones. Per the notice Oklahoma was allotted 25% of the total acres of hay, pasture, and rangeland in the state. This gave us a total of 4,871,188 eligible acres for our Grassland priority zone. The conservation section contacted the NRCS state office staff to determine what would be the best fit for our state. The map below shows the determined area. The STAC was consulted on this Priority Zone and determined it should be approved. The zone we determined will be used to provide additional points to producers in these areas for the 2023 Grassland CRP signup.



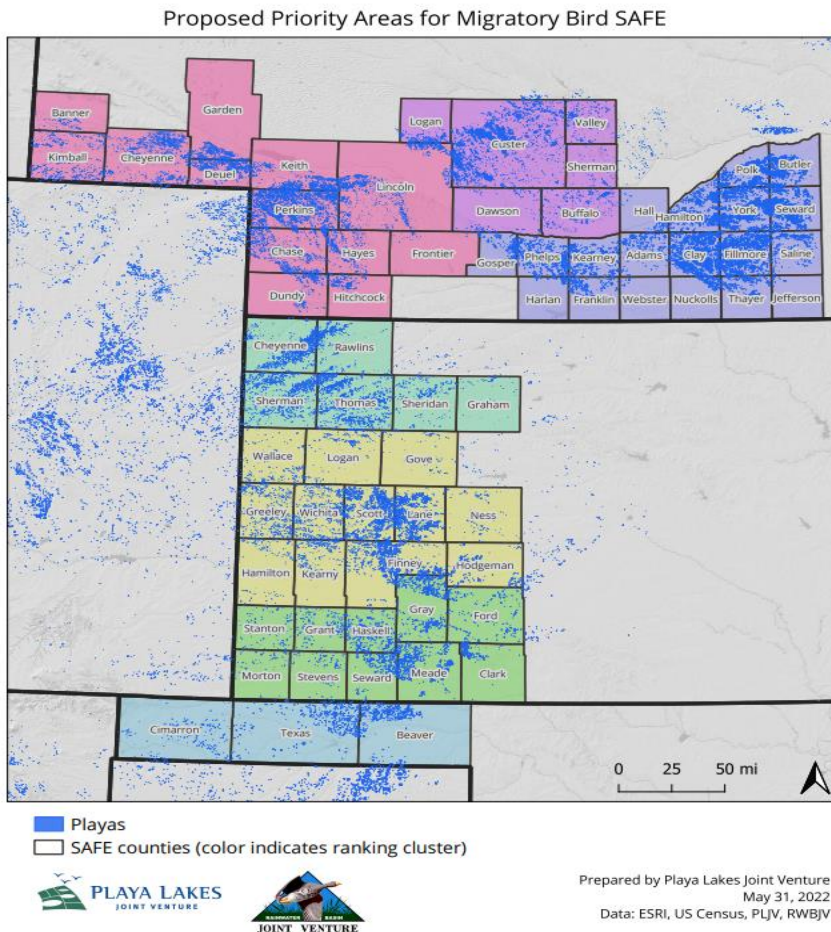
United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
Oklahoma State Office

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Map Created 08/19/2022

Oklahoma has been given the opportunity to be included in a pilot program for a Multi-State SAFE sign-up for Migratory Birds, Butterflies and Pollinators with Kansas and Nebraska. The SAFE practice will be CP38B. This specific SAFE sign-up is targeting producers in Cimarron, Texas, and Beaver counties. The map below shows the SAFE area that is eligible to offer acreage in this sign-up. With this sign-up producers will work with NRCS and FSA to offer acreage for wetland restoration. These areas are known as Playas. The sign-up was set to begin December 5th but due to the 2023 Soil Rental Rates needing to be reviewed it has been pushed back. Sign-up is currently underway. It began on January 3rd and will run through March 17th. Producers are to have their initial offer completed by February 17th.



In this Pilot program the producers will be able to bid their offers. They will be restricted a range of SRR's between the irrigated and dryland rates for their counties. For example, the estimated range will be between \$64 and \$15. The producer can bid their offer at any number that falls in that range. The rates are based off of NASS data.

NASS Rates for OK

NASS Rental Rates/Ac	Irrigated	Dryland
Beaver	\$64	\$15
Cimarron	\$76	\$27
Texas	\$110	\$20

The projected target areas for the eligible counties are shown below.

Oklahoma SAFE Counties

County	County Area (ac)	Playa Acres
Beaver	1,163,243	2,570
Cimarron	1,178,370	3,848
Texas	1,311,110	6,747

Due to the level of drought this year the amount of Emergency haying and grazing was rather high. There was a total of 90,557.94 acres that were either utilized for emergency haying or grazing. For comparison the amount of reported emergency haying and grazing for 2021 was 323.3 acres. The table below shows the counties with highest amount of reported emergency haying or grazing.

CRP Haying and Grazing for 2022								AppEmerH		App EmerG		STC App EmerHG		Final Report
Oklahoma	Number of CRP Contract	Total Number of Contract Acres	Non-Emergency Haying Contract	Non-Emergency Haying Acres	Non-Emergency Grazing Contracts	Non-Emergency Grazing Acres	Emergency Haying Contract	Emergency Haying Acres	Emergency Grazing Contracts	Emergency Grazing Acres	Total Managed Haying/Grazing Acres	Total Emergency Haying/Grazing Acres	Total Haying/Grazing Acres	Total percentage
Beaver	505	83,984.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	72	5,190.54	131	18,766.70	0.00	23,957.24	23,957.24	28.53%
Cimarron	648	171,666.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	75	15,221.83	0.00	15,221.83	15,221.83	8.87%
Texas	1,086	190,037.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	49	4,784.64	79	14,933.12	0.00	19,717.76	19,717.76	10.38%
Harper	357	49,209.00	1	23.02	0	0.00	58	3,749.28	88	9,724.00	23.02	13,473.28	13,496.30	27.43%
Totals	4,166	633,231.00	42	2,956.46	0	1,047.72	343	21,948.35	475	68,609.59	4,004.18	90,557.94	94,559.12	14.93%

PRICE SUPPORT Section –

Livestock - several counties eligible. Signup will be announced.

Farm Loan –

FLP – ARCA loan program on hold.

As of December 13, 2022, \$64,816,295.00 total funds have been made available to Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers for FY23. Approximately 359 loans have been made across the state. The breakout is as follows:

Loan Category	Loan Total Dollars	Number of Loans
Direct Loans	\$50,373,730.00	331
Guaranteed Loans	\$14,442,565.00	28

Migratory Birds, Butterflies and Pollinators State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Project Update



WHAT ARE PLAYAS?

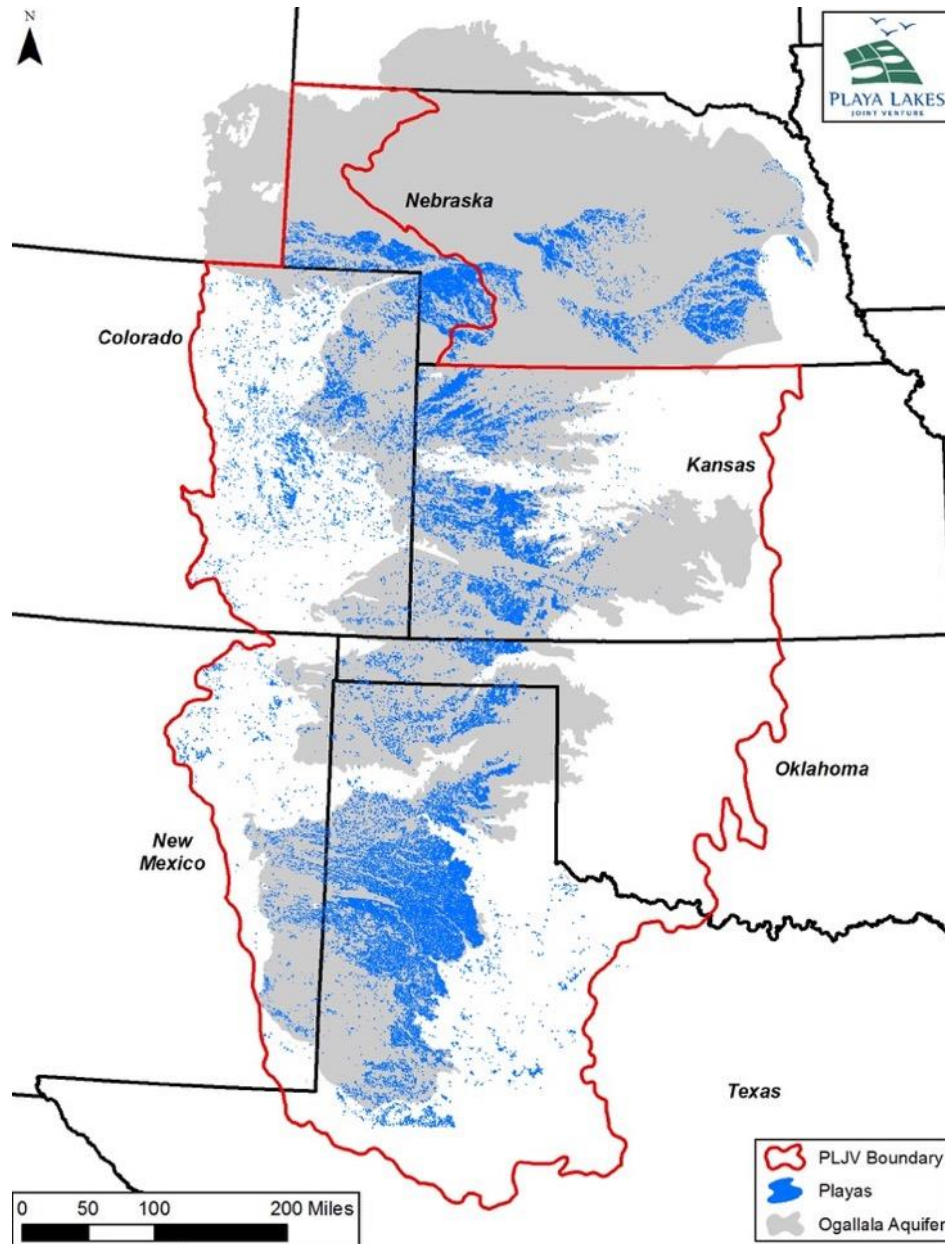
- Small, temporary recharge wetlands
- Found mostly on private land
- Lowest point in a closed watershed (no inflow or outflow)
- Collect rainfall and runoff
- Clay basin
- Primary source of recharge (10-1,000x greater under playas)
- Higher quality water through playas
- Good for wildlife (and people!)



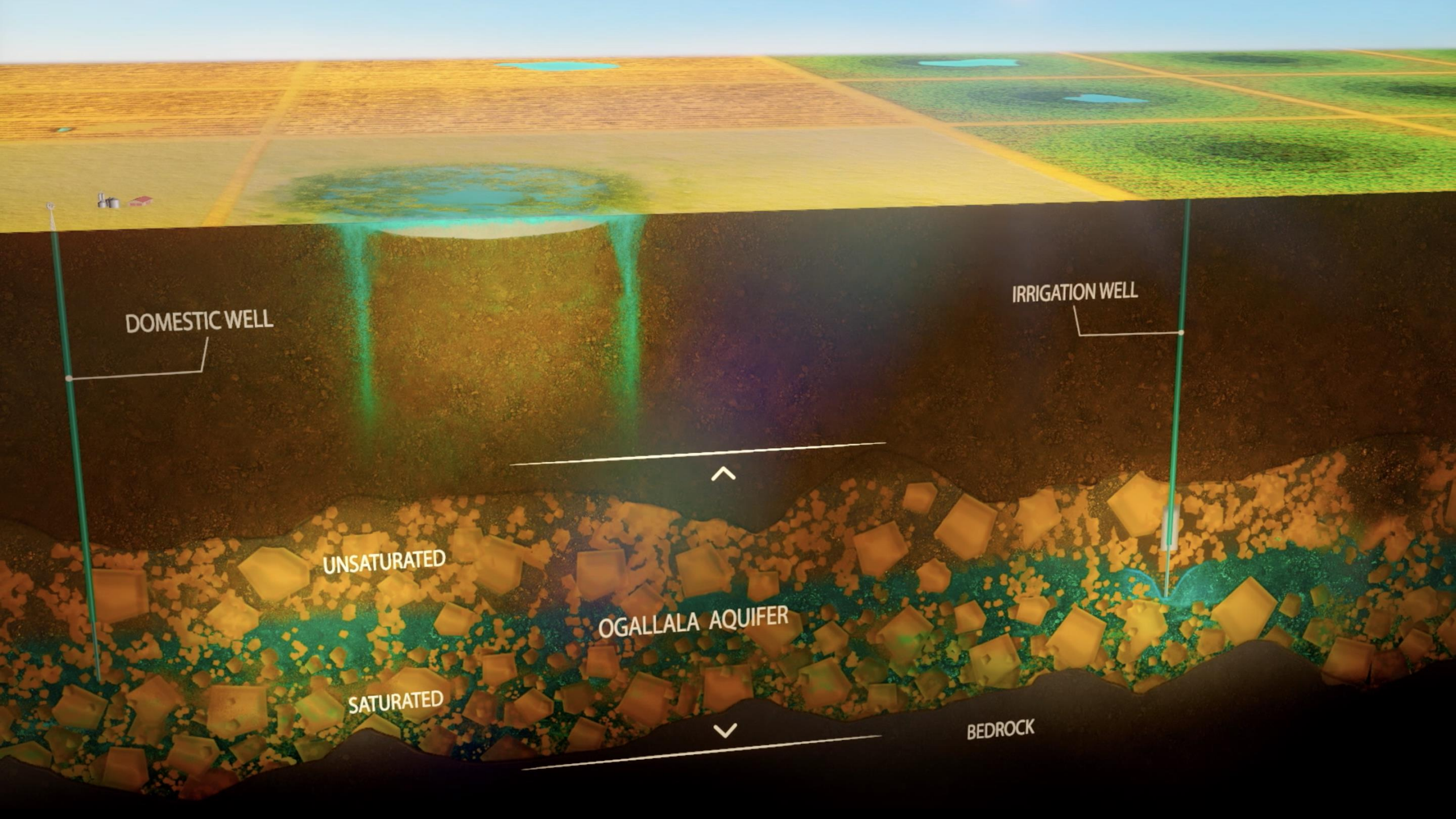
PLAYAS ARE KEYSTONE ECOSYSTEMS

- Biodiversity centers
 - 185 species of birds
 - 350 species of plants
 - 37 mammal species
 - 13 amphibian species
- Migratory stopover habitat in the Central Flyway
- Critically important for waterfowl, shorebirds and waterbirds





Nearly 80,000 playas
are located
in the high plains



DOMESTIC WELL

IRRIGATION WELL

UNSATURATED

OGALLALA AQUIFER

SATURATED

BEDROCK

KANSAS, NEBRASKA & OKLAHOMA MIGRATORY BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES AND POLLINATORS STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT (SAFE) PROJECT

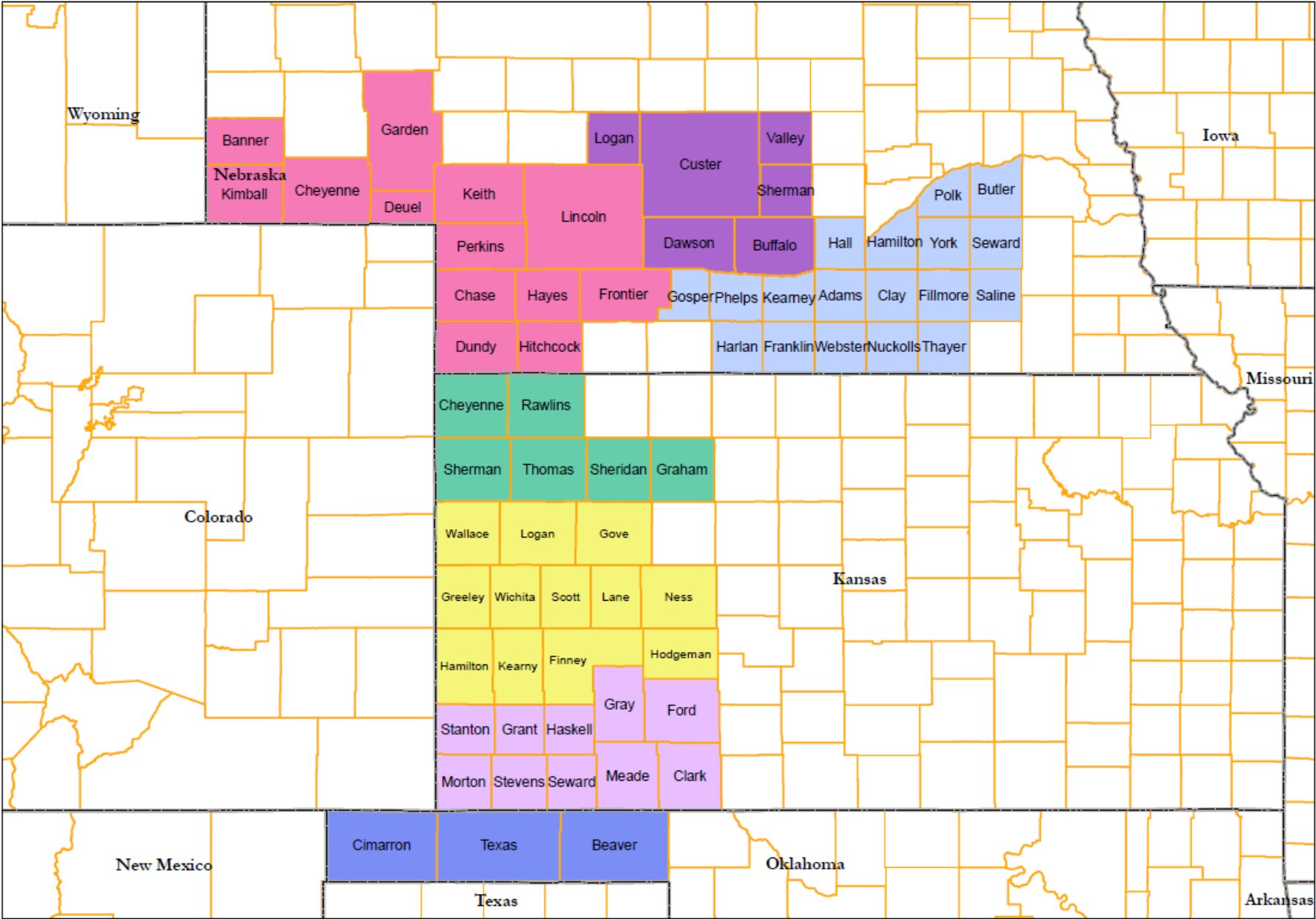
A **market-based approach** that enables landowners to submit offers at a rate they are willing to accept as an annual payment for enrolling playa area and buffer into CRP

Project **goal is to improve habitat** for migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and water birds, butterflies and pollinators by restoring playa wetlands.



Multi State SAFE for Migratory Birds, Butterflies, and Pollinators
for Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma

SAFE Eligible
Counties in
Nebraska, Kansas
and Oklahoma



RESTORATION PLAN

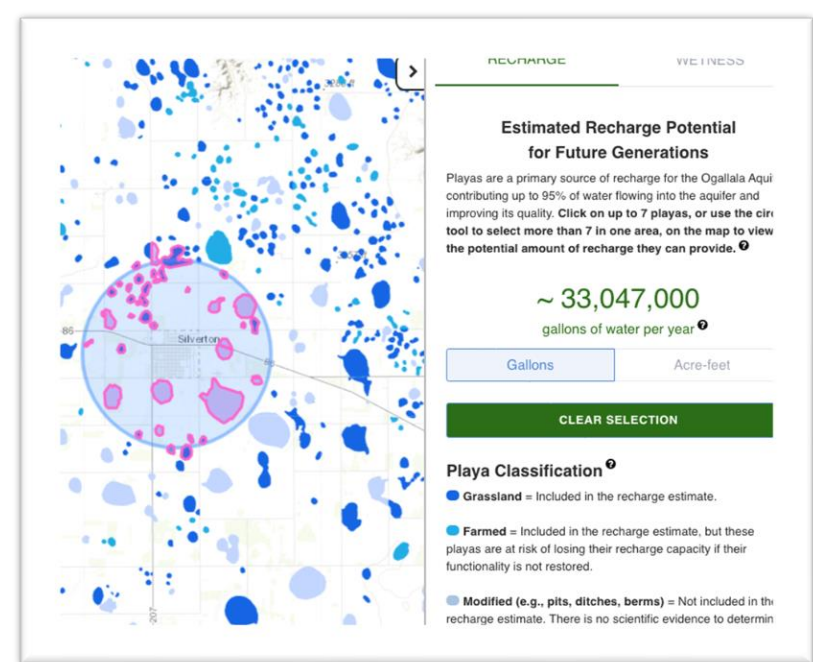
- Minimum size = 2 acres
- No Maximum size
- Maximum buffer width ratio = 4:1
- Hydrology restored to the maximum extent possible
- Diverse native seed mixes established
- No certified wetland determination
- February 17th sign-up deadline



TOOLS & RESOURCES

- Interactive Playa Map
- Downloadable Playa Maps by County
- Playa Recharge & Wetness Estimators
- Playa Land Use Calculator
- Playa Restoration Guide
- Tomorrow's Water Community Engagement Guide
- Playa Educational Handouts
- Videos
- And More

PlayasWorkForKansas.com



Restoring & Maintaining Healthy Playas

What is a Healthy Playa?

A healthy playa has an intact clay basin — without excavated pits or ditches — that is not buried by sediment from nearby fields. Water from the surrounding watershed freely enters the basin through a native vegetative buffer without being diverted from the playa by roads, terraces or other impediments.

Playas — also called mud holes, buffalo wallows, and lagoons — are round, shallow depressions at the lowest point of a watershed. They fill with water from rainstorms and run-off, which then slowly moves toward the Ogallala aquifer or evaporates. These temporary wetlands recharge the aquifer and support many kinds of wildlife.

While playas provide critical habitat for wildlife, they also provide important benefits for the people who live in this region. When healthy, playas provide a sustainable water source for communities and rain-fed operations, water filtration, flood control, livestock forage, and recreation.

How Do Playas Work?

Playas have an unpredictable and rapidly changing wet-dry cycle, which is essential to how they work — and provide benefits including groundwater recharge and wildlife habitat. Since playas depend on rainstorms to fill with water, it is not uncommon for a playa to be dry for long periods, years even, or to be wet several times during a growing season. No matter the amount of water — whether dry, moist, saturated, or flooded — playas are still working. In fact, without this natural cycle, they wouldn't be as effective.

When dry, the clay soil in the playa basin contracts and forms large cracks. Then, when it rains, the first flush of water from surrounding uplands flows toward the playa. As water moves through the grasses surrounding the playa, sediment that may carry contaminants from farm fields is trapped and stopped from entering the playa. The water continues into the playa and into the cracks — beginning its journey to the underlying aquifer.

Once the clay becomes saturated, the cracks close allowing the playa to hold water. Some of the water in the playa is used by plants or evaporates. Even when the clay basin is sealed, water continues its journey through the clay along roots and other small channels. When the playa is full, water also flows around the clay, through surrounding porous soil.

After the water is gone and the soil dries, prairie winds scour the playa basin, blowing out some of the sediment that has found its way into the playa. Over time, cracks reappear in the clay, and the playa awaits the next big storm when the cycle will repeat.

Plants and animals have adapted to this cycle and respond rapidly when playas become wet. Tiny seeds and eggs lay dormant in the soil, sometimes for several years, waiting for a heavy rainfall to germinate and hatch. The variable nature of playas enhances the plant diversity, which in turn leads to increased wildlife diversity. Birds and other prairie wildlife use wet playas for much-needed rest stops, water and food.

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE

CLEANER WATER

FLOOD CONTROL

RECREATION

Playa Restoration Process

Once you've decided to restore your playa, what happens next? This document provides some general information about what to expect as you work with conservation delivery staff to determine what needs to be done to restore your playa and as the restoration work happens.

Technical Assistance

Planning a playa restoration may seem overwhelming, but there are playa experts who can help guide you through the restoration process and help identify the best conservation program to meet your individual needs. In addition to working with your local USDA Service Center, consider contacting your local Conservation District for information about conservation programs. Another option is to talk with a private lands biologist. You'll find their contact information on one of the state-based playa websites listed below.

Conservation Programs

Private lands biologists will meet with you and discuss the various conservation practices and programs available for playas. They can help you identify funding sources to help with restoration costs and provide income when taking the playa and surrounding land out of production.

There are many options to restore wetlands available through USDA conservation programs such as through the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Program availability varies by state, so check with your local conservation agency. Information is available through state wildlife agencies and other non-governmental organizations. For more information about the conservation programs in your state, visit the websites listed below.

More Information

To learn about available playa conservation programs and find a playa restoration, visit one of our state-based playa websites.

PlayasWorkForKansas.com • PlayasWorkForNewMexico.com



OUTREACH

- Playa article in OCWC Magazine
- Playa Workshop
- Postcards mailed to landowners
- News releases to local papers
- Conservation Districts
- ODWC - OLAP
- Newsletters
- Fact sheets

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS TO INFORM BRUSH MANAGEMENT:
CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANT in OK and KS
Beaver, Woods, and Roger Mills Counties

GOAL	STATUS
• Integrate social science data into communications outreach designed to increase conservation actions. • Develop an outreach model that improves perceptions around brush management and prescribed fire on rangelands	• Completing literature review and producer interviews • Holding three focus groups in OK week of February 6th • Developing reports, a communications guide, and other outreach materials focused on producer motivations and barriers



SOCIAL SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS TO INFORM BRUSH MANAGEMENT

**NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant in Kansas & Oklahoma
Beaver, Woods, and Roger Mills Counties**

GOAL

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- Develop an outreach model that improves perceptions around brush management and prescribed fire on rangelands

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- Holding three focus groups in OK week of February 6th
- Developing reports, a communications guide, and other outreach materials focused on producer motivations and barriers



THANK YOU

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