

Little Arkansas River WRAPS

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About Our Watershed

The Little Arkansas River Watershed is located in south central Kansas covering 913,430 acres in Reno, Harvey, Sedgwick, McPherson, Rice, Marion and Ellsworth counties. The Little Arkansas River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) is a planning and management framework built to engage local citizens. WRAPS is a process used to **identify** restoration and protection needs, **establish** management goals, **create** an action plan to achieve those goals, and finally, **implement** the action plan.

Little Arkansas River Watershed



Harvesting Knowledge: Little Ark's Productive Producers

In this issue we are high-lighting the work of **Mr. Dale Schmidt**, who farms in McPherson county. Mr. Schmidt grew up on a crop farm east of Inman. He has had a passion for farming since he was a young boy. After graduating from K-State in 1998 with an agronomy degree, he worked as a crop consultant for 6 years. Dale then became a full-time agriculture producer and has spent the past 17 years farming in our watershed. Dale Schmidt produces a mix of irrigated and dryland corn, soybeans, and wheat. Dale currently uses grid sampling, variable rate fertilizer, and lime applications on all acres, along with variable rate seeding on irrigated acres. He uses no-till practices on all acres, and incorporates strip till on irrigated corn acres.

Dale has been involved with the Little Arkansas River Watershed WRAP programs in the past. He has been involved in the Atrazine/BMP program, and has recently enrolled in the Advanced Nutrient Management Program. Dale says, "The WRAPS program brings an awareness to what the environmental concerns are in our local and regional communities. My experience with the WRAPS program has been hassle-free and very positive. The mission of WRAPS aligns well with my farm management plan of using best management practices. My commitment to land stewardship and awareness of environmental impacts is very important in relation to protecting our investment of nutrients in the soil and the intermingled connectivity to the highly valuable water supply chain in our region."



Mr. Schmidt says that he aspires to be a leader by innovation and example. The WRAPS program leadership team thinks he is achieving this goal in our watershed. Dale is continually looking toward the adoption and implementation of new technology and applying appropriate practices in priority areas that make a difference in our water quality. He says, "I want to use products and services that will make my farm business more efficient while creating a better return on investment for myself and my landowners. Being involved with incentive-based programs (through WRAPS) is a great initial step towards administering and linking improved land stewardship practices with technology. I want to do my part in molding the crop practice standards that will carry into the next generation of providing food and feed for the world."

When asked for some advice to share with rest of his friends in the watershed, Dale replied by simply saying, "Be adaptable." He continued, "The agricultural business landscape is rapidly changing and shifting with consumers, public, and technology driving these changes. I feel we as ag producers have a special opportunity to advocate for our industry now and into the future by adapting to new tools and crop production practices at our disposal." **Thank you Dale Schmidt for your continued dedication to improving agriculture in the Little Arkansas River Watershed, we appreciate your leadership!**

Kansas Mesonet Weather Station in our Watershed

Did you know that the Flickner Tech Farm, just west of Moundridge, is the home of a new Mesonet weather station? You can now log on to the Kansas Mesonet website at <https://mesonet.k-state.edu/> and choose the "Flickner Tech Station" for local weather, wind, saturation, soil temperature and moisture data.

2020 WRAPS Program Accomplishment Update

The global pandemic could have set the Little Arkansas River WRAPS program back but the resilience and dedication of our producers to water quality in our watershed did not allow that to happen. A few adjustments had to be made such as: stakeholder leadership team meetings were held online rather than in person, some educational workshops were cancelled or postponed, and on-farm consultations were carefully held with the number of participants kept to a minimum. The WRAPS program and our watershed persevered and positive impacts were made in the Little Arkansas River Watershed. Below is a list of our high-lighted 2020 accomplishments.

- **Atrazine Program:** 117 BMPs were implemented on 19,836 acres in priority areas. Thank you to the City of Wichita for their continued financial support in providing \$60,649 for these practices. Atrazine BMPs that were used in 2020 included: early application (33%), post emergent application (19%), reduced soil-applied rate (29%), split application (11%), and the utilization of no atrazine (7%). BMP implementation was predicted to reduce atrazine runoff by 53.8% with a total load reduction of 853.5 lbs a.i. in targeted acres.
- **Sediment Program:** 16 BMPs were implemented on 2,345 acres. Thank you to WRAPS, EPA 319 funding in the amount of \$14,577. Sediment BMPs included the use of the Hagie-Montag interseeder for cover crops (24%), no-till (34%), conservation crop rotations (34%), the establishment of terraces (6%), and permanent vegetation (2%).
- **Nutrient Management Program:** This is our new program, rolled out just this past fall. We had our first two (2) producers implement nutrient management BMPs on a total of 391 acres. This is also funded by WRAPS, 319 funds in the amount of \$4,000.
- **Livestock Program:** Goering Farms is paving the way with this new program. 163 acres of cover crops in the Dry Turkey Creek area were planted in the Fall along with a crossing and a new watering system that includes a storm shelter for the pressure pump, protecting it from weather and allowing for accessibility. Future plans for 2021 include a ½ mile long buffer, 30 feet in width along the Dry Turkey Creek. 100 acres will drain through this buffer, reducing nutrient and sediment runoff.



As discussed in previous newsletters, our program is currently focusing on the high priority area of Turkey Creek. Anyone interested in these programs should contact us (see contact information below)!

Prefer to Receive Our Newsletter by Email?

If you or your neighbor are interested in receiving this newsletter, news of upcoming events, and program updates by email, please contact Amanda Schielke at aschielk@ksu.edu. She will be happy to add you to our email list!

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For more information, visit our website at www.kcare.k-state.edu. We are on social media, too! Follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook under the name: @KStateKCARE.



Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment

