



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Lynn Gentine, RTK Executive Director, 785-273-5115, lynn@kla.org

Ranchland Trust of Kansas Western Kansas Initiative

Written by: Samantha Weishaar, RTK Associate Director

Recently, the Ranchland Trust of Kansas (RTK) was awarded \$100,000 from Playa Lakes Joint Venture's (PLJV) ConocoPhillips Capacity Grant program to support the launch of a four-year project in western Kansas to educate ranchers on conservation easements. RTK was recently the recipient of two additional grants to make the project possible.

RTK received a grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) by the Conservation Collaboration Grants or Agreements (CCGA) program.

Ducks Unlimited (DU) played a valuable role to help earmark NAWCA funds to secure at least one conservation easement with RTK in western Kansas as part of the PLJV conservation initiative.

"We look forward to our partnership with RTK on this project. Ducks Unlimited will help facilitate funding, outreach and connect with private landowners," said Matt Hough, DU Manager of Conservation Programs in Kansas.

Partners for the Kansas Prairie Wetlands NAWCA grant proposal are not only organizations dedicated to conserving and protecting wildlife and water, but many are city and county entities or corporations who are concerned about Kansas and their community.

Hough said, "Within the partnership of these great organizations, we can assist in restoration, habitat improvements and payment for the easement through NAWCA."

The next grant RTK received, thanks to the progressive approach of NRCS through the CCGA program, allows NRCS to leverage funding with private partner resources increasing the overall success in achieving mutual goals of protecting and conserving agricultural lands.

"NRCS is excited to partner with RTK to spread the word on potential benefits which conservation easements can provide to producers, rural communities, and the land through the CCGA program," said Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist.



6031 SW 37th Street • Topeka, KS 66614
Office: (785) 273-5115
www.ranchlandtrustofkansas.org

Landowners in western Kansas will now have the option to enhance, increase and protect grassland habitat through this project with conservation easements. RTK's role will be to build new relationships with ranchers to initiate dialogue between landowners and conservation partners.

Woodrich said, "Through this agreement, NRCS will be working with four non-federal partners, led by RTK, to provide outreach about the opportunities available to producers to protect and ensure their lands are healthy and productive for future generations."

This project will grow long-term project capacity and will help transition RTK from a regional to a statewide land trust. This work will take RTK to the next level of conservation and expand the footprint of conservation easements.

RTK is an agricultural land trust affiliate of the Kansas Livestock Association, with a mission to preserve Kansas' ranching heritage and open spaces for future generations through the conservation of working landscapes.

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