

NEWSLETTER

www.KSForestryAssociation.org

Winter 2025 • Issue 6

2024 KFA Fall Forestry Field Day, Wrapped

By: Tim Lyons

The KFA field day was a big success this year thanks to the many good volunteers and sponsors that contributed their time and resources.

The event was held at the Ralph Earles Conservation Easement in Douglas County on Saturday, October 5th. It was a beautiful warm day in the shade of an old growth forest, rich in it's natural diversity. This historic property, once known by locals as the "Goat Ranch", is now a protected conservation easement through the Kansas Land Trust.

We had 85 people register with 76 attending. Many new and non-members attended due largely to new formats in advertising the event in social media and through a large number of partner organizations. The location is near to Lawrence and only a mile north of Baldwin City which contributed to a diverse group of attendees. We scheduled the program on a Saturday this year to attract families and students.



The reviews on our topics were all very positive, especially tick-borne diseases and woodland foraging. We also had really good presentations on woodland birds, Kansas Land Trust, prairie preservation and a chainsaw clinic. Our presenters were all experts in their respective fields and came from many backgrounds. Everyone enjoyed the good lunch and a chance to share stories and experiences with other visitors. We did have one uninvited guest however...Sasquatch tried to crash the party and grab an armful of food but was chased away by our brave volunteers!

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

- [2024 Fall Forestry Field Day, Wrapped](#)
- [Our Story- Landowner highlight from Susan and Dan Willard, this year's American Tree Farmer of the Year award winners](#)
- [Understanding Conservation Programs- Ryan Armbrust with KFS explains some available landowner assistance programs](#)
- [Community Corner](#)
- [Woodchuckles](#)
- [KFA Forest Marketplace](#)



2024 KFA Fall Field Day, Continued

A special thanks to our Baker University Student Volunteers and Dr Scott Kimball. We had a core group of seven KFA and KFS volunteers working on this event from the beginning, starting in May, but only two additional members helped during the actual program. We will need more help in the future to continue this important annual event. Please consider volunteering for next year!

Our field day was much different than in past years as the Kansas Forest Service is moving forward in other directions, requiring more participation from our Kansas Forestry Association. The field day benefited from excellent financial assistance from our many sponsors and we were able to fund the event ourselves with a little left over for next year.

Our sponsors were: Stihl, Mid America Bank, Kansas Forest Service, CFC Tree Services, Chouteau Creek Winery, Barrow Logging and Sawmill, Amanda Baron and Hurst Coffman. Heritage Tractor provided the use of 2 Gators. Thanks to you all!



Next year's event will be held on Kansas Forestry Association member, Dr Phil Estep's farm and winery in Southeast Kansas, Montgomery County, in early October 2025.

Please give us your ideas for new topics for next year. Please also let us know if you think a weekday or Saturday is better. We will be meeting in the next few weeks to begin the process of planning the 2025 field day. We hope that you all enjoyed this year's KFA Field Day and hope to see you next year!

Please contact Tim Lyons with your ideas for 2025.

OUR STORY

By: Susan and Dan Willard

Having previously owned land in Wabaunsee County, we knew exactly what we wanted when we started our search for land in Jefferson County – trees. Our land is used for wildlife and family recreation so when we bought our land in 2006, our goal was to improve the forest and pastures. For our first step we explored land and forestry management with the county extension office and then worked with NRCS to develop a multi-year timber stand improvement plan. We have switched most of our hay ground into native grass in conjunction with Kansas Wildlife and Parks.



2024 Tree Farmer of the Year award recipients, the Willards, pictured with Jason Hartman and EJ Jamison of Kansas Forest Service.

Every year since we have owned our Jefferson County land, we have attended the annual Forestry Day and although we have attended many of the same presentations numerous times, we always learned something new. There has always been something fun and new to learn: classifying wildflowers and beneficial weeds, identifying different birds, visiting stands of walnut trees and seeing how wood is harvested are just a few.

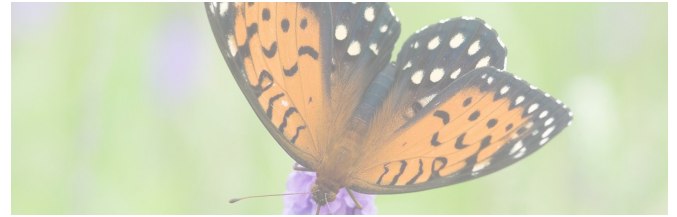
With the timber stand improvement, we have opened the canopy for new growth of trees and plants beneficial to wildlife. We contracted to have over 65 acres of forest, girdled and sprayed. An added bonus is the number of diverse birds that have moved into our area. A variety of woodpeckers inhabit the dead trees that are still standing each year, we plant a few acres in food plots. Our native grass and these food plots have brought quail back to our property plus an abundance of turkeys and deer.



Forest stand improvement and planting native grass is an ongoing progression. We remove Eastern Red Cedar and honeysuckle continually and the challenge of controlling sericea lespedeza and musk thistle is ongoing. During the winter months, we work on our overall land plan and this year we will plant the 'quail bundle' from the Kansas Forestry Service.

Understanding and Engaging with Conservation Assistance Programs

by: Ryan Armbrust



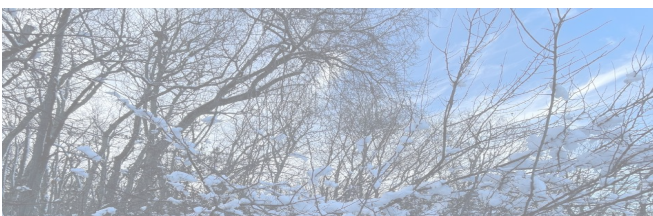
I'll be the first to admit that the massive number of acronyms and programs in the natural resources world can be intimidating, even if you're employed in that field like I am! My first exposure to this world was as a kid, tagging along with my dad to the ASCS office to talk about our CRP. This was in the late 80s, and the only acronym I probably knew was RBI since I was a baseball fan.

Now, many years later, we still deal in a huge number of acronyms and programs, many which may be very beneficial for landowners to engage with, but there remains something of a veil before us in terms of clarity about these programs.

I've found it helpful to start at a much more basic level, instead of doing a deep dive into specifics. In most cases, our excellent field foresters at the Kansas Forest Service start with conversations designed to better understand your woodland and your objectives, and then we can start to discuss what kinds of programs might be good fits for those needs.

As some savvy landowners already know, there are many different types of funding programs that can help support needed practices such as timber stand improvement, invasive plant management, streamside forestry, and even wildlife habitat enhancement. Some of the most familiar ones include the excellent (but limited funding) Habitat First program from KDWP, the popular EQIP program from NRCS, and some water-quality programs such as RQEI from KDA.

I won't take up space in the KFA newsletter defining each of those acronyms, but I do want to make folks aware of a great new resource that can shed some light on these (and other) sources of conservation assistance. The easiest way to find it is by Googling the phrase "Kansas Conservation Assistance Directory" and exploring the interactive map highlighting all programs applicable to your particular part of the state.



Understanding Conservation Programs; Continued

One program that I would like to highlight is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) from NRCS. Designed to build on and enhance previous conservation work (regardless of whether this work was funded by NRCS, other programs, or by private funds), CSP might be a great opportunity for Kansas woodland owners.

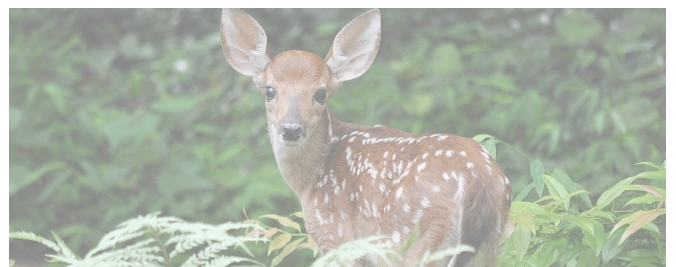
One major difference between CSP and EQIP is that CSP has a minimum annual payment, usually \$4000 for most landowners, designed to help enhance multiple conservation practices that have benefits for plants, wildlife, water quality, soil health, and more on your operation. CSP contracts are also for five years, and are renewable in certain circumstances where the initial goals have been met but additional work can be done.



The enrollment process for CSP is a little different than applying for an EQIP contract, but KFS has seen increased familiarity and support across NRCS field offices in recent years, leading to increased opportunities for forest landowners to benefit from CSP. Just this year, Kansas NRCS designated \$1 million to be used for “NIPF CSP”, which is to say CSP work that occurs on “non-industrial private forestland.”

Just what is NIPF? This is land that “has existing tree cover or is capable of growing trees and is owned by any non-industrial private ... individual, group, association, corporation, Indian Tribe, or other private entity.” If you’re a member of KFA, you almost certainly meet that definition.

The best way to engage with the CSP program is to start a conversation with your district forester and your local NRCS field office staff for your county. They can walk you through the program, and help you understand if it is a good fit for your land.



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Community Corner

Check your Inbox!

- **REMINDER** We want to hear from you! Check your inboxes for a member survey. This is your chance to let us know what's important to you, what you want more of, and to share your great ideas. You can also find this survey on our website ksforestryassociation.org

Woodland Restoration Event | Mar 22, 12:30-3:30pm Kansas City, MO | Heartland Conservation Alliance

You'll learn about HCA and their mission, the beautiful Blue River, woodland ecology, plant identification, and invasive species removal. Then, get hands-on and help us restore this vital 40-acre Oak-hickory woodland overlooking the Blue River! (Other days and times available)

Learn more at heartlandconservationalliance.org

2025 Kansas Natural Resource Conference | Feb 6-7 Manhattan, KS | Manhattan Conference Center

Building Tomorrow's Wildlife Habitats: Strategies for Success

Visit <http://www.kansasnrc.org/> for more information.

2025 KACD Conservation Day at the Capitol | Feb 4, 9am-2pm Topeka

This is a great opportunity to share your personal experiences that speak to the value of conservation and the importance of funding for conservation, with your elected officials.

lawrenceks.org/lprd/ppnc

2nd Annual Women in Ag Event | Feb 13, 9am-2:30pm Garnett | Linn Co Conservation District | Dutch Country Cafe

Speakers include K-State Ext Agents, Media Consultants and more.

Visit the Kansas Soil Health Alliance's events page for more details.

KFA Forest Marketplace

KFA Members! Do you have forestry or farm related items that you would like to sell or offer to other KFA members? Please let us know and we can publish appropriate items here in the newsletter.

- FREE, approximately 30, four-foot, used, plastic tree shelters and stakes. They will need to be cleaned up but they are useable and the price is right. Contact Tim Lyons at lyonstyggers@yahoo.com. I am in Douglas County.



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**Newsletter is a partnership between Kansas Forestry Association
and Kansas Forest Service**

Special thanks to contributing authors:

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The KFA would love to hear from you!

What have you been doing with your land?

What would you like to see KFA doing for you?

Help KFA to save money and trees, go paperless!

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please contact us at: kansasforestryhelpdesk@gmail.com



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