

Little Arkansas River WRAPS

Winter 2024

Volume 6, Issue 1

Harvesting Knowledge: Little Ark's Productive Producers



In this issue, we are doing something a little different. Rather than high-lighting the conservation efforts of an individual producer, we are high-lighting the work of a group that is making a big impact on stream flow in the Little Arkansas River Watershed!

The **Little Arkansas River Drainage District of Harvey County (LAR DD)** was established in 1951 in response to flooding that caused several area bridges to be blocked with logjams. Presently, LAR DD work consists of primarily cleaning up after flooding to include clearing bridges of uprooted trees, logs, and other debris that are preventing water from moving downstream. Older bridges with short spans are especially vulnerable.

Clearing trees that have fallen into the river is also a priority for the LAR DD with the goal of avoiding the creation of erosive clogging or logjams of downstream bridges. Logjams can alter water flow hydraulics by redirecting flow towards the bed or banks, which increases flow resistance and can create upstream pools. This may result in a diversion of flow onto the floodplain and dam the channel. In some cases, depending on water flow intensity, streambank soil type, slope, and vegetation present, altered channel hydraulics can change local patterns of erosion and deposition, which may result in weakened streambanks. The LAR DD, shares that “We can’t stop the river from flooding, but our work allows the flood waters to peak lower and go down sooner, saving field and road damages.”

How are logjams removed? The LAR DD typically utilizes an 800 lb grapple hook, a D7 Cat with large winch, and a ‘jammer’ winch used to return the grapple to the pile. Other equipment utilized includes a backhoe tractor and a winch truck. The logs and debris are typically burned after they are piled.

How do drainage districts operate? State rules dating back as far as 1905 regulate established drainage districts. Various privileges and responsibilities are framed within those regulations. Operating capital is derived from property taxes imposed on landowners within the district. Certain permitting situations are the responsibility of the district when it relates to stream flow. Enforcements against persons and entities within the district for stream flow hindrances are among district responsibilities.

The LAR DD has recently been constructing a new storage/equipment parking/headquarters building in Halstead; an important step towards improving their capabilities. While rain and flooding have not been prevalent in our area the past few years, the LAR DD has our river segments looking good and ready for healthy water flow when the time comes.

Special thanks to LAR DD Board Members: David Friesen, president; Kent Mayfield, secretary and project coordinator; and San Nikkel, member. The Little Arkansas River Watershed appreciates your continued dedication to improving and protecting our water resources! The late Glenn Schmitt and his son, Phil Schmitt, should also be mentioned as they were instrumental to district operations for many years.



LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS!
WE HAVE WRAPS DOLLARS WITH YOUR NAME ON IT!
IF YOU ARE IN THE TURKEY, SAND OR KISIWA CREEK AREAS AND ARE INTERESTED IN IMPLEMENTING ANY LIVESTOCK BMPs, PLEASE CONTACT US ASAP! BMPs INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: ALTERNATIVE WATERING SYSTEMS, COVER CROP GRAZING, LIVESTOCK PEN OR FEEDING SITE RELOCATION, ETC.

\$\$\$\$\$\$

The Little Ark's Atrazine Program

The Atrazine Management Program seeks to be flexible, no matter what the future holds; as economics, growers and conditions change, atrazine management practices must also adapt. This program works to make conversations about atrazine BMPs part of the agricultural forum, rather than an afterthought. The atrazine BMP program will continue educating growers, pesticide dealers, applicators, and other stakeholders, and fostering awareness. Area partnerships, especially with the City of Wichita are essential to reaching these goals. It is hoped that adoption of atrazine BMPs will continue to rise, which will lead to improved water quality within the Little Arkansas River Watershed. *Contact us if interested in learning more about the Little Ark Atrazine BMP Program and available incentives!*

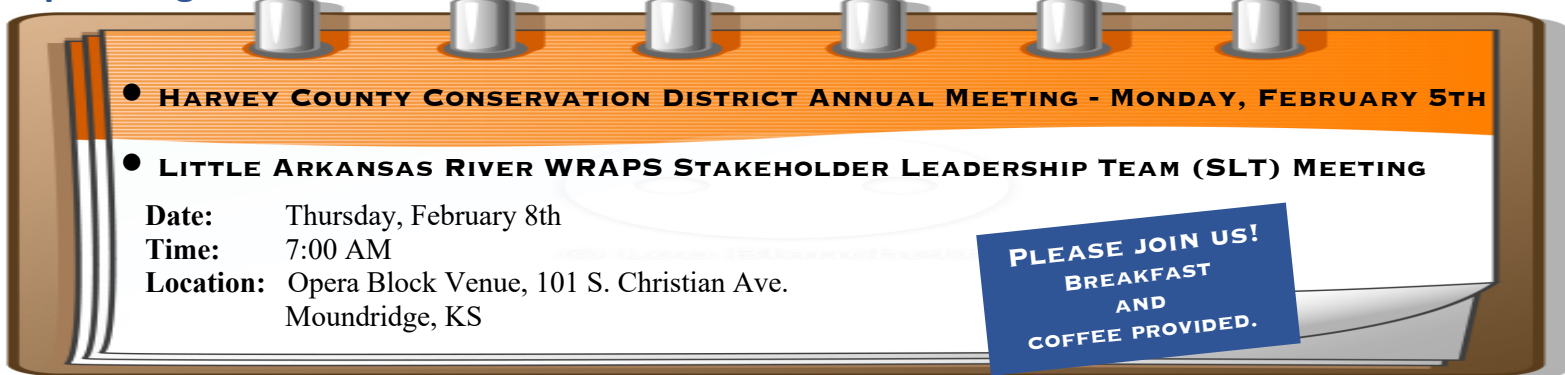
2023 WRAPS Program Accomplishment Update

The Little Arkansas River Watershed was hard at making positive impacts on water throughout the watershed in 2023!

- **Atrazine Program:** 94 BMPs were implemented on 16,656 acres in priority areas. Atrazine BMPs that were used in 2023 included: early application (22%), post emergent application (23%), reduced soil-applied rate (13%), split application (14%), and the utilization of no atrazine (28%). Thank you to the City of Wichita for their continued financial support in providing \$60,531 in funding for these practices.
- **Sediment Program:** Sediment loss BMPs can take place throughout the watershed. In 2023, individual consultations were made with producers and sign-ups were/are ongoing. Thus far, two (2) producers have signed up 271 acres of no-till and crop rotations and a buffer positively impacting 180 acres. This program has allocated \$14,000 of its \$40,000 in WRAPS funds in year 2 of the 3-year project.
- **Nutrient Management Program:** This is the WRAPS' newest innovative program, rolled out in the fall of 2020. In this 3-year funded project, five (5) producers, representing 676 acres have signed up to make soil health and precision agriculture a priority. This program has allocated \$24,800 of its \$39,000 in WRAPS 319 funding in Year 2, 2023.
- **Livestock Program:** Livestock BMPs can utilize WRAPS funds in Turkey, Sand, and Kisiwa Creek sub-watersheds. In 2023, three (3) livestock BMPs took place and were 100% funded by the landowner. These BMPs positively impacted 950 cattle and 20 contributing acres. Watershed Specialist and WRAPS Coordinator, Ron Graber of K-State, provided technical assistance.
- **Off-site BMP Program:** This is a City of Wichita funded 5-year program, with 4 years of incentive payments and the 5th year in maintenance. BMPs include crop rotations and no-till. 313 acres were in their 3rd year of incentive payments in 2023, while there were 141 new acres signed up for the Off-site BMP Program.
- **Education:** The Little Arkansas River Watershed was home to a major field day in August at Flickner Innovation Farm! Nearly 80 people were in attendance.

If you are interested in any of these programs, please use the contact information listed below and let one of us know!

Upcoming Events:

A graphic of a binder with a white page and a blue sticky note. The page lists two upcoming events. The sticky note says 'PLEASE JOIN US! BREAKFAST AND COFFEE PROVIDED.'

- **HARVEY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING - MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH**
- **LITTLE ARKANSAS RIVER WRAPS STAKEHOLDER LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT) MEETING**
 - Date:** Thursday, February 8th
 - Time:** 7:00 AM
 - Location:** Opera Block Venue, 101 S. Christian Ave. Moundridge, KS

Contacts

Ron Graber

Kansas State University
Little Arkansas River Watershed WRAPS Coordinator and Central Kansas Watershed Specialist
620-727-5665 | rgraber@ksu.edu

Rick Schlender

Kansas State University
Little Arkansas River Watershed WRAPS Agronomist and Crop Consultant
620-200-4496 | rschlen2@ksu.edu

Amanda Schielke

Kansas State University – KCARE
Little Arkansas River WRAPS Grant Specialist
785-313-3462 | aschielk@ksu.edu

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.

