

ALICE JO TAYLOR AND NICK WHITE/ WILDLIFE AWARD

Outdoorsman win award for wildlife habitat efforts



a food plot at Nick White’s land near Windom. White is an avid outdoorsman and this is his second award since 2015.

By RYAN CARLSON
2017 marks the second time that Rice County outdoorsman Nick White has won a Kansas Banker’s Association award. White, an avid hunter, won his first

award in 2015 for a tree row he planted around his house. This year the award is being given for wildlife habitat he has put on his property located near Windom. White’s wildlife improve-

ments include CRP ground, food plots and pollinator habitat. The ground White is on is owned by White’s grandmother Alice Jo Taylor of Hanston. The land has been in the family for many years.

Steps to properly maintain a terraced field

By CHRIS WILSON
Proper maintenance is as important to your terraces as it is to your farm equipment. If not properly maintained, they can let you down when you are counting on them most. It is also part of the agreement that you signed if you received cost share assistance for their construction. Proper maintenance includes work to prevent the terraces from deteriorating as well as repairing any damage that does occur as soon as possible. The first step in proper terrace maintenance is to control soil erosion above the terrace. This will reduce the amount

of sediment that accumulates in the terrace channel. The most effective ways to help control erosion are: contour farming, residue management and crop rotation. Contour farming is performing all tillage and planting operations parallel to established terraces using them as guidelines. Each tillage furrow helps slow down runoff and lets it penetrate the soil. Increasing crop residue will also help slow down runoff and store moisture in the soil for crops during the growing season. The terraces should be maintained so that the ridge height remains close to the same height

as when constructed. The best way to keep the terrace height up is to plow them every year or two with a moldboard or disc type plow. Sometimes a motor grader or other equipment may be needed. Remove sediment from the channel when capacity becomes restricted and use it to fill low spots in the ridge if necessary. Usually the first place that a terrace loses its effective height is close to the outlet end. Most farmers cross the terrace at this point to get from one side to the other which usually knocks them down over time. If any breaks in the terrace ridge oc-

LA VON AND MARLA WILCOX/ CONSERVATION AWARD

Native grass helps Rice County man stop erosion

By RYAN CARLSON
LaVon and Marla Wilcox won a conservation award for their quarter planted into native grass, brome and alfalfa since the 1990s. LaVon said he purchased the quarter in 1983. At that time it was all farmed to wheat. A 10 acre patch of ground directly in front of his house has two large ditches running through it. Due to the highly erodible nature of the surrounding soil, LaVon decided it would be better to plant something sustainable such as prairie grass which he harvests for hay. The soil, when left on it’s own, tends to blow when the climate is dry and washes away when

heavy rains come. “The ground hasn’t washed away,” said LaVon. LaVon said planting his place to prairie grass, alfalfa and brome is also good for the wildlife. He often



LaVon (left) and Marla (right) Wilcox

enjoys quail and pheasant hunting on his property. In addition, in a couple other plots he has planted oats and prairie grass. The conservation district helped with LaVon’s conservation project. They provided a soil sample test and made recommendations of what to plant

based on the results. There are a few stipulations about receiving their help. “You have to maintain the plots and control the weeds,” said LaVon. LaVon has a conservation project for his farm. Part of that plan includes leaving crop stubble for ground cover. “We have tried to be good stewards of the place. It’s a lot greener than when we first moved here 30 years ago,” said LaVon. LaVon’s advice to other producers seeking to plant crops to prevent soil erosion is to always get a soil test. The test will show exactly what the ground needs. He also mentioned the conservation district has guidelines showing cover crops and planting times. He also recommended always buying seed for cover crops from a reputable company to prevent the possibility of obtaining weed seed.

State has cost-share programs available

Landowners with natural resource concerns on their property are encouraged to visit the Rice County Conservation District to discuss solutions and possible state financial assistance. The Conservation District is charged with the responsibility of protecting and conserving the county’s natural resources with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) providing technical assistance relating to erosion, water quality, water conservation, and other resource issues. Funds for the Nonpoint Cost-Share and Water Resources Cost Share programs are provided by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation through a grant from the State Water Plan Fund. The Kansas Department of Agriculture,

Division of Conservation administers state cost-share programs through the conservation district, which provides landowners financial assistance to implement approved conservation practices. The Conservation District will be conducting an initial sign-up for these cost share funds during the month of April. Funds will be limited, so if you have conservation practices that you would like to complete in 2018, be sure to stop by the office to submit an application for cost share assistance. . As a reminder, in order to be eligible for cost-share assistance, landowners must receive approval prior to starting construction. Each application submitted goes through a ranking process. Those applications that rank the highest will be placed into a contract.

Basis versus advanced irrigation schedules

By BRADLEY YOUNKER
Irrigation scheduling has become extremely crucial as water supplies continue to be depleted across the state. Irrigation scheduling is simply knowing when and how much irrigation water to apply to meet the crop needs. Effective irrigation scheduling helps maximize profit while minimizing inputs such as water and energy. There are several factors that affect irrigation scheduling. The type of crop, stage of crop development, soil properties, soil/water relationships, availability of water supply, and weather conditions (temperature, wind, rainfall, etc.) all have a critical role when determining effective irrigation scheduling. Evapotranspiration (ET) is the term used to describe the sum of evaporation and plant transpiration from the ground to the atmosphere. ET values during the hot summer months can run as high as one half inch per day.

There are several methods and types of technologies that can help a producer track their irrigation schedule. They range from keeping well readings to using newer technologies that measure instantaneous soil moisture and evapotranspiration by canopy temperature. The basic checkbook method is used to track water application times and amounts. Soil moisture is estimated at the beginning of the irrigation season and crop ET rates along with other weather factors to determine the crops needs. KanSched, developed by Kansas State Research and Extension, is a simple and user friendly computer program that can be learned quickly and used easily by irrigators to develop an irrigation schedule. It uses daily and field inputs to calculate ET. The field inputs include

soil characteristics, emergence, maximum rooting depth, crop characteristics, and crop coefficients. The daily inputs include referenced ET, rainfall, and soil/water values. After entering the field and daily inputs into the program, KanSched will automatically update the root zone water level and develop a seasonal management chart that plots soil water values, rainfall, and irrigation amounts. Advanced irrigation water management uses advanced methods such as soil moisture probes. The soil moisture probes are equipped to send real-time data to electronic devices allowing the producer to make decisions on when to irrigate. Soil moisture is measured at different depths to give the pro-

ducer an idea of how much water still exists in the soil profile. The producer then can make decisions based on weather forecasts to determine how much and when the crop will need to be irrigated again. The Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working with groundwater management districts across the state to promote advanced irrigation water management through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. For more information about advanced irrigation water management, please contact your local NRCS office or conservation district office located at your local county U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center (listed in the telephone

book under United States Government or on the internet at offices.usda.gov) for assistance. More information is also available on the Kansas NRCS Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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