

LEE AND MARGARET SCHEUFLENER/ ENERGY AWARD

Scheufler Farms goes green



Lee Scheufler with his 60 kilowatt wind turbine (photo by Ryan Carlson)

BY RYAN CARLSON
Lee and Margaret Scheufler have been selected for the 2017 Energy Award. Lee and Margaret made the decision to install a wind turbine on their farm around six years ago. The turbine has the ability to produce 60 kilowatts of electricity, the same as a 100 horse power electric motor. It generates three phase electric power to the Scheufler's irrigation pumping plants and grain handling system. When they installed the turbine, the Scheuflers had the feeling that it was the direction the world might be going in; replacing fossil

fuels with more natural energy production. Although this hasn't entirely proven to be the case, Lee said they don't regret their decision. "Although we don't necessarily regret having done it, we certainly aren't saying 'gosh I wish we would have put up three where we only put up one,'" said Lee. Their wind turbine unit is used that was originally installed in California during the 1960s. The technology is old and the machines were taken down after having performed for around 50 years. Afterwards a company reconditioned them with all new electronics

and added fully digital controls. "That improves some of the efficiencies and long term reliability of the unit," said Lee. The wind generator has replaced some of the electrical dependence of Scheufler Farms. If other farmers are thinking of getting into wind power, Lee had a stark warning. When they first looked into the possibility, the first individual that approached them turned out to be less than honorable. "We later ended up having another firm finish the project and are real happy with the results," said Lee.



A grassland west of Lyons on K56. Rangeland concerns can be addressed by looking at the percentage of species of plant in the field.

Do I have rangeland concerns?

BY TORY FLAX
Most of all conservation programs require a resource concern in order to be eligible for financial assistance. So, what are resource concerns and what can be done to address them? For rangeland, there are several concerns and options.

Regarding rangelands, many of the resource concerns can be symptoms of the bigger problem: range condition. This is the percentage of what species of plants are in the field today in comparison to climax plant community. For most programs, this needs to be less than 65 percent and in a downward trend to be eligible. Many rangelands today fall into this category. Most of all of the options for other concerns will ultimately improve range condition.

Grazing distribution—occurs when parts of a field are grazed differently than others. This could be due to many reasons. Here are some questions to ponder: what are the range sites? Where is the water located? Is the field

rough? What is the size and shape of the field? Grazing distribution can be addressed in several ways, including cross fencing, movement of salt and mineral, herding, patch burning, and water source placement.

For lack of water or poor water quality, installing a pipeline and tank system is usually a good option. Fencing out streams, allowing limited access points, installing a pipe through a pond dam into a tank, fencing out the pond and possibly installing a spring development are other options.

Are trees and brush taking over? Many programs are specific about the species of trees and brush and also the quantity. A few species that need to be controlled are Eastern Red Cedar, Honey Locust, and Smooth Sumac. These can be controlled with a variety of options, such as prescribed burning, spraying, and mechanical removal.

Remember, there is never just one answer for addressing a resource concern as there are many options. This

is not an all-inclusive list, but just some ideas to think about. All Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs require a written conservation plan and can be developed at any time. However, it is best to have this completed before a program sign up, so there is time to look over the entire operation and identify all the resource concerns. Conservation plans also include identifying forage inventories and stocking rate determinations so the most informed decisions can be made. For assistance, 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 U.S. Government or on the internet at offices.usda.gov). 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.

KDWPT starts new wildlife habitat program

BY ALEXANDER LYON
As the seasons begin to change and temperatures start to drop, outdoor enthusiasts gear up to explore all that Kansas has to offer. Whether you enjoy hiking, biking, exploring, bird watching, or hunting, there are countless options to enjoy the outdoors. The year 2017 was very intriguing across the state: Kansas witnessed the largest wildfire in Kansas history, a late April snowfall in western counties, the entire state being drought free (albeit briefly), and the total solar eclipse. Spring moisture helped improve wildlife habitat across the state. Upland game bird surveys indicate this should be another good year for pheasants and quail. Mild temperatures through most of the summer helped deer and turkey survival. Pollinators got some help throughout the year with the increased emphasis on monarch butterflies. With the favorable weather conditions across Kansas this year, wildlife should again be abundant. Wildlife populations fluctuate from year-to-year and are dependent on many different factors. The two largest factors impacting wildlife in Kansas are weather and habitat. Unfortunately we have no control over the weather, but we can manage habitat to benefit wildlife. Habitat diversity is the key to providing all the life cycle requirements for wildlife and helps maintain populations when weather conditions are not-so-friendly. Luckily, getting advice on those wildlife habitat projects has never been easier.

The federal Farm Bill has access to technical and financial assistance aimed at improving wildlife habitat. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) all have options to create, maintain, and improve wildlife habitat on your property. Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWPT) has a new

program aimed at providing assistance for wildlife projects called the Habitat First Program. The KDWPT Web site has more information on Habitat First for landowners who are interested in improving wildlife habitat on their property at: <http://ksoutdoors.com/Services/Private-Landowner-Assistance/Wildlife-Biologists/Habitat-First-Program>. The process simply starts by contacting your local biologist and scheduling a meeting on your property. A few examples

of the habitat practices available through the Habitat First Program include: invasive tree control, native grass and forb establishment, pollinator planting, CRP management, multiple pass disking, wetland development, delayed spraying with wheat stubble height management, and edge feathering. With so many options available to landowners, there are no more excuses to put off that habitat project you have been thinking about. The technical

advice is free to those who ask and the financial assistance is available to those who qualify. If you are interested in the Habitat First Program, contact your local district wildlife biologist or call KDWPT at 620-672-5911. If you are interested in various Farm Bill programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. Enjoy the outdoors in 2018 while conditions are good and start planning ahead for the future; because in Kansas, you never know when it's going to change.

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.

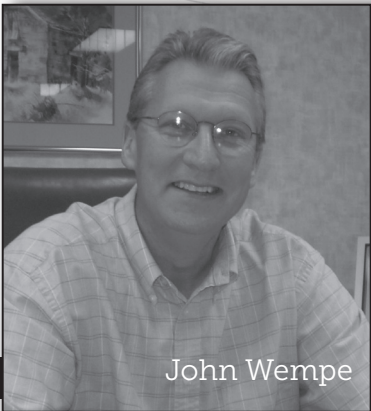
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