

# ~ Kansas Conservation Coalition ~ 2007 ~

*Organizations committed to conserving the natural richness of Kansas for the people of Kansas*

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## Steering Committee

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- Kansas Chapter

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Pheasants Forever

**Cherrie Nolden**  
Kansas Chapter  
The Wildlife Society

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 1, 2007

**Wildlife, landowner groups form “Kansas Conservation Coalition” to support Farm Bill Conservation Programs; Coalition to encourage Congressional Delegation to support wildlife habitat improvement and natural resource conservation.**

Wichita: In an effort to help build support for USDA Natural Resource Conservation Programs in the next federal farm bill, over wildlife, environmental, civic and landowner organizations along with several state agencies and private businesses today announced their formation of the ‘Kansas Conservation Coalition,’ a cooperative organization to help educate the general public and policy makers on the benefits of Farm Bill Conservation Programs to landowners and the environment.

“When you consider that over 97% of Kansas is made up of privately held land, mostly in agricultural production, we must have a strong conservation title in the next Farm Bill if we’re going to have good wildlife habitat and a healthy environment,” said Don Snider, President of the Kansas Wildlife Federation. “Farmers, ranchers and other landowners depend on these programs to conserve our natural resources and improve wildlife habitat. We support their efforts and that’s why we have formed this coalition.”

Members of the Coalition include Audubon of Kansas, Friends of the KAW, Geary County Fish and Game Association, the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, the Kansas Bowhunters Association, the Kansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, the Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Kansas Ducks Unlimited, Kansas Native Plant Society, the Kansas Natural Resources Council, the Kansas Nature-based Tourism Alliance, Kansas Ornithological Society, Kansas Outfitters Association, the Kansas Wildlife Federation, the National Rifle Association – Central Region, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, The Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association, The Kansas Rural Center and The Nature Conservancy - Kansas Chapter.

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### **Kansas Conservation Coalition Organizations**

Audubon of Kansas - Friends of the KAW - Geary County Fish and Game Association - Kansas Association of Conservation Districts - Kansas Bowhunters Association - Kansas Chapter American Fisheries Society - Kansas Chapter The Wildlife Society - Kansas Ducks Unlimited - Kansas Native Plant Society - Kansas Natural Resources Council - Kansas Nature-based Tourism alliance - Kansas Ornithological Society - Kansas Outfitters Association - Kansas Wildlife Federation - National Rifle Association, Central Region - National Wild Turkey Federation - Pheasants Forever - Quail Forever - The Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association - The Kansas Rural Center - The Nature Conservancy Kansas Chapter

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Designed to help 'spread the word' on the benefits of the programs under the Conservation title of the Farm Bill to both the wildlife habitat in Kansas and the bottom line of Kansas's agriculture producers and private landowners, the Kansas Conservation Coalition will work to educate policy makers, wildlife groups, agriculture producers and other landowners, and the general public on the benefits of conservation work on private lands.

"When you see the improvement in wildlife habitat that has been brought about through programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), the value of USDA Conservation Programs to Kansas wildlife speak for themselves," said Barth Crouch, Regional Wildlife Biologist for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever. "When you consider the help these programs give to producers and to the environment and when you see how these programs help us continue our outdoor recreation traditions, and improve the quality of life of all Kansans as well as help support the bottom lines of our farmers and ranchers, it's easy to come together to support the conservation title of the farm bill."

The Conservation Title of the Farm Bill primarily deals with locally led, voluntary natural resource programs under the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). This title of law also deals with the Conservation Reserve Program under the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). These programs generally work with landowners through financial assistance in the form of cost-share dollars and technical assistance through NRCS technicians to help protect and conserve soil, water, air and wildlife habitats. Last year over \$20 million in cost-share dollars were available to Kansas's landowners through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) alone. Additional monies were also available to landowners through programs such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and over 3 million Kansas acres are currently in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

"Kansas land owners work hard to make a living for their families and we must give them an incentive to set aside parts of their property to support habitat for wildlife, not just game wildlife, but for all wildlife," said Dan Haines, President of the Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. "If we are going to leave our children a heritage, we must conserve nature's bounty so generations to come can enjoy and appreciate our great wildlife diversity in Kansas. The Conservation provisions of the Farm Bill accomplish that objective if funded as originally envisioned, but last year, only one in four land owners who applied for incentives were able to implement conservation measures due to lack of congressional funding."

"It is great that Agriculture and Wildlife groups are coming together to support these Farm Bill conservation programs," said Troy Schroeder of the Kansas Rural Center. "Working together we can help better educate farmers about the programs that are available and we can help encourage our policy makers in Washington to support these voluntary programs that improve water quality, provide wildlife habitats, and financial incentives to farmers and ranchers."

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