

Tuttle Creek Lake WRAPS Receives National Recognition From EPA

The Tuttle Creek Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) project recently landed in the national spotlight. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recognized the Kansas project for developing one of the best watershed protection plans in the nation, receiving one of the highest scores of all rated plans. This acknowledgement affirms the efforts of the watershed stakeholders who composed the WRAPS plan, and supports their commitment to a sustainable, healthy watershed for the future.

Tuttle Creek Lake WRAPS is one of nearly forty WRAPS projects throughout the State of Kansas. With headwaters in Nebraska, the Kansas portion of the Lower Big Blue and Lower Little Blue watersheds are located in Republic, Washington, Marshall, Nemaha, Riley, and Pottawatomie counties, and drain into

Tuttle Creek Lake WRAPS is one of nearly forty WRAPS projects throughout the State of Kansas.

Tuttle Creek Lake. The Tuttle Creek Lake WRAPS project dates back to 2007 when a team of individuals began to plan the foundation for a watershed protection project in response to growing water quality concerns. Local watershed stakeholders, K-State Research and Extension Office of Local Government, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Watershed Management Section, and other organizations and agency personnel assembled on a regular basis for three years to develop a comprehensive watershed plan. “The concept of the WRAPS program is

designed to be a collaborative effort between government and local stakeholders to identify water quality issues, establish water quality goals and develop an action plan to achieve the goals,” explained Jaime Gaggero, with the KDHE Watershed Management Section.

Developing the Tuttle Creek Lake WRAPS plan was no easy task. The planning team utilized as many resources as possible for a thorough investigation into their watershed, local communities, and land uses within the drainage area. Computer modeling was used to simulate pollutant loading potential from specific areas within the watershed. This information, combined with local knowledge, and state and federal resources, aided the planning team in determining the best approach to address pollutant sources. Restoration and protection efforts were and are focused on decreasing bacteria, atrazine, siltation and eutrophication in

the watershed. Knowing “hot spots,” or targeted areas, throughout the drainage gave the group a focused approach at making good management recommendations with the resources available to them. These recommendations were channeled into an action plan; the to do list for making actual water quality improvements. Some of the high priority action items include: establishing continuous no-till farming practices, installing riparian and grassed buffer strips along water bodies, aiding in the development of nutrient management plans, encouraging cost-share assistance for establishing best management practices, and continuing water quality monitoring. This WRAPS document, also known as an EPA 9-Element Plan, not only focuses on present watershed concerns, it is written to address pollutant loading and management solutions for the next forty years. EPA determined that successful watershed protection plans from across the nation need to include nine key elements into the content of their planning document. This guidance has been shared with the states and respective watershed groups, for the ultimate support of individual implementation strategies. EPA and

KDHE recognize there is tremendous value in well-written, concrete plans. The problems, solutions, and needed resources are laid out in a user-friendly format that demonstrates the local and state commitment to ultimately better the environment for the future.

Like the Tuttle Creek Lake WRAPS, ten other WRAPS documents have been approved by the State of Kansas and more are on the way. It is a goal of all WRAPS groups, as well as KDHE, to have an approved and adopted 9-Element Plan. Plans are written to aid watersheds in meeting state water quality goals to ultimately protect and restore water resources. Approved 9-Element Plans are also required for WRAPS groups to qualify for grant funds to implement protection projects near identified water bodies. But more than that, the development process of the document fosters local buy-in, commitment from the state and funding agencies, and responsibility from the watershed residents. Comprehensive and thorough plans lay the groundwork for successful outcomes and goal achievement.

All water quality protection efforts have a direct correlation to drinking water suppliers. WRAPS projects are

already in place across the state and the local commitment of planning teams have set the bar high for achieving their outlined goals. This lends a unique opportunity for public water suppliers to get involved in the protection process. As financial resources become more difficult to obtain, partnerships and collaborative efforts in the implementation of watershed action plans will be even more critical. The development process of a WRAPS document alone confirms that successful projects have savvy partners at the table. The WRAPS process is proving to be a tried and true way to invest in the future. More information about the WRAPS program and watershed projects across Kansas can be found at www.kswraps.org.

Katie Miller joined the KRWA staff in October 2009. She previously worked for Flint Hills Resource Conservation and Development as a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Project Coordinator since



2003. She organized and coordinated the Twin Lakes Water Festival in 2005 – 2009.



Tuttle Creek Lake just north of Manhattan captures 1,556,262 acres of runoff from the Little Blue and Lower Big Blue Watersheds.

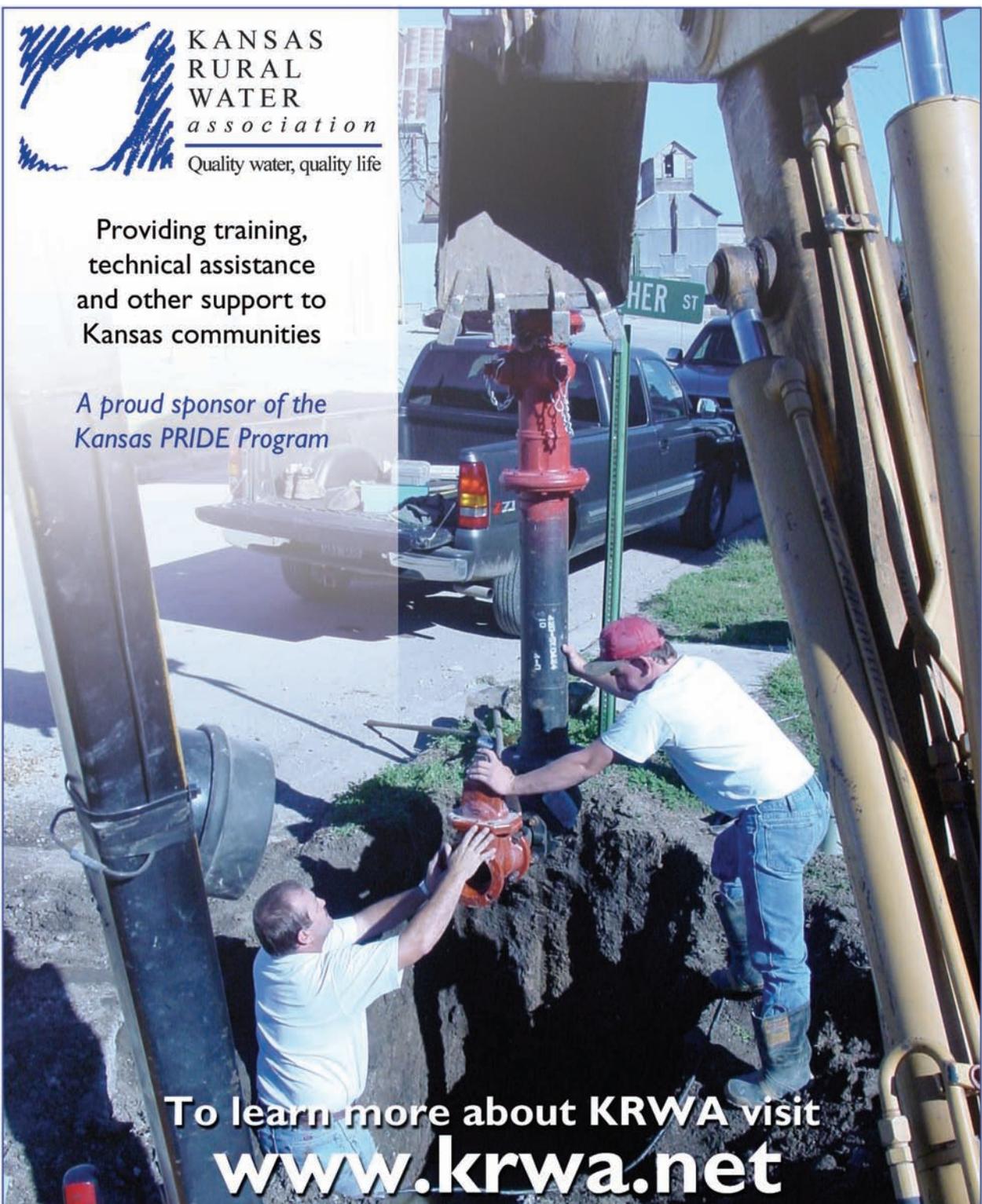


KANSAS
RURAL
WATER
association

Quality water, quality life

Providing training,
technical assistance
and other support to
Kansas communities

*A proud sponsor of the
Kansas PRIDE Program*



To learn more about KRWA visit
www.krwa.net

*The mission of the Kansas Rural Water Association is to provide education,
technical assistance and leadership to public water and wastewater utilities
to enhance the public health and to sustain Kansas communities.*