

Kickapoo Wetlands Protection Program

2014 - 2018

**Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas
Kickapoo Environmental Office**

**US Environmental Protection Agency- Region VII
Wetland Program Development Grant
Project Period: 2014-2018**

April, 2013

Introduction

This report details a conservation plan for the wetlands within the boundaries of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas Reservation. Historically the Kickapoo have been deeply connected with the Tribe's land and water resources. Wetlands fill a unique niche in Tribal lore because of the plant and animal diversity that can be used for medicinal and ceremonial purposes.

Outside of being culturally significant wetlands also have major benefits affecting water quality and wildlife habitat that are also valuable to the Tribe. Most important of these are the water quality benefits, because the Tribe gathers its drinking water directly from the water flowing in the Delaware River.

Because of wetlands cultural, water quality, and habitat benefits, it is necessary to protect the remaining wetlands and to restore lost or damaged wetlands where possible. To meet this need the Tribe's wetland conservation goal is to achieve *a no net loss of remaining wetlands and, to the extent possible, increase the quantity and quality of the Tribe's wetland resource.*

The core elements that the Kickapoo Environmental Office (KEO) will address with the implementation of this Wetland Program Plan are:

1. Monitoring and Assessment
2. Wetland Restoration and Protection
3. Wetland Water Quality Standards
4. Wetland Regulatory

Past activities

In 1994 the Kickapoo Tribe engaged in wetland program plan development, an outside contractor was hired to create a Phase I plan for the Tribe. In 1996 another contractor White, Martin & Associates, Inc. then prepared the Phase II Wetland Conservation Plan and also completed an inventory of wetlands on tribal owned land at that time. Approximately 123 wetlands were found to fall within Tribally owned properties. Of the 123 wetlands found most were determined to be farm/stock ponds or waste treatment lagoons. However, there were approximately 35 emergent wetlands found of which only 9 were considered to have minimal impacts from human development/use. In addition to the emergent wetlands there were also approximately 24 forested wetland areas. These

areas fared better as only half the wetlands were impacted by human development. Lastly there were 2 shrub scrub wetlands found on the Reservation's eastern edge.

The previous Wetland Coordinator for the tribe was in the process of carrying out the Wetland Conservation Plan and had several projects in the development stage. One of the planned projects called for a 196ft dike that would create a 12 acre wetland area. The area the dike would be built is currently listed as a 1.2 acre freshwater pond and .6 acre emergent vegetation wetland. The site though does show signs that on a significantly wetter year it could expand to the 12 acre size but doesn't because a large portion of it has been drained.

Much of the other past information that was found looks as if there were other small projects and assessments in progress. However, information is scattered and incomplete and it is unknown exactly what was done and what was only planned.

Goals

1. Gain a greater understanding of the functionality and condition of wetland systems within the Reservation boundary by way of wetland monitoring and condition assessment. (Monitoring and Assessment)
2. Work to improve wetland condition and functionality through coordinating resources and collaborating with landowners and partners. (Voluntary Restoration)
3. Promote public interest and knowledge of wetlands through education and information distribution. (Voluntary Restoration)
4. Maintain a comprehensive inventory of wetlands. (Monitoring and Assessment, Wetland Water Quality Standards)
5. Develop and enforce wetland definitions and regulations to further protect the land and its' resources. (Wetland Regulatory)

Core Element: Monitoring and Assessment

Goal 1- Gain a greater understanding of the functionality and condition of wetland systems within the Reservation boundary by way of monitoring and wetland condition assessment.

Goal 3- Maintain a comprehensive inventory of wetlands.

Action	Activities	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Monitor Wetland resources as specified in strategy								
	Track selected monitoring sites	X	X	X	X	X		EPA
	Update wetland inventory to monitor acreage and condition		X		X		COE, NRCS, HINU	EPA
	Evaluate wetland function for BMP recommendations	X	X	X	X	X	NRCS, HINU	EPA
	Evaluate monitoring and assessment strategies to ensure they meet long term wetland resource goals	X		X				EPA
Establish a baseline quantity and quality of Tribal Wetlands								
	Compare any past data with current monitoring to identify trends and patterns in wetland losses/gains and condition	X					BIA, NRCS	EPA

Core Element: Voluntary Restoration

Goal 2- Promote public interest and knowledge of wetlands through education and information distribution.

Goal 4- Improve wetland condition and functionality through coordinating resources and collaborating with landowners and partners.

Action	Activities	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Coordinate technical assistance for the Tribe and private landowners in the Reservation boundaries								
	Utilize tribal and other agency resources to provide technical assistance	X	X	X	X	X	EPA, NRCS, WRAPS, COE, BIA, KDHE, KBS, KDWPT...	
Coordinate financial assistance for the Tribe and private landowners within the reservation boundaries								
	Identify funding sources to assist landowners in wetland restoration and rehabilitation activities	X	X	X	X	X	EPA, EQIP, DU, PF, WRP, NRCS, WRAPS, CD, KAWS, KDWPT	
Maintain a no net loss of remaining wetlands regarding acreage, condition, and function								
	Use a watershed approach to protect and restore wetlands by integrating the tribes 319 and other water quality program goals with wetland resource goals	X	X	X	X	X	KEO, WRAPS, KWO	KEO, NRCS, WRAPS

	Coordinate funding and implementation of recommended BMPs							KEO, WRAPS, KWO	KEO, NRCS, KDHE, BIA, PF, DU, KBS, WRAPS, EQIP, KFS, KAWS, KWO
Maintain an up to date knowledge of wetland topics regarding BMP, funding sources, and other wetland topics									
	Attend trainings, workshops, webinars, etc. to remain up to date on wetland topics	X	X	X	X	X		ASWM, WTI, EPA, Local Agency workshops	
Increase information sharing with involved agencies and Public									
	Compile information on assessment and projects into a GIS system	X	X	X	X	X		KWO	
	Distribute brochures, flyers etc. at community events	X	X	X	X	X		Local community	EPA
	Present at local schools or community events on the importance and functions of wetlands	X	X	X	X	X		KNS, Local schools	
	Utilize the Kickapoo website to share information on wetlands and projects	X	X	X	X	X		KTIK	

Core Element: Wetland Water Quality Standards

Goals 3- Maintain a comprehensive inventory of wetlands.

Action	Activities	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Compile wetland data to use as reference should the Tribe decide to develop wetland specific water quality standards								
	Continually search for additional sites that can be used to gather more wetland water quality data		X		X		KEO	
	Continue to sample selected tribal wetlands	X	X	X	X	X	Other KEO programs	EPA
	Create appropriate wetland water quality standards to better manage the Tribe's wetland resources					X	KEO, KWO, KDHE	

Core Element: Wetland Regulatory

Goal 5- Develop and enforce wetland definitions, regulations to further protect the land and its' resources.

Action	Activities	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Possible Partners	Potential Funding
Develop definitions and jurisdictional scope in case the Tribe decides to develop wetland specific regulatory program								
	Develop a working definition of what the Tribe considers a wetland				X		KDHE, KWO	
	Develop definitions involving Tribal waters				X		Other KTIK programs	

Note: At this time neither the political climate, funding, and capacity surrounding the Kickapoo Tribe will allow progress towards creating wetland water quality standards or implement wetland regulation at this time. The Tribe does desire to pursue this at a later date if circumstances shift and give the KEO the opportunity.

List of Acronyms

ASWM	Association of State Wetland Managers
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CD	Conservation Districts
COE	Corps of Engineers
DU	Ducks Unlimited
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentive Program
HINU	Haskell Indian Nation's University
KAWS	Kansas Alliance for Wetlands & Streams
KBS	Kansas Biological Survey
KDHE	Kansas Department of Health and Environment
KDWPT	Kansas Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
KEO	Kickapoo Environmental Office
KFS	Kansas Forest Service
KNS	Kickapoo Nation School
KWO	Kansas Water Office
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
PF	Pheasants Forever
WTI	Wetland Training Institute Inc.
WRAPS	Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy