

**2-1915. Conservation structures and practices, grants; riparian and wetland protection programs; return of water right, cost-share grants; water quality buffers, grants, valuation of land.** (a)

Appropriations may be made for grants out of funds in the treasury of this state for terraces, terrace outlets, check dams, dikes, ponds, ditches, critical area planting, grassed waterways, tailwater recovery irrigation systems, precision land forming, range seeding, detention and grade stabilization structures and other enduring water conservation practices installed on public lands and on privately owned lands and, the control and eradication of sericea lespedeza as provided in subsection (n) of K.S.A. 2-1908, and amendments thereto, on public lands and on privately owned lands. Except as provided by the multipurpose small lakes program act, any such grant shall not exceed 80% of the total cost of any such practice.

(b) A program for protection of riparian and wetland areas shall be developed by the Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation and implemented by the conservation districts. The conservation districts shall prepare district programs to address resource management concerns of water quality, erosion and sediment control and wildlife habitat as part of the conservation district long-range and annual work plans. Preparation and implementation of conservation district programs shall be accomplished with assistance from appropriate state and federal agencies involved in resource management.

(c) Subject to the provisions of K.S.A. 2-1919, and amendments thereto, any holder of a water right, as defined by subsection (g) of K.S.A. 82a-701, and amendments thereto, who is willing to voluntarily return all or a part of the water right to the state shall be eligible for a grant not to exceed 80% of the total cost of the purchase price for such water right. The Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation shall administer this cost-share program with funds appropriated by the legislature for such purpose. The chief engineer shall certify to the Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation that any water right for which application for cost-share is received under this section is eligible in accordance with the criteria established in K.S.A. 2-1919, and amendments thereto.

(d) (1) Subject to appropriation acts therefor, the Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation shall develop the Kansas water quality buffer initiative for the purpose of restoring riparian areas using best management practices. The executive director of the Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation shall ensure that the initiative is complementary to the federal conservation reserve program.

(2) There is hereby created in the state treasury the Kansas water quality buffer initiative fund. All expenditures from such fund shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the executive director of the Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation or the executive director's designee. Money credited to the fund shall be used for the purpose of making grants to install water quality best management practices pursuant to the initiative.

(3) The county or district appraiser shall identify and map riparian buffers consisting of at least one contiguous acre per parcel of real property located in the appraiser's county. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, riparian buffers shall be valued by the county or district appraiser as tame grass land, native grass land or waste land, as appropriate. As used in this subsection (3), "riparian buffer" means an area of stream-side vegetation that: (A) Consists of tame or native grass and may include forbs and woody plants; (B) is located along a perennial or intermittent stream, including the stream bank and adjoining floodplain; and (C) is a minimum of 66 feet wide and a maximum of 180 feet wide.

(e) The Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation with the approval of the state conservation commission shall adopt rules and regulations to administer such grant and protection programs.

(f) Any district is authorized to make use of any assistance whatsoever given by the United States, or any agency thereof, or derived from any other source, for the planning and installation of such practices. The Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation may enter into agreements with other state and federal agencies to implement the Kansas water quality buffer initiative.

**History:** L. 1937, ch. 5, § 15; L. 1976, ch. 7, § 5; L. 1979, ch. 9, § 1; L. 1985, ch. 342, § 9; L. 1986, ch. 7, § 1; L. 1987, ch. 10, § 1; L. 1988, ch. 396, § 2; L. 1989, ch. 308, § 1; L. 1998, ch. 143, § 46; L. 2001, ch. 64, § 1; L. 2002, ch. 37, § 3; L. 2004, ch. 96, § 4; L. 2012, ch. 140, § 127; July 1.