

For Immediate Publication

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Neighborhood Meeting Focuses on Forestry Practices

Improving forested areas along streams was the focus of a neighborhood meeting, June 13, south of Ottawa, through the Marais des Cygnes Watershed Riparian Forestry Initiative.

The meeting featured a timber stand improvement demonstration project to improve water quality, wildlife habitat and overall condition of Brian Shurtleff's property. The goal of the Initiative's neighborhood meeting was to bring neighboring landowners along a water body to tour the featured property's forestry improvements and provide an opportunity for them to complete contiguous improvement practices- making a much larger, beneficial impact on water quality, stream bank stabilization and wildlife habitat.

Ryan Neises, Kansas Forest Service Marais des Cygnes watershed forester, said he is looking forward to working with additional landowners in the area.

"Landowners can receive free technical assistance on tree plantings and timber improvements," Neises said. "Included in that is a Forest Stewardship plan detailing how to properly maintain their forested areas along stream banks."

"I marked trees to remove for Brian for a timber stand improvement," Neises said. "I then assisted him in treating those marked trees which released the quality trees."

Shurtleff said he sees an increase in wildlife since he began his forestry projects.

"I harvest several turkey and by the next hunting season, they are once again thriving," Shurtleff said. "I hope to have some established coveys of quail soon."

Bob Culbertson and Amy Zavala, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, discussed the additions of quail buffers and filter strips to Shurtleff's property to decrease the amount of nonpoint source pollution and slow run off into the area streams.

Funds are available through the Marais des Cygnes Watershed Riparian Forestry Initiative grant for completing forestry plantings, installing best management practices and timber stand improvement projects. The installed practices along stream banks improve water quality, provide an economic benefit and increase wildlife habitats.

The event is funded through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319 Non-Point Source Pollution grant administered through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Lake Region Resource Conservation and Development Council sponsors the Initiative in partnership with Kansas Forest Service and Hillsdale Water Quality Project.

Cooperators for the neighborhood meeting included: Franklin County Natural Resource Conservation Service, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, K-State Research & Extension, Franklin County Conservation District, Marais des Cygnes Basin Advisory Committee, Smokey's BBQ and Gerken Rental.

For more information about the Initiative, or to participate in upcoming workshops and events, contact Watershed Forester, Ryan Neises at 785-242-2073 or rneises@ksu.edu.

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