



News Release

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Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Acquisition for the Cherokee County, Kansas portion of the Tri-State Mining District

The Kansas Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), collectively known as “Trustees”, have acquired 711 acres in Cherokee County, Kansas. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWPT) will hold title to the property and be responsible for its operation and maintenance. This marks the first restoration acquisition in Kansas since the implementation of the Cherokee County Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment.

Cherokee County, Kansas, is part of the Tri-State Mining District in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma which was mined extensively for lead, cadmium, and zinc for more than a century. As a consequence of these mining and mine-related activities, large amounts of metals were released into the Cherokee County environment. Lead, cadmium, and zinc are potentially toxic to a wide variety of organisms, including birds, mammals, fish, mussels, plants, and other biota. The Trustees have been documenting these injuries since the mid-1990’s. The Restoration Plan outlines specific goals to compensate for mining-related injuries to trust natural resources.

The property was previously enrolled in the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). The WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, enhance and restore wetlands on their property. As part of the WRP agreement, NRCS will fund restoration of native grasslands and construct wetlands. The 711 acre property has one mile of perennial stream with an intact riparian corridor. The Trustees will work together with KDWPT and NRCS to draft and implement a management plan for the property. The management plan will focus on benefits to trust resources such as shorebirds, waterfowl and other migratory birds. It is anticipated that the property will also provide a recreational benefit to the public for activities such as hunting, fishing and bird watching.

When completed the management plan will be posted online at:
http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/NRDA/CherCO_KS/CherokeeCounty.htm.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Our mission is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.