

Conservation District employee provides knowledge that's hands-on, science-based

By Larissa Morgan

Did you know that conservation districts had their beginnings in the 1930s in response to multiple dust storms and erosion? The Franklin County, Kansas, Conservation District was founded by five men who had the insight and felt they needed to conserve the land.

I recently interviewed Keri Harris, who is employed by that district. Her primary location is Ottawa, the county seat.

She visits local farmers and ranchers in the field and visits local schools to provide hands-on, science-based lessons on a variety of topics that include soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Harris oversees the implementation of state-funded financial assistance programs to improve soil and water quality. She also educates the public about the importance of conserving our natural resources for the future.

While she's technically the Franklin County Conservation District's only employee, Harris has developed an amazing network of partners and volunteer who help with various events and tasks.

Her job has enabled her to travel throughout the nation to receive training on conservation-related topics.

“Professional development trainings have allowed me the opportunity to travel to New Orleans, Reno, Anaheim, Denver, Nashville, and San Antonio,” Harris said.

Franklin County Conservation is dedicated to educating the public about conservation and helping people help the land while conserving natural resources.

“It is only natural for the Conservation District to partner with local schools and organizations to promote conservation of our natural resources and to help promote the number one industry in Kansas – agriculture,” Harris said.