



News Release

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For Immediate Release

Kansas Rolls Out CRP Program for Playas, Signs up Landowners

The Kansas Farm Service Agency launched the new [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) for playa lakes](#) during a roll-out event October 26 in Dodge City which featured national and state agriculture and wildlife officials and a landowner who signed up for the program on the spot.

Brothers Earl and Dennis Simon are landowner and farm operator, respectively, of a 22-acre playa lake west of Dodge City. [Playas](#) are shallow, seasonal wetlands found in abundance throughout the Southern High Plains; about 10,000 are located in western Kansas. Playas are the primary source of [recharge](#) for the Ogallala Aquifer and are one of the most important wetland habitats for birds along the Central Flyway.

The Simon brothers were featured guests at the roll-out event where landowner Earl Simon enrolled his playa and adjacent 60-acre buffer into the [CRP Wetlands Restoration Non Floodplain Initiative \(CP23a\)](#).

The signing of the contract took place alongside Simon's playa in the presence of Kansas Farm Service Agency Executive Director Bill Fuller, U.S. Farm Service Agency Assistant Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs Steve Connelly, Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks Director of Fisheries and Wildlife Joe Kramer, Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) Coordinator Mike Carter, Agriculture Assistant to U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts - Mel Thompson, and Legislative Assistant to U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran - Trevor McKeeman, as well as dozens of individuals from conservation groups and agencies such as Pheasants Forever, Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS), Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission.

"This is a great program for landowners, playas, water quality, wildlife and recreation," said Fuller, who encouraged partners to help the FSA sign up more landowners.

As the papers were signed, as if on cue, a flock of Canada Geese flew overhead, joining a gathering of about 300 Sandhill Cranes, American Avocets, Northern Pintails, Mallards, Redheads and Lesser Yellowlegs which were also

Later this week, KAWS will host three CP23a workshops for landowners Oct. 28 and 29 in Lakin, Scott City and Colby, Kansas. The workshops were funded in part by the PLJV in an effort to boost landowner enrollment in the program to 11,000 acres - the maximum allotted to the state out of the 250,000 acres designated nationally. For more information on how to join a workshop, contact KAWS Coordinator Tim Christian at (620) 242-6440.

"I'm sure we are going to max out enrollment in this program - so let's go get it," Fuller said.

"Earl Simon may be one of the first landowners in Kansas to sign up for this program," Mike Carter said. "But with all the effort from our partners such as KAWS, Pheasants Forever, NRCS and FSA, he certainly won't be the last."

The CP23a initiative has only been available to landowners since Oct. 1, but Texas already has 429.7 acres enrolled in the program within just two counties, according to Sammy Orange, Conservation Chief for the Texas Farm Service Agency. Results from other states were not available at press time.

The initiative was announced August 4 by President Bush as a part of the Administration's national goal to restore, enhance and protect at least three million wetland acres over the next five years.

paying a visit to the playa that day.

"What we are doing today to protect this playa is great for birds and works for landowners," said PLJV Coordinator Mike Carter.

Note to editors: Event and playa photos available upon request.

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