



**Selling Conservation of Playas
in Western Kansas
Via CCRP & WRP Programs**

**Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and
Streams**

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What Is A Playa?

- ❖ Playas are shallow, seasonal wetlands that lie in the lowest point of a closed watershed.
- ❖ Basins are lined with clay soil, which collect and hold water from rainfall and runoff events.
- ❖ Playas are the center of biodiversity on the plains, supporting more than 200 species of birds and other wildlife.
- ❖ Playas are also the primary source of recharge for the **Ogallala Aquifer**.

What Does A Playa Look Like?



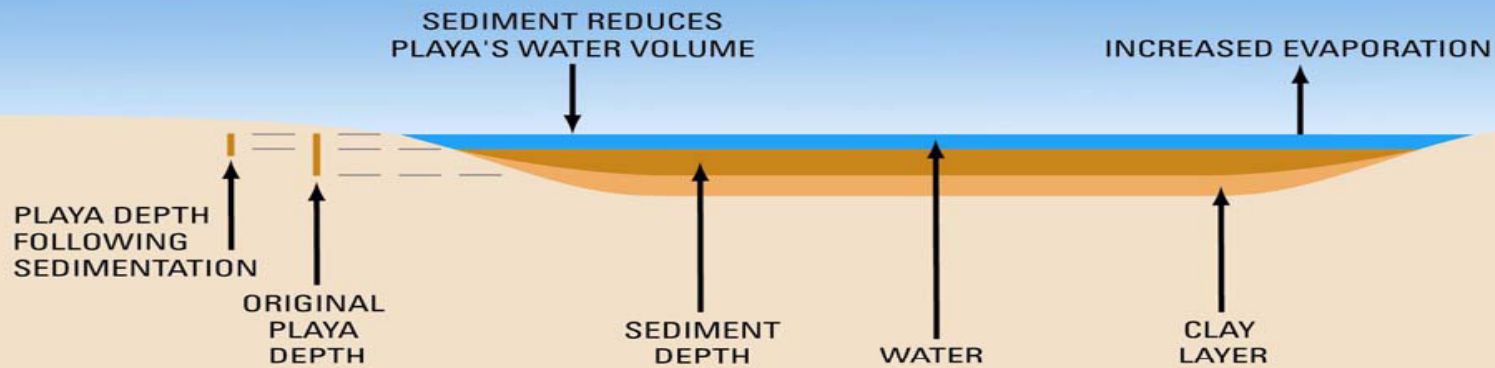
Why Protect Playas?

The best way to conserve the wetlands and protect them from sediment build-up is the seeding of native grass buffers around the playa area.

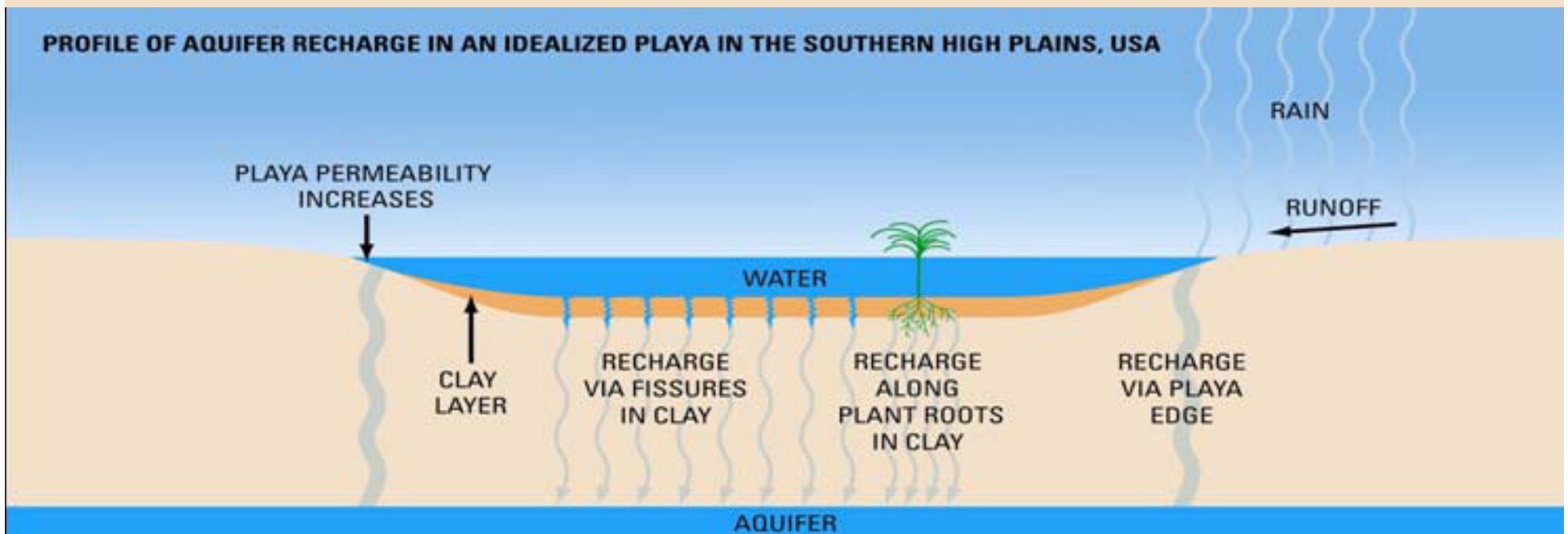
The buffer zone around the playa acts as a filter and reduces the amount of sediment and unwanted chemicals from reaching the basin of the playa. At the same time the grass buffer becomes habitat for wildlife.

Profile of Aquifer Recharge

PROFILE OF A SEDIMENT-FILLED PLAYA IN THE SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS, USA



PROFILE OF AQUIFER RECHARGE IN AN IDEALIZED PLAYA IN THE SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS, USA



Conservation of Playas

Many of the Playa's in western Kansas have been protected by the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

≈335,000 acres of CRP (west of highway 81) expired in 2009

≈541,000 acres will expire in 2010

≈448,000 acres will expire in 2011

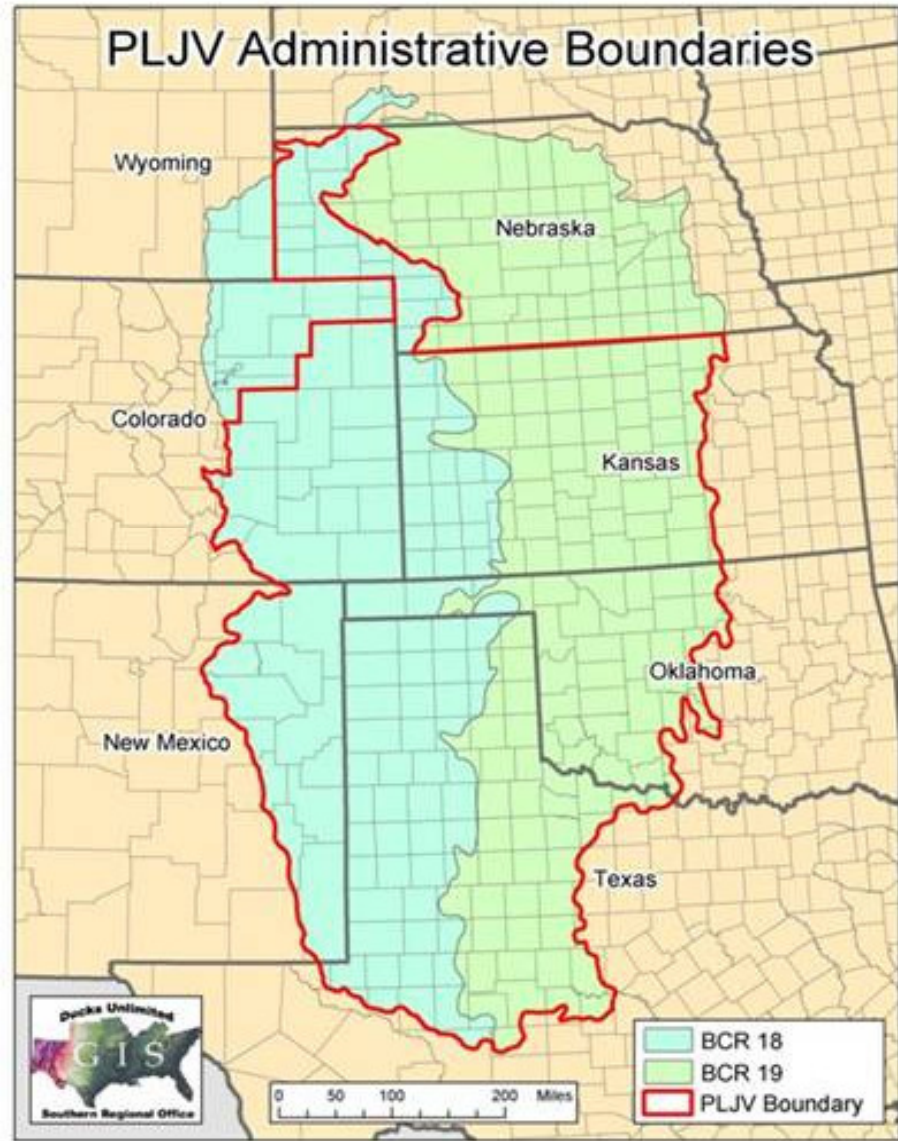
≈421,000 acres will expire in 2012

(2008 Farm bill reduced the authorized acres of CRP from 39.2 million to 32 million.)

Building Partners In The Conservation of Playas

- **Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS) has a contribution agreement with Playa Lakes and Joint Ventures (PLJV) since 2002 in building conservation capacity in Western Kansas. That agreement helps fund the position of Wetland Coordinator for Western Kansas.**

Playa Lakes Joint Venture



Playa Conservation Partnership

USDA/NRCS also provides funding for the Wetland Coordinator position and provides:

Office space, access to various office equipment; including a lap top and a vehicle to make face to face contact with landowners/producers in the field.

Playa Lakes and Joint Ventures doubled the capacity grant for the Wetland Coordinator to continue making contacts offering CCRP/WRP programs that facilitate the setting aside playas for **Ogallala Aquifer Recharge.**

Role of Wetland Coordinator

As a Wetland Coordinator I facilitate the enrollment for landowners/producers having playa(s) in expiring CRP contracted acreage into a Continuous Conservation Reserve Program offered through the NRCS/FSA offices in their respective counties.

Contact is made via the telephone to discuss enrollment into CP practices offered (such as CP23 and CP23A) which could generate dollars to enhance their bottom line by offsetting input costs in their farm/ranch operation. Incentives for enrolling playas are offered to create an interest in participation. Rate caps have almost doubled for setting aside playas in a Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) in Western Kansas.

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) High Priority Practices

******Signing Incentive Payment (SIP)******

- * **CP5A Field Windbreaks**
- * **CP16A Shelterbelts**
- * **CP21 Filter Strips**
- * **CP 23 Wetland Restoration Floodplain**
- * **CP27 Farmable Wetland**
- * **CP29 Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Buffer Wetland Buffer**
- * **CP33 Field Borders**
- * **CP8A Grassed Waterways**
- * **CP17A Living Snow Fences**
- * **CP22 Riparian Buffer**
- * **CP23A Wetland Restoration Non-Floodplain**
- * **CP27 Farmable Wetland Buffer**
- * **Farmable Pastureland Wetland Buffer**
- * **CP38E Wildlife Habitat**

******Practice Incentive Payment (PIP)******

- * **CP5A Field Windbreaks**
- * **CP21 Filter Strips**
- * **CP 23 Wetland Restoration Floodplain**
- * **CP27 Farmable Wetland**
- * **CP29 Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Buffer Wetland Buffer**
- * **CP31 Bottomland Timber Establishment**
- * **CP8A Grassed Waterways**
- * **CP22 Riparian Buffer**
- * **CP23A Wetland Restoration Non-Floodplain**
- * **CP27 Farmable Wetland Buffer**
- * **Farmable Pastureland Wetland Buffer**

Practices may be 10 to 15 years in length. Contact Local NRCS office for more information.

Expanding the Partnership

Along with USDA/NRCS, Playa Lakes and Joint Ventures...

KS Department of Wildlife & Parks is providing additional funding for the Wetland Coordinator and providing the assistance of a Bio-Tech to work with the Wetland Coordinator for one-on-one or group contacts in Western Kansas.

Where do we go from here?

As water becomes an ever increasing valuable natural resource for drinking and for irrigation, **playas** must be protected.

As we educate the public as to the role **playas** play in our ecology, we hope **playas** will continue to gain national recognition in the part they play in the recharge of the **Ogallala Aquifer**.

The time is at hand to recognize lagoons, buffalo wallows or **playas** for their contribution to the fragile hydrological make-up of the **Ogallala Aquifer**.

It's quite simple...it is up to us as conservationists of our natural resources to promote **playas** and to continue to educate the public as to what **playas** do and why we need them .



Questions???