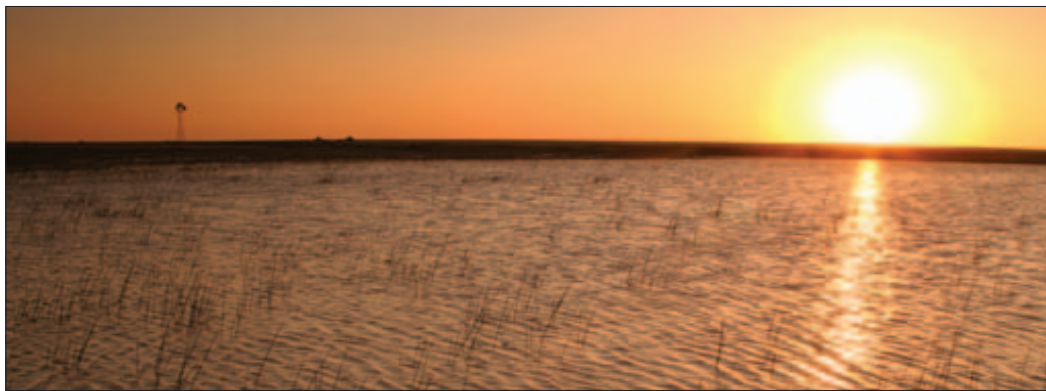


Natural Resources

PHOTO CREDIT: BRIAN SLODE



PLAYA POSITIVES: There are more than 60,000 playa lakes in a six-state area that includes Kansas, according to the Playa Lake Joint Venture. Playas are important contributors to groundwater recharge; they also provide wildlife habitat.

Survey says landowners like playas conservation

A SURVEY commissioned by the Playa Lakes Joint Venture finds that most landowners with playas on their properties are willing to conserve them. Many say the wetlands are a positive presence on the land, primarily because they attract an array of wildlife.

These findings, based on results of a

Key Points

- Playa Lake Joint Venture survey says landowners want to preserve playa lakes.
- Conservation programs help landowners preserve playas with natural plantings.
- Playas in the six-state PLJV region are key sources of groundwater recharge.

2006 survey commissioned by the PLJV, indicate that playa lake landowners are a potentially significant market for wetlands and wildlife conservation programs, such as those offered through the U.S. farm bill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, state landowner incentive programs, and other private-lands con-

servation programs.

"The results are encouraging for wildlife and wetlands conservation, especially going into the next farm bill reauthorization process," says PLJV Coordinator Mike Carter. "I think we and our partners need to ensure that wetlands and playa conservation programs are given greater attention in the next farm bill."

Wetlands are popular

The survey says that 74% of playa landowners are willing (28% "highly" and 46% "moderately") to plant native-grass buffers around the wetlands if given an incentive, which is what farm bill programs like the Farmable Wetlands Program and Wetlands Conservation Non-Floodplain Initiative — otherwise known as CP 23a — do.

Grass buffers protect playas by filtering out eroded soils from surrounding cropland that can wash into and bury playa basins, and by filtering out contaminants from irrigation and storm water runoff.

Survey data also reveals that landowners like playas and the wildlife they attract. Sixty-eight percent of playa landowners say the wetlands are an "overall positive" feature of the landscape, with wildlife being the top benefit.

Also, landowner (playa and non-playa) willingness is fairly significant for many other conservation practices, such as removing invasive plant species (52%) and implementing grazing management plans (48%).

Survey data indicates that although

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