

## COVER CROP INTERSEEDING PILOT PROJECT

**STATE PROGRAM:** Kansas Department of Environment

**ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT:** City of Wetmore

**ASSISTANCE AMOUNT:** \$3.5M



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2019, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) forged a partnership between its CWSRF, the Bureau of Watershed Management, Glacial Hills Resource Conservation and Development, and the City of Wetmore to establish a new CWSRF Interseeder Program to promote the use of cover crops to farmers in northeast Kansas. When widely adopted, planting cover crops during the offseason can conserve water resources with less irrigation, reduce excess nutrients that could enter neighboring water bodies, and better protect water quality by improving the integrity of the soil profile over time. Producers also experience the long-term benefit of reduced costs for fertilizer and pesticides. High clearance interseeder equipment is used to plant cover crops, though the significant upfront capital costs of purchasing this expensive equipment is the largest barrier to wider adoption in the agricultural community.

This project uses a \$3.5 million pass-through loan made to the City of Wetmore that will be entirely forgiven. The City then provides the funding to its local nonprofit partner, Glacial Hills Resource Conservation and Development, which purchases the interseeding equipment, markets the program, and provides the equipment to agricultural service providers (ASPs) in targeted watersheds. The savings from the forgivable CWSRF allows ASPs to significantly discount the cost of leasing the equipment to farmers, allowing them to try the practice without the large capital investment of purchasing the equipment or leasing the equipment at market prices. The partners anticipate that the interseeder equipment will plant approximately 50,000 acres each year which will result in nutrient load reductions of 97,000 lbs of nitrogen, 48,000 lbs of phosphorus, and 33,000 tons of sediment. This project will empower the agricultural community to adopt and maintain crop covers, which will produce long-term and large-scale improvements in nonpoint source pollution remediation. After the initial project period, the equipment will be available for purchase by the agricultural service providers.

To read more about this case study, please visit [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/documents/2020\\_pisces\\_compendium.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/documents/2020_pisces_compendium.pdf).