



# Making a Difference

2016 – 2017

## Natural Resources Program Focus Team Natural Resources

### Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension: providing education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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#### Situation

Natural resource management on American Indian reservations is a complex mix of cultural and sacred uses, as well as the more pragmatic and economic. Traditionally, local K-State Research and Extension offices have had difficulty engaging this clientele, centered on the four reservations in northeast Kansas. Through the long-term efforts of members of the Natural Resources Program Focus Team, we are now engaging with this group.

#### What We Did

K-State Research and Extension provided advice about natural resource management to tribal environmental departments. They helped secure tribal representation on local Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) leadership teams, and are continuing to offer annual fruit and vegetable gardening workshops to the largest tribal communities (Kickapoo and Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation). K-State Research and Extension was selected to lead a regional project entitled *Building Collaboration Between 1862 Land Grant Universities and Tribal Colleges* in the North Central Region. The project culminated in a three-day water summit in May at Haskell Indian Nations University. A total of 35 people attended the event, including representatives from seven tribal colleges, six state land grants, and three federal agencies.

#### Outcomes

K-State Research and Extension agents and specialists are now trusted advisors of the tribes, which will lead to improved range management, water quality, and local food production on the reservations. As an added benefit, for the first time K-State Research and Extension 4-H Youth Development began working directly with the tribal communities.

An evaluation of the Extension Water Summit held in May showed:

- 100 percent of the respondents indicated the summit increased their understanding of opportunities for improved collaboration between land-grant universities and tribal colleges on water issues.
- 88 percent of respondents indicated that they would be likely or very likely to attend a similar event in the future.

Comments from the May Extension Water Summit:

- It was great especially the networking
- Well done, nice diverse group



*Attendees on a field trip at the Extension Water Summit.*