The offsite program is designed to benefit water quality in the Arkansas River by removing at least twice the amount of sediment as would be achieved by onsite Best Management Practices (BMPs). By using the offsite BMP program, developers realize significant economic benefits because they can avoid expensive installations of urban solutions for sediment reduction, such as hydrodynamic separators (HDS) or other onsite BMPs. Developers save more than just upfront costs as well: the estimated lifecycle cost of an HDS is $1,100 for maintenance, inspections, and replacement. In comparison, by choosing to participate in the offsite program, developers have the option to pay an annual fee of $19/acre in lieu of HDS installation. These annual fees help incentivize area farmers to convert their acres to no-till, which reduces significantly more sediment upstream, and for a fraction of the cost of on-site methods.

Part of this program’s success is due to farmer support in the Little Arkansas River Watershed. To date, a reported total of 246 developments (1010 acres) are participating in the Offsite BMP program, and these acres would produce an estimated 404 tons of sediment. To offset this, 496.7 acres of upstream farmland has been converted to no-till through the program’s incentives and education. As a result of this program, annual offsite sediment load has been reduced by an estimated 1589 tons, developers and businesses in Wichita have been able to save more than $5 million in upfront costs, and the city reports $368,500 in ongoing annual savings for private businesses.
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The offsite BMP program in Wichita will continue to grow and evolve, and its continued success will help to establish a model for a regional approach to water quality management.

As the Offsite BMP Program forges ahead, careful monitoring and accurate reporting is necessary to establish actual costs and savings for all involved. Local engagement and detailed accounting of sediment removal and other water quality impacts such as atrazine use is a key requirement for city, state and federal regulators. Ensuring that water quality benefits from the offsite practices continue in perpetuity remains the fundamental key to this program’s long-term success. Progress hinges on participation by farmers in the Little Arkansas watershed, located upstream from the City of Wichita.

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$5 million in upfront cost savings for private development
1010 development acres enrolled and
496.7 offsite acres converted to no-till
1589 tons of offsite sediment reduced annually as a result of cropland BMPs
$368,500 in annual savings for private development and businesses