

Oklahoma Conservation Partnership Report

September 2011



Natural Resources Conservation Service
100 USDA, Suite 206
Stillwater, OK 74074
405.742.1204

www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov

VISION: Productive Lands – Healthy Environment -- MISSION: Helping People Help the Land

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American Indian Youth Summit

The Choctaw Nation hosted their 4th Annual American Indian Youth Summit this last June in Durant Oklahoma. The Choctaw Nation Event Center was the site for the youth inspirational summit with the theme "Xtreme Determination is Power." This years summit provided a program filled with educational and motivational material presented by entertainers known to capture and hold the attention of young audiences. This event is held annually to kick-off the Summer Youth Employment Training Program. The program includes curriculum and class work as well as real-life work experiences.

This event was sponsored by the Choctaw Nation, Big Five Community Services, Southern Workforce Board, KEDDO, Southeastern Workforce Board, Chickasaw Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Citizen Pottawatomie Nation, OK Department of Career Tech, Kiamichi Technology Center, Governor's State Youth Council, Department of Rehabilitation Services and the OK Department of Commerce. NRCS along with several agencies and organizations also set up informational booths and talked with students about potential career choices. This event has continued to grow American Indian youth and young adults from all over the state of Oklahoma flock to this annual youth event that began in 2007.

The American Indian Youth Summit is designed to motivate and inspire youth and young adults ages 14 to 21 about their future. The American Indian youth are also provided the opportunity to visit with exhibitors who have important information about career opportunities and other educational materials. NRCS had a career booth at the event and provided the NRCS career brochure and educational materials; the NRCS Native Bee Pollinator poster and Backyard Conservation booklet, to approximately 1,538 youth at the Summit. These were an estimated 1620 in total attendance.



Ann Colyer, Choctaw Nation Tribal Liaison & Choctaw Nation Indian Princess



An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

CHOCTAW NATION LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

Each year, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma conducts its Labor Day Festival and Pow Wow at Tushka Homma. The Labor Day Festival offers many activities that appeal to all ages and personalities. NRCS hosted an information and education booth at the Labor Day Festival on Sept 2 -3.

Those assisting with the booth were Ann Colyer, Carol Crouch, Jennifer Mosteller, Tom Neumeyer, T.J. Martin, Donna Neumeyer, Jamey Wood, Harold Wheeler and Amanda Stanford. The Native American Indian poster, bee poster, bookmarks, Backyard Conservation and other materials were shared with festival-goers, and supplies were all given away before noon on Saturday. The Choctaw Nation is the country's third largest tribe with approximately 100,000 people attending the festival over the 4 day period.



Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) Enrollment Continues to Increase

In September, NRCS closed on two more permanent conservation easements in the HFRP. Both easements are in Delaware County. This brings the total acres under permanent easement to 875.29 acres.

In August and September, NRCS extended offers on the highest ranking 2011 applications. Ten offers were extended and eight of those offers were accepted. This raises the acres that have been approved for enrollment from 4,348 to 5,489 acres.

Restoration work is already underway on two of the approved HFRP projects and forest stand improvement through selective chemical thinning has been completed on 749 acres. The first in a series of prescribed burns have been completed on 869 acres.

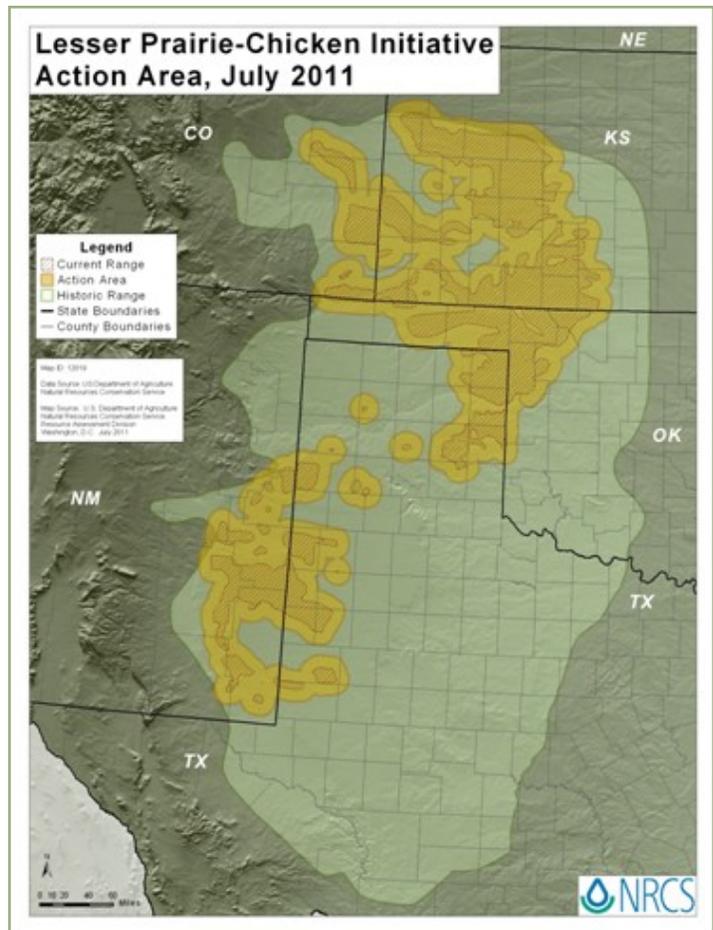
Programs Obligations in Oklahoma for Primary 2008 Farm Bill Programs				
Program	2009	2010	2011	TOTALS
Financial Assistance Programs				
Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)	\$739,900	\$888,000	\$1,099,822	\$2,727,722
Conservation Security Program (CSP)	\$5,557,400	\$4,363,100	\$3,568,766	\$13,489,266
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) *		\$16,175,900	\$27,036,104	\$43,212,004
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	\$20,874,200	\$22,061,800	\$22,378,303	\$65,314,303
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	\$1,375,800	\$845,900	\$184,249	\$2,405,949
*Conservation Stewardship Program 2011 obligations include \$15,912,804 for prior year contract payments in 2011				
Easement Programs				
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)	\$268,000	\$276,500	\$0	\$544,500
Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)	\$1,400,000	\$2,450,000	\$1,475,300	\$5,325,300
Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)	\$6,600	\$976,300	\$3,523,600	\$4,506,500
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	\$4,403,900	\$8,153,400	\$8,134,468	\$20,691,768
Annual Totals	\$34,625,800	\$56,190,900	\$67,400,612	

NRCS Completes Conference Report with USFWS on the Lesser Prairie Chicken

NRCS began implementation of a 5 state Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative (LPCI) over 2 years ago in an effort to facilitate landscape-level improvements across the range of the LPC. The LPCI is based on a targeted conservation systems approach to implement practices to manage, enhance and expand the habitat of the LPC. The LPCI is comprised of three key components: 1) focus technical and financial resources on priority LPC areas to implement practices that support the needs of the LPC; 2) develop and implement a plan of monitoring and assessment of on the ground efforts and; 3) develop and implement an outreach and training program to educate landowners and other professionals.

Collaboration with many stakeholders has taken place to ensure that the activities of NRCS complement the efforts currently underway by other partners. Part of this collaboration has been the development of a Conference Report (CR) between the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NRCS. This report was finalized in June, 2011, and contains the USFWS analysis of the expected adverse, benign, and beneficial effects likely to result from implementation of NRCS conservation practices within LPC Action Area (shown here).

What does the LPCI-CR do for NRCS and its cooperators? It evaluates the collective effects of implementing NRCS conservation practices and related planning processes on the LPC and its habitats. It provides certainty to cooperators who voluntarily implement the NRCS conservation practices and measures covered in the CR in that those actions will be compliant with the ESA while the LPC is a candidate species. The CR will not provide certainty if the species is listed. Therefore, the next step in this process is the agencies will now begin work to develop a conference opinion. The conference opinion will include "incidental take" provisions and provide additional levels of certainty for NRCS and our cooperators should the species be listed.



(l) to (r) NRCS, State Conservationist Ron Hilliard; OCC, Assistant Director Ben Polard and NRCS, Assistant for Field Operations, Jamey Woody. On site of the Coalgate City Lake, which is scheduled to be rehabilitated starting in October.

Zone 1 Review — *submitted by Lanny Miller*

Kay County Field Service Center

Payton Mumford, started work with the Newkirk Field Office on August 29th as the new Soil Conservation Technician. Payton is from Fox, Oklahoma and recently graduated from OSU with a BS in Natural Resource Ecology and Management with an emphasis on Range Ecology.



Payton Mumford, Soil Conservation Technician, Newkirk Field Office

Major County Field Service Center

The Major County Conservation District (MCCD) and NRCS in Fairview have been reaching out to area schools for participation in the MCCD Speech and Essay Contests as well as the NW Land and Range contest and any other needs we can assist concerning conservation education. On September 9th Ringwood Agriculture Education Teacher Will Bunt and students: Aaron Balay, Cullen Duran, Ty Hamm and Zach Palmer met NRCS District Conservationist Michael Roberts in the field to work on a plant exhibit for the state fair. Students clipped native grass plants for their display board while they learned how to identify plants in the field. Site suitability, resource concerns and our planning process for grass establishment were also part of the discussion in this field planted back to native grasses in 2008.



Ringwood Agriculture Education Teacher Will Bunt and students: Aaron Balay, Cullen Duran, Ty Hamm and Zach Palmer

Noble County Field Service Center

Meredith Shiflet Engineering student trainee worked in Perry from May – August. We exposed her to many different conservation practices and different jobs. Meredith worked with the field office on measuring native grass for CSP with the pasture stick, she helped install terraces and waterway systems and went on the WRP reviews with Steve Barner and Rusty Peterson. She worked with the Conservation District doing watershed inspections and learned to inspect the towers and do the paperwork. We were able to have Meredith work with the Perry Technical Office on numerous jobs in other counties. The partnership between NRCS, Conservation Districts and the Student Trainee program helped us give Meredith many views of NRCS.



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Zone 1 Review — *continued*

Woodward County Field Service Center

Woodward County Conservation District and Woodward USDA Service Center participated in the Feds, Farmers, and Friends Feed Families this summer and donated food and necessary living items to the local Food Pantry. Donations were weighed and distributed in June and July. This August collection totaled 220 lbs. making the Center's total collection over 300 lbs.



Cimarron County Field Service Center

Cimarron County Conservation District and NRCS – Boise City Field Office joined area partners in hosting a meeting, August 30th, to hear concerns and develop solutions regarding present and future water use needs which will effect of the Ogallala Aquifer. 126 producers attended the noon meeting.

(l) to (r); Tayla Dunn, FSA, Tom Barber, RD, Missy Halper, NRCS TSO and Stanley Irving, NRCS.

Zone 2 Review — *Submitted by Jasper Parker (Acting)*

Chandler Field Service Center

Livestock Health Seminar hosted by the Sac & Fox Nation, The Intertribal Agriculture Council and Langston University USDA Liaison Office. The location of the event was 5 ½ miles South of Stroud Oklahoma at the Sac & Fox headquarters. The event was held on August 13, 2011.



Dewey Field Service Center

The Dewey NRCS Field Office hosted a display at the County Free Fair on September 8-10. Information provided included services provide by USDA-NRCS, Farm Bill Programs and youth conservation education. Information on Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers claims of discrimination was also provided in English and Spanish. Approximately 3500 people came to this 3 day event.



James Dixon, District Conservationist



Zone 2 Review — Submitted by Jasper Parker (Acting)

Vinita Field Service Center

On Wednesday September 7th the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Craig County Conservation District (CCCD) held a come-and-go open house at the USDA Service Center in Vinita. It provided conservation program information to assist Craig County land managers with installation and maintenance of conservation practices. Erik Friend, local district conservationist from the NRCS provided the details of the conservation programs from the USDA Farm Bill. Flyers and handouts were placed at 40 locations in Craig County.



Vinita Meet and Greet

Jay Field Service Center

An informational meeting on Water Quality was held in Jay on September 13th at the Jay Community Center. Charles Rogers, Soil Conservationist in Jay, handed out program information and flyers on the Women's/Hispanic settlement. There was a wide range of information at the meeting. James Rogers from the Noble Foundation discussed converting to switchgrass and nativegrass, Joe Armstrong, OSU Weed Scientist discussed herbicide resistant weeds, Jeannetta Cooper, ODAFF, presented on Weed Free Forage certification, Tony Shepard, FSA, discussed Drought Assistance, and Jill Ashbrenner, Marti Mefford, and Tashina Kirk gave updates on their 319 programs. There were 45 people in attendance.



Tashina Kirk, 319 Illinois River Coordinator and Daniel Franke, CREP Coordinator/Water Quality Specialist

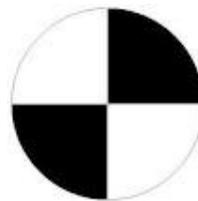
Water Quality Camp presented for 4H students by OSU Extension and the OCC was held on July 14, 2011 at the 319 demonstration farm on Honey Creek. There were 30 students in attendance with many activities going. Seining, insect collection and ID, water quality testing, catching, cooking and eating crawdads, swimming, and playing in the creek to get out of the Oklahoma heat. Christine Rose, DCCD secretary gave Enviroscene demonstration and handed out NRCS washable tattoo.



James Rogers, Noble Foundation, discussing switchgrass



Cheryl Cheadle, Blue Thumb Coordinator prepares the kids to seine for fish and insects.



Students using secchi disks to check water turbidity

Zone 3 Review — Submitted by Richard Kacir

Mangum Field Service Center

We welcomed a new employee in August to the Greer County NRCS office. Lance Lanning began his NRCS career in Mangum to fill the Soil Conservation Technician spot that has been vacant since September 2009. We welcome and look forward to working with Lance in the future.



Lance Lanning

Chickasha Field Service Center

On August 25-27 the Chickasha NRCS Field Office and the Grady County Conservation District (GCCD) were involved with the 96th Annual Grady County Fair. This year approximately 11,000 people went through the Grady County Exhibition Hall where the many booths were set up. The Chickasha F.O. and the GCCD set up a booth to inform the public about the NRCS's many programs and GCCD cost-share programs, and the 158 Watershed Control Structures in Grady County. The display showed NRCS programs such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). NRCS provided informational pamphlets such as Backyard Conservation, Eastern Redcedar Invading the Landscape, Helping You Help Your Land, as well as many others. We provided For the Good of the People and Pollinator posters for the many children visitors to our booth. Staffs from both offices were on site to answer any of the public's questions. The fair booth was a big success, and we hope to receive many customers from our efforts.

Norman Field Service Center

Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Cleveland County Conservation District partnered with the Cleveland County Cattlemen's Association (CCCA) to provide information on USDA Farm Bill conservation programs available for farmers and ranchers in Cleveland County. The conservation outreach meeting and ice cream social was held at the Cleveland County fair grounds on August 25, 2011, in Norman, Oklahoma. The meeting was held from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM and seventy three landowners attended the meeting.



District Conservationist,
Carol Crouch

Purcell Field Service Center

On Sept 8-10, NRCS and McClain CD partnered to host a conservation booth at the McClain County Fair. The Farm Bill Programs brochure was made available for farmers, ranchers, Tribes, Tribal members and women in agriculture. Information was also provided on three major resources concerns in McClain County; invasive Eastern Redcedar, Musk Thistle and Sericea Lespedeza. Over 150 students visited the booth and received handouts such as; Earth Team bookmarks, Backyard Conservation, Hometown Clean Workbook, Pollinator; Native Bee poster and Water Cycle poster. Approximately 388 people visited the



Students take advantage of the conservation educational information provided

John
Worthington,
Soil Conserva-
tion Techni-
cian at the
County Fair.



Zone 4 Review — Submitted by Jamey Wood

Ardmore Field Service Center

The Ardmore Field Service Center provided information to visitors at the NRCS and Arbuckle Conservation District Booth during the Carter County Free Fair. Public attendance at the four day event was estimated at 3500 visitors. The Ardmore FO also conducted the Land Judging and Plant Identify contests for 42 FFA students during the fair.



Coalgate Field Service Center

The Coalgate Service Center held an open house on September 7 to show off their new office and district storage barn. Approximately 40 people showed up to see the new facility and have snacks. State Representatives Paul Roan and Donnie Condit were present along with State Conservationist Ron Hilliard and OCC Assistant Director Ben Pollard.



Eufaula Field Service Center

The Oklahoma Cattleman's Association held its annual membership drive meeting on September 20, 2011 in Checotah, and Jacob Worley the District Conservationist for McIntosh County NRCS was asked to give information about USDA programs and the State Cost Share Program. The meeting was attended by 138 members and prospective members. A great barbecue dinner was served and plenty of ideas about dealing with the current drought in Oklahoma were discussed. Jacob Worley gave an informational hand-out about conservation needs in McIntosh County and the overwhelming response to the handouts was for livestock water.



McAlester Field Service Center

Fifth grade FFA & 4-H students from 6 Pittsburg County Schools participated in the annual Land Judging Contest held Sept 8 during the Pittsburg County Free Fair. The contest is conducted each year with assistance provided by the Pittsburg County Conservation District, OSU Extension Service and NRCS.



Poteau Field Service Center

On September 10, the Poteau NRCS office and LeFlore County Conservation District set up a booth at the LeFlore County Fair. Information on NRCS programs/services was provided along with information on the African American Farmer, Native American and Women and Hispanic Settlement. The event was well attended and several contacts were made.



Stigler Field Service Center

The first two Structures for Water Control in Haskell County were recently constructed. The conservation practices were planned, designed and certified complete by NRCS under the terms and conditions of a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) contract. The landowner will be able to manipulate the level of water in each structure in order to manage the sites for waterfowl and other wildlife habitat.

