

Oklahoma Conservation Partnership Report

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

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Plasticulture Conference Offers Advice for All Farmers

Plasticulture is a relatively new way of growing produce that had more than 100 people attending a conference February 12, 2011, in Oklahoma City. You could hear the nervousness in the voice of sixteen year old Myiul Murphy. Murphy is an FFA student from Comanche High School. She shared her vision and experience farming with plasticulture. Though she really doesn't have anything to compare it to, the advantages of starting her operation this way were more than apparent. She shared that the biggest struggle of being a teenage producer was not convincing her parents to buy her the machinery, it is caring so much about the people who receive the food that she insists on processing each piece of produce herself, even when it drives her to tears. Murphy may be an anomaly among her friends, but getting the youth interested in farming will be essential to the future.

Micah Anderson and Jamey Allen award Henry Caldwell for the work he has done to advance agriculture in his community. Caldwell runs a program that helps disadvantaged youth connect with nature by helping them learn to grow produce in the community garden in Clinton, Okla. Caldwell is retired and has only farmed for four years but says he will continue to reach out to the youth in the community as long as he is able.



Also presenting at the conference was Slade Farms owner Clifton A. Slade. Slade showed the drip irrigation system they use on their farm and gave ways for smaller farms to adapt the technology for the needs of the acreage. Slade also provided a peek inside the direct marketing techniques Slade Farms uses at farmer's markets and their road side stand.

Among Slade's tips were to keep produce at eye level, present a colorful display with the foods you are offering, and emphasize atmosphere—people will buy more if they feel they are getting an experience. He mentioned several added value items he and his wife had discovered that people will pay more for. But Slade also said the most important things to remember are to start small, don't overextend yourself and never invest more in any marketing scheme than you can afford to lose. He also encouraged the group to keep their eyes open because an opportunity can present itself in the most unusual way. The theme of the event and the advice Slade got from his father, "There's enough ways that everybody can have a way."

Water Resources Report — Submitted by Bill Porter

Status of Oklahoma Watershed Rehabilitation Projects as of 2-16-10

Watershed	Dam No.	County	Conservation District	Status
<i>In Planning</i>				
Fourche Maline	7M	Latimer	Latimer County CD	Est. completion 4-1-11
Cottonwood Creek	16	Canadian	East Canadian CD	Est. completion 10-1-11
Cobb Creek	3	Washita	Deer Creek CD	Est. completion 9-1-11
Upper Black Bear	62	Noble	Noble County CD	Est. completion 9-1-11
<i>Planning Completed - Awaiting Design</i>				
Sallisaw Creek	32	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending Landrights
Sallisaw Creek	29	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending
<i>In Design</i>				
Quapaw Creek	15M	Lincoln	Lincoln County CD South Caddo County	Pending
Ft Cobb Laterals	10	Caddo	CD	Est. completion 6-15-11
Barntiz Creek	1	Dewey	Dewey County CD	Est. completion 10-1-11
Barntiz Creek	11	Dewey	Dewey County CD	Est. completion 11-1-12
Barnitz Creek	5	Dewey	Dewey County CD	Est. completion 3-1-13
Sallisaw Creek	28	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Est. completion 4-15-12
Sallisaw Creek	30	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Est. completion 6-15-12
<i>Planning & Design Completed - Awaiting Construction</i>				
Cottonwood Creek	54	Logan	Logan County CD	Pending Landrights
Sallisaw Creek	34	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending Landrights
Upper Clear Boggy	36	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD	Est. start 5-1-11
Upper Clear Boggy	35	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD	Est. start 4-15-11 *ARRA
Sallisaw Creek	26	Adair	Adair County CD	Est. start 7-1-11
Sugar Creek	L-44	Caddo	South Caddo Co. CD	Est. start 4-1-11 *ARRA
Upper Clear Boggy	33	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD	Est. start 5-1-11 *ARRA
Upper Clear Boggy	34	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD	Est. start 5-1-11 *ARRA
Cottonwood Creek	15	Kingfisher	Kingfisher County CD	Est. start 3-1-11 *ARRA
Sallisaw Creek	33	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending
Caney-Coon Creek	2M	Coal	Coal County CD	Est. start 4-1-11
<i>Under Construction</i>				
Sallisaw Creek	18M	Adair	Adair County CD	Est. completion 4-1-11 *ARRA
Sugar Creek	L-43	Caddo	West Caddo County CD	Est. completion 4-1-11 *ARRA
Cobb Creek	1	Washita	Deer Creek CD	Est. completion 2-1-12
Turkey Creek	9	Washita	Washita County CD	Est. completion 1-1-12

Water Resources Report — ... continued.

Rehabilitation Completed

Sandstone Creek	16A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Barnitz Creek	14	Dewey	Dewey County CD
Mill Creek	18	Johnston	Johnston County CD
Double Creek	1,2,3,4,5,6	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Cavalry Creek	6	Washita	Washita County CD
Sandstone Creek	12,17A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sergeant Major Creek	1,2	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Cobb Creek	2	Washita	Deer Creek CD
Sallisaw Creek	15,16,20	Adair	Adair County CD
Big Wewoka Creek	29	Seminole	Seminole County CD
Cottonwood Creek	17	Canadian	East Canadian CD

*American Recovery
Reinvestment Act

Engineering Events — submitted by Chris Stoner

New Employees

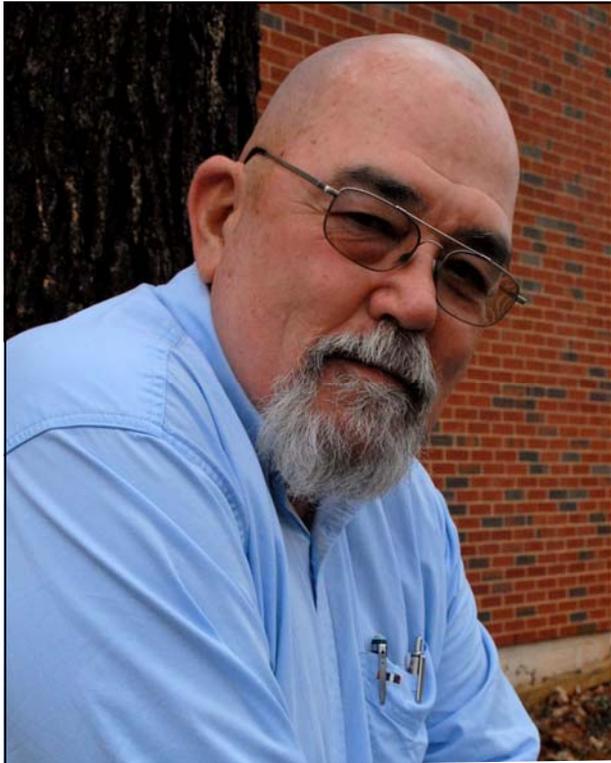
Water Management Specialist

Dr. Donald Sternitzke was chosen for the water management specialist position at the Woodward TSO. Dr. Sternitzke invented a hydroelectric machine that converts the erosive energy of moving water (kinetic) to electricity without a dam. He has previous experience with USDA as an agricultural engineer with the ARS National Peanut Research Laboratory in Dawson, GA.

During that time, he invented a patented row crop planter that plants seeds in a diamond-shaped pattern. The pattern eliminates the dead furrow, reduces plant-to-plant competition, and accelerates canopy coverage. This leads to increased yields and reduces soil erosion, weed growth, evaporation and irrigation water requirements. Dr. Sternitzke also worked as a senior environmental engineer for the Dynamac Corporation. Don has extensive irrigation and water management experience including a three year assignment in Bangladesh. He received his Doctorate in Agricultural Engineering, as well as a Masters in Agronomy from OSU, and a Bachelor's in Agricultural Engineering from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.



Engineering Events — ... continued.



Geologist

Terry Tate was chosen for the geologist position at the Pauls Valley TSO. Terry is originally from Roosevelt, Okla., but moved to Wichita, Kans., in his early teens. After spending time in the Army, he graduated from Wichita State University with a degree in geology. From there he went into the oil and gas business living in Houston, Denver, Duncan, and then Oklahoma City. He worked most of the mid-continent as well as parts of the Rockies and gulf coast.

The oil downturn in the late 80s lead him to the environmental end of things. He worked with the petroleum storage tank division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission cleaning up leaks from underground storage tanks. Tate is licensed in Oklahoma as a remediation consultant with the Corporation Commission and as a licensed driller with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board and is HAZWOPER certified.

Tate also has a Class A CDL and can operate most heavy equipment. Terry has 4 children, a son in Anchorage, AK and daughters in Oklahoma City, OK, Temple, TX, and New York City, NY. He has, so far, seven grandchildren of various ages. As a hobby, he makes a lot of sawdust from good

wood and occasionally produces usable finished projects. He is also an avid motorcyclist and currently owns four (three of which run). He has ridden as far south as Acapulco, Mexico, as far north as Inuvik, NW Territories Canada, as far west as Anchorage, AK and as far east as Prince Edward Island, Canada and has ridden in every state except Hawaii. That is ridden, no trailers. He is very pleased to be with the NRCS and is looking forward to many interesting and challenging duties.

Zone 1 Review — submitted by Lanny Miller

Woodward Technical Service Office

Melisa "Missy" Elder is the new Zone 1 clerk in the Woodward Technical Service Office. Elder is a long-time resident of Woodward and is blessed to have her family close to Woodward and in surrounding areas. She raised her daughter here and is now enjoying watching her daughter and her son-in-law raise her 2 ½ year old granddaughter, Ally, the joy of Elder's life. Knowing what a great atmosphere Oklahoma is for family, Elder looks forward to meeting each of you as her new NRCS family.



Zone 1 Review — ... continued.

Beaver Field Service Center

The Five-State Women In Ag Conference was held on January 29, 2011, in Guymon, OK. The Texas County Field Service Center provided an outreach booth during the conference. Beaver County District Conservationist Carri Manley presented information on NRCS programs during the "Making Sense of USDA Programs" portion of the conference. There were 26 people in attendance.



Zone 2 Review — Submitted by Andy Tucker



Pawnee Field Service Center

The Pawnee County Conservation District Pawnee Field Service Center held a watershed landowner meeting at the Pawnee County Fairgrounds to inform landowners of the do's and don'ts of owning or renting land with watersheds. Robert Toole from the Oklahoma Conservation Commission attended and presented to the landowners. State Conservation Engineer Chris Stoner and Civil Engineer Monty Jones also gave a presentation. Watershed Coalition President Dr. Dan Seibert provided the field office staff with excellent reference materials to provide to landowners.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation GIS Day vendors NRCS GIS Specialist Julie Adams and District Conservationist Ronald Goedecke discuss the advantage of web soil surveys with participants during a break at GIS Day, Nov. 17, 2010, at the MCN GIS Building in Okmulgee, Okla. Other participating groups included MCN Environmental Department, BIA Fire Prevention and Mitigation, Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Geospatial Department.

Pictured from left: NRCS GIS Specialist Julie Adams, MCN Realty employee Josh Castleman, Contract Grant Writer Pennie Betsillie, NRCS District Conservationist Ronald Goedecke and OSU-IT GIS Student Floyd Reed.



Zone 2 Review — . . . continued.

Dewey Field Service Center

The Dewey Field Service Center and the Caney Valley Conservation District maintained an informational booth at the OSU Beef Cattle Conference and Trade Show at the Washington County Fairgrounds on January 12, 2011. Sixty-seven area cattle producers and other interested landowners attended the event. Information provided at the booth included conservation services that NRCS provides as well as Farm Bill cost-share and easement programs.

Zone 4 Review — Submitted by Jamey Wood

Ardmore, Madill, and Marietta Field Service Centers

The Ardmore, Madill, and Marietta Field Service Centers presented an outreach program with the OSU Extension Service. The event was held on January 31, 2011, at the Early Spring Roundup in Overbrook for producers in Love, Carter, and Marshall counties to stay up-to-date on livestock related issues.

District Conservationist Chris Goedecke, Madill Field Service Center, presented the EQIP, WHIP, WRP, and CSP programs to 81 attendees. Goedecke reviewed the amount of money that has been paid out on programs in the three counties. District Conservationists Jim Williams, Ardmore Field Service Center and Warren Sanders, Marietta Field Service Center, provided program materials and distributed surveys to rank resource concerns that challenge the producers.



The Ardmore Field Service Center completed an emergency watershed protection project repairing 2009 tornado damage in Carter County. Staff members are preparing another EWP project in March that will repair stream bank erosion damage to area bridges from 2010 flooding. They are also completing rankings on EQIP, WHIP and CSP program applications in the county and implementing practices on active program contracts.



ODA Poultry Specialist Foster Johnson, emphasized the need to properly fill out required annual reports of litter application.

Stigler Field Service Center

February 15, 2011, a three-hour Poultry Waste Management Education Session was held at the Kiamichi Technology Center in Stigler, Okla. The Haskell County OSU Cooperative Extension Service conducted the training session with assistance from NRCS personnel. There were 38 poultry producers, commercial and private litter applicators, and other landowners from Haskell and adjoining counties. OSU Cooperative Extension Specialists and an Oklahoma

Department of Food Forestry and Agriculture Poultry Inspector presented information pertaining to poultry litter subsurface application, poultry mortality composting, value and incentives updates for litter, weed control and stocking rates, and poultry regulations. Stigler Field Service Center personnel were on hand to provide current information about Farm Bill Programs and services available through USDA and conservation districts.

Zone 4 Review — . . . continued.



Various stages of the prescribed burn as it was being conducted on the Bullard 26-acre native grass hay meadow.

A prescribed burning workshop was held on the Gerald Bullard Ranch in Haskell County February 22, 2011. OSU Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Forestry Services Division and NRCS staff presented the purposes, needed planning, and proper conditions for conducting a prescribed burn. There were 32 landowners and Eastern Oklahoma State College students in attendance. State and federal personnel were trained as well including NRCS employees Mike Van Wyk, P.J. Martin, David Wells, Holt Hagy, Harold Wheeler, Tom Neumeyer, and Tim Jones.

RC&D Activities — submitted by Scott Pace

High Plains RC&D Council

The lesser prairie chicken was the subject of two Ranch Conversations held by the High Plains RC&D Council. Speakers discussed the status of lesser prairie chicken and the availability of habitat cost-share programs available to agricultural producers. Ranch Conversation IV was held in the Community Building at the Beaver County Fairgrounds, Beaver, Okla., February 22, 2011. Ranch Conversation V was held at the High Plains Institute of Technology in Woodward, Okla., February 23, 2011. The meetings were open to the public and a meal was provided through several sponsors.

RC&D Activities — . . . continued.

Coleta Bratten, Chair of the High Plains RC&D Council said, “the declining numbers of the lesser prairie chicken continue to pose problems for landowners and land managers and for the various conservation and wildlife agencies. In view of the situation at this time, the High Plains RC&D believes there is an urgent need to hold these two meetings to provide information and offer a forum where all participants can have an opportunity to ask and receive answers to their questions.” High Plains RC&D, together with many other partners in the five state historical range of the lesser prairie chicken, have been involved in efforts to prevent the listing and improve habitat conditions for the bird since 1998. Three previous ranch conversations were held to keep people informed. The ranch conversations held by High Plains RC&D have become an accepted, neutral setting for stakeholders to meet and discuss the issues.



Ouachita Mountains RC&D Council

February 1, 2011, the Ouachita Mountains RC&D Council was showcased on the Timber Talk Radio Show broadcasting in Magnolia, Ark. The thirty-minute radio show promoted the council’s upcoming tri-state Forestry on the Grow Conference to be held March 9-12, 2011, in Idabel, Okla.

“The RC&D and the planning committee have done an excellent job in planning, promoting and preparing for the 2011 Tri-State Forestry conference” says Teddy Reynolds, host of Timber Talk Radio show. Along with a new conference location, the conference will offer mill and field tours and a free Master Logger/Pro Logger Certification course. One of the highlight of this year’s conference will be the celebrity kick-off speaker, Mr. Bobby Goodson from the Discovery Channel’s “Swamp Logger” program.

“The event will be one of the most in-depth forestry conferences of the year, offering forestry presentations and networking opportunities that will benefit landowners, investors and professionals with timberland holdings from Texas to the Carolinas” says Frank Acker, president of the Ouachita Mountain RC&D Council. For more information go to www.tri-stateforestryonthegrow.org.

Wheatland RC&D Council



The Wheatland RC&D Council was featured at the recent Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Forum hosted by Redlands Community College in El Reno, Okla. Presentations included successful fundraising activities, corporations and foundations and the availability of state and federal government programs for loans and grants. An overview of the council’s recent completed projects illustrated the capabilities of the RC&D program.

More than 80 attendees represented a broad spectrum of business including schools, tribes, non-profits, local governments and community organizations. Chairman Phil Carson and Vice-Chair Jeff Lockett answered questions and networked with the crowd to give the audience a council’s perspective.

RC&D Activities — ... continued.



Great Plains RC&D

The Great Plains RC&D and the Washita County USDA Service Center is planning a USDA People's Garden. The People's Garden Initiative is an effort by the USDA that challenges agency employees to establish People's Gardens at USDA facilities worldwide or help communities create gardens. People's Gardens will vary in size and type, but have a common purpose – to help the community they are in and the environment. Assistance is also being provided to start additional community gardens and farmers markets in the area.

Marvin Hankins was recognized as the outstanding council member at the quarterly Great Plains RC&D council meeting. Hankins is the director for the Center for Economic and Business Development located at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Chairman Alfred Miller presented the award to Marvin Hankins.

The Great Plains RC&D council assisted with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Plasticulture Workshop on February 12, 2011, in Oklahoma City. Information was provided on the USDA People's Garden Initiative and NRCS Organic Initiative.

The Council was part of the advisory team for Redlands Community College Higher Learning Commission Accreditation visit. Congratulations to Redlands Community College on receiving a full 10-year accreditation.



Tallgrass RC&D

The Tallgrass RC&D Council has been working on a grant for the Pawhuska Constantine Arts Center to replace the center's sound system and refurbish the inside of the theater. The theater was originally built as the Pawhuska House Hotel in the 1880's. In 1911, Mr. C.C. Constantine purchased the building and remodeled it into the elegant Constantine Theater. In 1987, a group of concerned citizens began a long, tedious renovation. The renovation is now more than 90 percent complete. The theatre features a live stage in Greek Revival Style with a seating capacity of 589 and outstanding acoustics. The theatre is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the National League of Historic Theatres.

The Tallgrass RC&D Council is also working to expand the business loan program to Rogers County. The council is still working with the Claremore Expo on a grant to construct a covered farmer's market.

RC&D Activities — ... continued.

Oklahoma Chisholm Trail RC&D Council

In 2010, Jefferson County groups worked with Oklahoma Chisholm Trail RC&D Council to secure two small grants from Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. One grant went to the boy scouts of Ringling for cleaning up the downtown area. The other grant went to a group of young ladies in Waurika who are working with the chamber of commerce to build and fill planter boxes. Beautifying the main shopping districts encourages customers to stop, linger, purchase and generate community sales tax for bigger projects.



Fun Country RC&D Council

The Fun Country RC&D Council participated in the Oklahoma Agritourism Association First Annual Conference. The conference hosted several speakers including keynote speaker Ronda Mikles, president of Mikles' Marketing and Management. Mikles specializes in providing a humorous and energetic approach to the challenges of customer relations and managing employees.

Concurrent morning sessions covered ways to make renewable energy work on the farm, adding wildlife and nature photography to your business model, license requirements for petting zoos and

hunting facilities, starting an agritourism business from the ground up and tasting procedures for grape juice and wine. Afternoon tour options were the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center (FAPC) on the OSU campus or Bear Creek Farms. The educational FAPC tour was designed for businesses with food-related products for sale and focused on food safety and processing methods. The specialty crop garden tour at Bear Creek hoped to spur other business owners to improve their business skills and specialty gardening techniques. Attendees networked with other interested parties and enjoyed a trade show of agritourism venues throughout the day.

The council is facilitating strategic planning and funding opportunities with a coalition of interested parties in Murray County. The cities of Davis and Sulphur are at the table with a local animal welfare organization discussing plans for the design, construction and maintenance of an animal welfare facility. Feral and abandoned animals are becoming a huge burden not only on city resources but also in the rural outlying communities.



RC&D Activities — ... continued.

A local, home-based, woman owned company is producing certified organic beauty products. The business is using organic sunflower oil in several of their products, but she has lost her supplier. Fun Country RC&D Council is helping the business locate another organic producer to purchase raw product from.

The Heartland Flyer Coalition is again undergoing some change. Current chair, Karen Adams, stepped down from her position and the chair is returning to Fun Country Council member Judi Elmore. Congratulations to Elmore for stepping back into the role. Current activities with the Heartland Flyer Coalition continue with the biodiesel pilot engine, travel itineraries and hopefully some 'Made in Oklahoma' and/or Oklahoma Agritourism specialty trains.

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