

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

Information for and about Oklahoma's Conservation Districts

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Conservation Day at the Capitol 2008

Lt. Gov. Jari Askins participated in awards presentations

The Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) and other sponsors presented awards to outstanding conservationists and educators during Conservation Day at the Capitol on March 19. Awards were also presented to members of the press and conservation districts for outstanding conservation communications efforts. The various awards were cosponsored by Chesapeake Energy, the Nature Conservancy of Oklahoma, Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation and the Oklahoma Press Association (OPA).

Presenters at the awards ceremony in the Governor's Blue Room, included Lt. Gov. Jari Askins, OACD President Scotty Herriman, OPA Executive Vice President Mark Thomas, and Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) Executive Director Mike Thralls. Corporate Development Associate Taylor Shinn represented Chesapeake Energy, State Director Mike Fuhr represented the Nature Conservancy and Agricultural Division Director Wadell Altom represented the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in presenting the awards. In addition, several state legislators presented commendations to the honorees. (See accompanying material beginning on page two for more information on individual award recipients.)

The OACD Conservation Awards are presented for the categories of Outstanding Conservation District, Outstanding District Director and Outstanding Landowner/Cooperator.

Deer Creek Conservation District received the Outstanding District Award, cosponsored by Chesapeake Energy. State Reps. James Covey and Ryan McMullen also presented the district with a Legislative Citation.

Rick Jeans of Kay County Conservation District, received the Outstanding District Director Award, cosponsored by the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. In February Jeans was inducted into the Oklahoma Conservation Hall of Fame. Sen. David Myers and Rep. Dale DeWitt presented Jeans with a Legislative Citation.

Dan Gallery of Wann, Okla., received the Outstanding Landowner/Cooperator Award, cosponsored by the Nature Conservancy of Oklahoma. Gallery is a cooperator with and was nominated by the Caney Valley Conservation Dis-



Deer Creek CD was named Outstanding District



(From left) Amber, Rick and Diane Jeans with Lt. Gov. Jari Askins as Rick received the Outstanding Director award.

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*"In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours."
~Mark Twain*

Our vision:

Responsible care for Oklahoma's natural resources.

Our mission:

To conserve, protect and restore Oklahoma's natural resources, working in collaboration with the conservation districts and other partners, on behalf of the citizens of Oklahoma.

www.conservation.ok.gov

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Conservation Calendar

For more events and information, click on "Calendar" at www.conservation.ok.gov

Oklahoma Conservation Commission Meeting, May 5, Agriculture Bldg., Oklahoma City

OCC Full Staff Meeting, May 5, Nat'l Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City

National Land & Range Judging Contest, May 5-7, Oklahoma City

Public Service Recognition Week May 5-10

Alternative Fuels & Vehicles Conf., May 11-14, Las Vegas, Nev.

Water Day at the Capitol, May 14, Oklahoma City

Memorial Day Holiday, May 26

Oklahoma Conservation Commission Meeting, June 2, Agriculture Bldg., Oklahoma City

Independence Day Holiday, July 4

Oklahoma Conservation Commission Meeting, July 7, Agriculture Bldg., Oklahoma City

Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference July 26-30, Tucson, Ariz.

Chuck Nuttle, OCC/AML project inspector, was recognized at the April Commission meeting for 15 years of service to OCC and the state of Oklahoma.

Eldon Merklin, OCC/CP Cost-Share Program coordinator, was recognized at the April Commission meeting for 10 years of service to OCC and the state of Oklahoma.

In our thoughts...

Clyde Adams, former Cimarron County CD director, passed away March 20 due to injuries from a welding accident.

C.C. Gillespie, Latimer County CD director, passed away April 15. A charter board member, serving 1951-53, he rejoined the board in 1993.

Congratulations!

Maribeth Hudson, Marshall County CD secretary, has a new grandson — Ezekiel Kent Hudson, born March 6. Mark Harrison, OCC/Admin information officer, married Cynthia White on March 29.

trict. Reps. Earl Sears and Steve Martin and Sen. John Ford presented Gallery with a Legislative Citation.

Five teachers from across the state, one in each Congressional district, received Outstanding Conservation Educator Awards cosponsored by OACD and Chesapeake Energy. The recipients were John Beasley, Tulsa; Alicia Brents, Fort Towson; Jennifer Crabb, Sayre; Rick McElhaney, Lawton (not present); and Colby Cagle, Bethel Acres.

Excellence in Communication Awards were presented to two conservation districts and two newspaper publishers for outstanding communication efforts to support and promote conservation. Kay County Conservation District was honored for an Outstanding Public Information Campaign. Garfield County Conservation District received an award for Excellence in Broadcast Communication. Mark Carson, publisher of the Woods County Enterprise, and Willis Choate, publisher of the Marietta Monitor, each received an award for Outstanding Continuing Support of Conservation by an Oklahoma Press Association Member Newspaper.

During the day approximately 30 display booths were presented in the Capitol Fourth Floor Rotunda by local conservation districts, OCC, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and other partner agencies and organizations. The displays featured diverse conservation activities across the state that address local natural resource needs.

Awards Recipients

Outstanding Landowner/Cooperator: Dan Gallery, a rancher from Wann, Okla., has been a district cooperator with the Caney Valley Conservation District since 1958. Dan graduated with a degree in Animal Science from Oklahoma State University in 1957 and throughout his ranching career has pursued an intensive erosion control plan, including construction of over 60 ponds. Along with his hundreds of acres of Bermuda, fescue and native bluestem, Dan created a 15-acre wetlands area to improve wildlife habitat. With abundant deer and turkey, he hopes to restore the declining quail population as well.

Outstanding Director: Rick Jeans, Kay County Conservation District, has served on his district board since 1990. He served as chairman during the consolidation of the Western Kay County Conservation District and the Arkansas River-Kay Conservation District in 1995. Jeans served the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts as Area II director, vice president and then two terms as president. Rick served as Area II Commissioner on the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and received a Commendation from Gov. Brad Henry for his service. He continues to represent Oklahoma on the board of directors of the National Association of Conservation Districts and its Environment and Resource Policy Committee. Jeans offered input at a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Bill listening session and testified to the U.S. House of Representatives' subcommittee on Conservation, Credit and Rural Development. Rick was a member of the first Conservation Leadership Class and the sixth Ag Leadership Class. Rick calls his wife Diane and daughter Amber his "two biggest supporters in helping farmers and conservation."

Outstanding Conservation District: The Deer Creek Conservation



From left are Reps. Earl Sears and Steve Martin, Jo Ann and Dan Gallery (Outstanding Cooperator), Sen. John Ford and Lt. Gov. Jari Askins.

District pursues an active and varied program to further conservation of natural resources. The district offers no-till workshops, equipment rental and incentive signups to promote the goals of the state's 319 Water Quality Program. The district sponsors a Blue Thumb Program to monitor water quality, stencil storm drains and help volunteers identify pollutants and analyze the health of local streams. Deer Creek Conservation District takes pride in educating the conservationists of tomorrow by sponsoring poster, essay and speech contests and reaching hundreds of students each year with its Outdoor Classroom, annual land judging contest and in-school presentations. The district sponsors truckload tree sales to serve as windbreaks and wildlife habitat. Each year the district recognizes an individual who has exhibited an outstanding stewardship ethic. The district is active in the state Cost-Share Program and the Watershed Rehabilitation Program and maintains ongoing communication with local, state and federal elected officials.

Outstanding Conservation Educators

Congressional District I: John Beasley, nominated by the Tulsa County Conservation District, teaches environmental science and aquatic biology at Tulsa Memorial High School. His students study environmental issues including wastewater management and poultry litter impacts on water quality and lead and zinc mining mitigation at Tar Creek. Beasley's students participate in the Blue Thumb program by monitoring Little Joe Creek in Tulsa County and are responsible for a recycling initiative at Memorial High School.

Congressional District II: Alicia Brents, nominated by the Kiamichi Conservation District, has been an educator for 37 years and currently teaches 6th grade at Ft. Towson Elementary School. She incorporates natural resources into all the subjects she teaches. She is also a 4-H leader and coaches a Forestry Judging team that has won the state title 8 times. Her students also participate in the OACD poster, essay and speech contests every year.

Congressional District III: Jennifer Crabb, nominated by the North Fork of Red River Conservation District, teaches 9th-12th grades at Sayre High School where she has expanded the curriculum to include environmental science. Her students use the school's greenhouse to propagate native plants for use in a butterfly garden at the conservation district's Outdoor Classroom as well as trees for the school's campus. Crabb is also coaching an Envirothon team this year.

Congressional District IV: Rick McElhaney, nominated by the Comanche County Conservation

District, has been teaching for 29 years and currently teaches Ag Science at Lawton Eisenhower High School. McElhaney's students study water, soil, forestry, wildlife and range in both the classroom and in the field. His students will be establishing several native grass demonstration areas at the new FFA school farm. His students also participate in the OACD speech contest, and he coaches two Oklahoma Envirothon teams.

Congressional District V: Colby Cagle, nominated by the Shawnee Conservation District, is the Ag Science teacher at Bethel Public Schools. His students study forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife and plants. They also participate in local recycling programs, wildfire restoration projects, the Blue Thumb program, and the Adopt-a-Fish program. His students participate in the OACD poster, essay and speech contests, and he coaches an Envirothon team. Cagle works with the Boy Scouts of America as a merit badge trainer for Environmental Science and Natural Resources.

Excellence in Communication

Outstanding Public Information Campaign: Kay County Conservation District, in addition to a continuing relationship with local newspapers, is regularly represented on the local cable television station. In addition, the district carries out an innovative outreach program utilizing puppet shows to teach conservation principles to area students.



From left are Mark Thomas, OPA; and from Kay County CD Joe Caughlin, director; Susan Henning, manager; Garold DeWitt and Rick Jeans, directors.

Excellence in Broadcast Communication: Garfield County Conservation District produced 30-second radio public service announcements featuring Sherri Nickel, district secretary, promoting district services and contact information.

Outstanding Continuing Support of Conservation by an Oklahoma Press Association Member: Mark Carson, publisher of the Woods County Enterprise, was nominated by the East Woods County Conservation District for a continuing series of articles and advertisements that raise awareness and promote the cause of conservation. Willis Choate, publisher of the Marietta Monitor, was nominated by the Love County Conservation District for a continuing series of articles and advertisements that raise awareness and promote the cause of conservation.

Range Camp Delivers Outdoor Education and Fun

High school students looking for a week-long camp to attend this summer are encouraged to consider the High Plains Range Camp, where being outside is "in." Held June 16-20, 2008, at Camp Billy Joe in Kenton, Oklahoma, Range Camp gives students the opportunity to learn about natural resources and the environment in a ranch setting among rocks, creeks, canyons and mesas. The goal of the camp is to teach youth the principals of range management through the use of evaluation skills and land management planning.

High Plains Range Camp is open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors from Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas and Colorado. Ten students will be accepted from each state. Registration is \$150, which includes meals, lodging and transportation during the camp. Applications must be postmarked by June 2, 2008, and are available by contacting Melissa Teague at 580-688-3456 (day), 940-937-0075 (evening), e-mail at melissa.teague@ok.usda.gov, or by visiting the High Plains Range Camp website at: www.highplainsrangecamp.net.

Muskogee CCD Honors Robert Ross for 40 Years

In April the Muskogee County Conservation District recognized Robert Ross of Webbers Falls for 40 years of service on the district board of directors. Ross began his service on the Muskogee County Conservation District Board of directors in 1968.

Ken Silver, Muskogee County CD board chairman (right), presented Ross with a plaque commemorating his service and a jacket embroidered with the district name.

Mailing Tab Area



WORKSHOPS & TRUNKS

Project WET Workshops
Karla Beatty, 405.521.2384

•
Project Learning Tree
Workshops or Trunks
Christina Stallings, 405.521-3864

•
Project WILD Workshops
Lisa Anderson, 405.521-3857

Oklahoma Conservation Conversation
Oklahoma Conservation Commission
2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite 160
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
73105-4201
405.521.2384, FAX: 405.521.6686
<http://www.conservation.ok.gov>

Commission Members

Area I Matt Gard
Area II Mike Rooker
Area III George Stunkard
Area IV Dan Lowrance
Area V Virginia Kidd

Editing and Layout — Mark Harrison
email: Mark.Harrison@conservation.ok.gov
Proofreading and Reviewing — Charlotte Stieber and Ben Pollard

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