

# OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

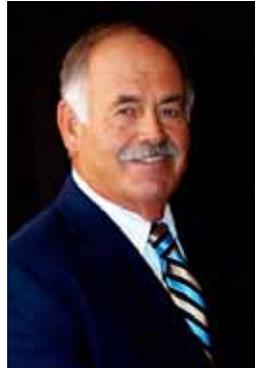
Information for and about Oklahoma's Conservation Districts

Volume 57, Issue No. 7 July 2011

## Karl Jett, Area I Conservation Commissioner

Karl Jett was sworn in and took his place as Area I Member of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission at the July 2011 Conservation Commission meeting. A board member of the Beaver County Conservation District since 2003 and a district cooperator since 2001, he and his wife Charlene live outside Laverne. They have four grown children and five grandchildren.

Jett is a fourth-generation farmer and rancher whose ancestors homesteaded in the Oklahoma Territory Land Run of 1890. In 1904 they moved to "No Man's Land" and settled in what is now eastern Beaver County, where he was born and raised. After graduating from Oklahoma State University with a degree in Agricultural Economics in 1972, he returned to the family farm where he raises wheat, alfalfa and forage sorghum and runs a commercial cow/calf operation.



Karl Jett

Jett serves as a member of the boards of directors of the First Security Bank at Beaver and the Woodward Travelers summer baseball organization. He has served in leadership roles in the Fairview Methodist Church near Slapout, Farmers Grain in Follet, Texas, the Laverne Farmers Coop and the Laverne Sports and FFA Booster Clubs.

## Sugar Creek L-44 Groundbreaking

State Sen. Ron Justice and Reps. Phil Richardson, Harold Wright and Joe Dorman attended a groundbreaking event near Anadarko on Friday, July 15, to commemorate the conservation infrastructure projects underway in Caddo County. Currently nearly \$20 million worth of improvements to the county's conservation infrastructure are in various stages of design, contracting, and construction. The South Caddo, North Caddo and West Caddo Conservation Districts, along with NRCS and OCC are responsible for the projects in which each dollar of state and local funds garners enough federal match to install \$4.33 worth of conservation in the county.

"I appreciate what the participating farmers, local conservation districts and others involved are doing to protect and conserve these resources that are so precious to our future," said Sen. Justice.

Caddo County is home to 710,000 acres of cropland and 30,000 people, and also to more than 100 flood control structures that were built by NRCS and local conservation districts. These structures, constructed primarily in the 1950s and '60s, help to reduce flooding through greater water storage, thus preventing damage to fields, roadways, and communities. But many of them are reaching the end of their design life and need work to extend the benefits they provide. And in many cases they were built in what were rural settings at the time but encroaching development has necessitated their being reclas-



From left are Jessica Willis, Congressman Tom Cole's representative; Dean Graumann, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Area IV director; Emily Shipley, U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn's representative; Dan Lowrance, Oklahoma Conservation Commission Area IV member; state Rep. Joe Dorman; Garrett King, Congressman Lucas's office; Rep. Phil Richardson; Rep. Harold Wright; Caddo County Commissioner Benny Bowling; Charlie Opitz, South Caddo Conservation District chairman; Ed Granger, Sugar Creek Watershed Association president; Sen. Ron Justice; and Gary O'Neill, Natural Resources Conservation Service assistant state conservationist.

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## Going Green?

Want to receive the electronic newsletter instead of the paper one? Just email [Mark.Harrison@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:Mark.Harrison@conservation.ok.gov) asking to be moved to the email subscription list!

### 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](http://www.conservation.ok.gov)

## Conservation Calendar

For more events and information, click on  
"Calendar of Events" at

[www.conservation.ok.gov](http://www.conservation.ok.gov)

- NACD South Central Meeting,**  
Aug. 7-9, Oklahoma City
- Conservation Commission Meeting,**  
Aug. 9, Oklahoma City
- Conservation Commission Meeting,**  
Sept. 1, Oklahoma City
- Labor Day Holiday,** Sept. 5
- Conservation Commission Meeting,**  
Oct. 3, Oklahoma City

### *In our thoughts...*

Harold Wheeler, NRCS soil conservation technician, Seminole County CD, lost his mother-in-law Helen Allgeyer, June 5.  
Lanny Miller, NRCS assistant state conservationist/field operations, lost his mother, Martha Jean Miller, June 17.  
Jason Skaggs, Garfield County CD manager, lost his grandfather on July 5.  
Jim Dorsey, North Caddo CD director, lost his father Neil Dorsey on July 20th.

### *Congratulations!*

John and Joni Mustain, NRCS forester/agonomist and NRCS programs assistant, have a new grandson. Steven Max Perry was born June 27 to Diana and Steve Perry. Diana, Rural Development engineer, is a former NRCS engineer.

### *Farewell...*

After 36 years, much prayer and deliberation with my family, I have decided to retire. I feel it is time to do something different with the remainder of my life. It has been an honor and privilege to work for the SCS/NRCS, as well as meeting and working with so many dedicated and hardworking employees over my career. I wish each of you the best and God bless. Ken Swift, NRCS district conservationist Little River Conservation District

### *Thank you...*

Thank you very much for the prayers, cards, emails, visits, flowers/plants and other support you provided to me and my family in the passing of my mother. I have been overwhelmed by the number of condolences I have received and count myself fortunate to have so many within NRCS and the partnership that I can truly consider family/friends. Thank you again and may God bless you and your families.

Lanny R. Miller, NRCS assistant state conservationist/field operations

I want to thank you all for donating leave while I was out due to surgery. It is wonderful to work with such giving people. I truly appreciate it. I am doing fine and glad to be back.  
Tammie Holder, secretary, Pawnee County Conservation District

## Deer Creek Conservation District and Friends of Hydro Library send 'Hydro Hugs' to soldiers

By Kristi Hill, Deer Creek Conservation District Information/Education Coordinator

Jane Cunningham of Hydro and the Friends of Hydro Library are doing what they can to make soldiers' days in the desert a little cooler. She and other volunteers cut, sew and assemble what they call "hugs" and send them over to be distributed to troops.

The "hugs" are neck wraps filled with hydrating crystals, which are soaked in water, then wrapped around the neck or head to help the wearer stay cool. They can also be refrigerated for an extra chill. Deer Creek Conservation District in Weatherford sells the crystals and donated some for the project.

For Cunningham, the project hits closer to home. She has a granddaughter currently serving in Iraq. She called and asked her grandmother to send some of the neck wraps.

"We love knowing we did something to make them feel better," Cunningham said. "It's just one small thing we can do to help."

Each "hug" is sent with directions for use and a brief note from the volunteers. The message reads: "We appreciate you for your service to your country and so we want you to have this 'hug' from home. When you place it around your neck, please remember there is someone who made this just for you and wished they could actually give you a real hug. We want you to know that we are praying for your safety."

The group also makes helmet liners for the winter months and sends items such as toys and blankets for children in orphanages.

They have sent close to 100 so far this year. Cunningham said the group would love to make and send more, but needs more donations: of money, of fabric, and of time. Volunteers and those wanting to help can email the Hydro Library at [hydrolibrary@sudenlinkmail.net](mailto:hydrolibrary@sudenlinkmail.net) or call 405-663-2009.

## NACD Auxiliary National Photo Contest 2011

The NACD Auxiliary Photo Contest is open to amateur photographers who are residents of the United States or its territories. Participants can enter as many as five photos total each year. Each photo has to fit in one of the four natural resource or conservation photo categories. At the website <http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/photo> NACD has provided entry instructions with a complete description of how to submit photographs, accepted photo formats including changes for submitting digital photos by email, judging,

use of the photos and prizes. Following instructions and guidelines carefully will help ensure eligibility. The required entry and release forms are available at the website also.

Photos may be submitted in electronic format or in print. The deadline is Dec. 1, 2011. Entries are to be sent to NACD Auxiliary Photo Contest 968 E 600 N, Greenfield, IN 46140, or emailed to [NACDphoto.conservation@picasaweb.com](mailto:NACDphoto.conservation@picasaweb.com). There are divisions for both youth and adult photographers. The categories are Conservation Practices, Close Up Conservation, Conservation in Action and Agriculture and Conservation Across America. Judges reserve the right to determine if a photograph is appropriately categorized and change a photograph's category accordingly.

### South Central Auxiliary Photo Contest

The NACD South Central Region Auxiliary also has a photo contest earlier in the year, but only accepts 5"x7" print submissions and entries must be from youth only, defined as 18 years of age or younger. The region contest deadline is July 20 and entries are sent to Grace Vining, 1651 Highway 18, Edgard, La., 70049. No forms are required.

### Awards & Recognition

**Dennis Boney**, OCC/CP watershed technician, was recognized at the July Commission meeting for 25 years of service to OCC and the state of Oklahoma.



Jane Cunningham wears a "hug" ready to be filled with water absorbing crystals, then shipped overseas to a soldier. Deer Creek CD donated crystals for the project.



2010 Youth Photo Contest entry

## OCC Spring Education Events by Karla Beatty, OCC Education Coordinator

### Oklahoma Envirothon 2011 State Champions Named

Estuaries — what's an estuary and do we even have such things in landlocked Oklahoma? The Lawton FFA Envirothon Team found out at the 2011 Oklahoma Envirothon Competition where they earned the title of State Champion Team. The event occurred on April 5 at Keystone State Park, near Sand Springs. The special topic for this year's competition was "Saltwater and Freshwater Estuaries." The team will represent Oklahoma at the Canon Envirothon competition on July 24-29, 2011, at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada.

The Oklahoma Envirothon is part of a national program for high school students designed to educate and challenge young people in the environmental sciences. It presents an exciting, fun way for students to learn about the environment and the issues facing this and future generations. Combining in-class curriculum with hands-on field experiences, Envirothon demonstrates the role people have in important environmental issues such as forestry, wildlife management, water quality and soil erosion.

Envirothon is a team-based program. All teams must be sponsored by their local conservation district. Teams are formed in the fall and begin studying resource materials to learn the fundamentals of natural resources management in five areas of study: aquatic ecology, forestry, soils/land use, wildlife and a special topic.

The statewide competition takes place in the spring of each year. The competition includes written exams on each subject area and an oral presentation. Written exams are administered in the field at four or five test stations. Each station is staffed with a natural resource professional who is a specialist in one of the subject areas. Teams also prepare a presentation on the special topic for that year.

Eight teams competed at the 2011 Oklahoma Envirothon competition. The teams and their sponsors were the following:

- Bethel FFA sponsored by Shawnee Conservation District
- Fort Supply FFA sponsored by Woodward County Conservation District
- Lawton FFA sponsored by Comanche County Conservation District
- Miami High School sponsored by Ottawa County Conservation District
- Ninnekah High School sponsored by Grady County Conservation District
- Owasso High School and sponsored by Tulsa County Conservation District
- Tulsa Memorial High School sponsored by Tulsa County Conservation District
- Stratford FFA sponsored by Garvin Conservation District

The 40 team members were accompanied by 12 team advisors. An additional 23 volunteers served as team walking leaders, station captains, and oral presentation judges. The volunteers represented state agencies, local conservation districts and organizations including Great Plains Resource Conservation and Development Council, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Oklahoma Forestry Services, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, OSU Student Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dewey County Conservation District, Kay County Conservation District, North Fork of Red River Conservation District, Ottawa County Conservation District, Payne County Conservation District, Rogers County Conservation District, Tulsa County Conservation District and Woodward County Conservation District.

For more information on the Oklahoma Envirothon visit the website at [www.envirothonok.com](http://www.envirothonok.com).

### Dig In! at ScienceFest Oklahoma 2011

That's exactly what more than 5,000 fourth and fifth graders from across Oklahoma got to do at this year's ScienceFest. The annual event was held on April 21, 2011 at the OKC Zoological Park and Botanical Garden. The Oklahoma County Conservation District and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission once again participated in the event with an activity station — Dig In!

Discover a World Beneath Your Feet. Students got to "dig in" to a pile of compost to discover some of the critters that live in the soil and how they help make the soil healthy.

ScienceFest is a day of interactive science and environmental activities focusing on the conservation of natural resources and the use of alternative energies. Over 20 agencies and organizations provide activities for students and their teachers to enjoy. The Oklahoma County Conservation District and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission have been involved with the event since 2008. Representatives from the conservation district working the activity station this year were Rick Godfrey, board member; Don Bartolina, district manager, and Becky Inmon, district secretary. Representing the Oklahoma Conservation Commission were Karla Beatty, Dianne Ireton, and Sheryl Gibson.

For more information about ScienceFest, visit the website [www.sciencefestok.org](http://www.sciencefestok.org).



The Oklahoma Envirothon state champion the Lawton High School FFA team, sponsored by Comanche County Conservation District.



Oklahoma Envirothon teams, advisors and volunteers.



Don Bartolina, Becky Inmon, and Rick Godfrey from the Oklahoma County Conservation District help students identify soil critters at the Dig In! Discover a World Beneath Your Feet activity station during the 2011 ScienceFest event at the OKC Zoo.



*Sugar Creek, continued from page 1*

sified as “high hazard” structures, needing to meet higher safety criteria. To address these issues, U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas sponsored the Watershed Rehabilitation Amendment Acts of 2000 that made federal assistance possible for rehabilitating flood control dams.

In addition to normal aging and encroaching development, severe weather plays a role as well. Caddo County’s conservation infrastructure was severely battered in August 2007 when Hurricane Erin reformed as an inland tropical storm and ravaged western

Oklahoma. In addition to homes and buildings flooded and roads washed away, flood control dams and conservation practices in the area were severely battered and damaged.

“With the extreme heat and dryness we see today it is hard to realize that four years ago we had a flood in Caddo County that did this kind of damage,” said Rep. Richardson. “Can you imagine the kind of problems we would be having today if we had not built and maintained the conservation infrastructure and agricultural best management



Rehabilitation of Sugar Creek L-43, also severely damaged in August 2007, was recently completed. The dam only awaits rainfall to restore its permanent pool and help restore vegetation.

**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**

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**Mailing Tab Area**

practices we developed in response to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s?” Richardson asked. Funding for the vital repair and rehabilitation work is coming from NRCS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act, OCC, and the North Caddo, West Caddo and South Caddo Conservation Districts. A capital improvement bond devoted to conservation work, passed by the Legislature in 2009, was critical to providing the state match for federal funding. Rep. Dale DeWitt was one of the sponsors of the bond legislation, and Sen. Justice and Rep. Richardson were instrumental in the bill’s passage. Additional work is being performed by private landowners and by the Caddo County Commissioners. The sponsors acknowledged the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for their help in making the projects possible.

Conservation projects underway in Caddo County include:

Rehabilitation was recently completed on Sugar Creek Dam No. L-43, sponsored by the West Caddo CD. Flood control dam Sugar Creek L-44, in South Caddo CD, is in the initial stages of rehabilitation. The first two miles of a 22-mile project to repair conservation practices in the Sugar Creek waterway that were damaged or destroyed during the 2007 flooding are also currently under construction. Farrow Drop, a channel stabilization structure, is under construction in South Caddo Conservation District. There is also a program for landowners of property located in the channel and floodplains of Sugar Creek and Sugar Creek tributaries to install conservation best management practices.

**Mailing Tab Area**

**Commission Members**

- Area I Karl Jett
- Area II Mike Rooker
- Area III George Stunkard
- Area IV Dan Lowrance
- Area V Jim Grego

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