

O K L A H O M A C O N S E R V A T I O N C O N V E R S A T I O N

Information for and about Oklahoma's Conservation Districts

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Matt Gard Honored on Completing Term as Area I Commissioner

Matt Gard attended his final Conservation Commission meeting as Area I member on June 6. Former Lt. Gov. Jari Askins and state Rep. Joe Dorman were among those who attended a luncheon in Gard's honor immediately following the meeting. Dorman presented Gard with a Legislative Citation. Mike Thralls, OCC executive director, presented Gard with a Conservation Commendation for his "leadership and dedicated service to the State of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission as Area I Conservation Commissioner."



Matt Gard

In February the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts honored Gard with its President's Award. In presenting the award, Trey Lam, outgoing OACD president, commended Gard for his courage and perseverance. Gard suffered a tragic motorcycle accident in February 2010 that left him partially paralyzed and unable to walk. Despite that personal tragedy and a rigorous rehabilitation program, Gard missed only one Conservation Commission meeting and continued his role of public service almost without missing a beat, Lam said.



Although Matt has suffered partial paralysis since February 2010, he stood, using his own strength, to make remarks at both the Commission meeting and the reception held in his honor afterward.

Gard became a cooperater with the Major County Conservation District in 1989 and joined the board of directors in 1993. He has served on the OACD executive board as Area I director and vice president. A board member of the Fairview Chamber of Commerce for four years, he also served as vice president in 1997 and president in 1998. He has served as a member of the steering committee for

Matt Gard, continued on page 3

OCC/AML and NSU Partner to Reclaim Mine Land

OCC's Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program (AML) is working with Northeastern State University (NSU) to reclaim an abandoned mine area on the campus and neighboring area. The area to be reclaimed is approximately 100 acres, with about 40 acres on the north side of the NSU Broken Arrow Campus. A neighboring property owner is also cooperating in the project where it extends on to private property and about seven acres to be reclaimed belong to the city of Broken Arrow.

The area had been stripped of its natural vegetation and soil composition. Highwalls were cut into the earth, trapping water and posing safety hazards. The parties hope to restore the area and create a recreational area including a nature trail and outdoor amphitheater. The land will be graded to allow proper runoff and eliminate trapped water, but possibly allow creation of a pond. The city hopes to create areas that can serve as soccer fields until NSU needs the additional space. NSU faculty will design the walking trail and the school hopes to use the area for hands-on learning activities.

According to Tim Foutch, NSU vice president for operations, NSU would be years away from being able to reclaim the area without support from the federally-funded AML Program.

In This Issue

Matt Gard Honored on Completing Term as Area I Commissioner

OCC/AML and NSU Partner to Reclaim Mine Land

Rogers County Conservation District recognized in Partnership Project with NSU

Oklahoma Prescribed Fire Council: Burn Survey

OACDE Annual Essay Scholarship Contest

Conservation Districts Honor Jack Hudman and Ralph Morgan

NACD South Central Regional Conference coming to OKC



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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

Conservation Calendar

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

www.conservation.ok.gov

Independence Day Holiday, July 4

**Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association
Meeting, July 7, Lawton**

**Conservation Commission Meeting,
July 11, Oklahoma City**

**NACD Summer Board Meeting,
July 16-17, Washington, D.C.**

**NACD Summer Legislative Conference,
July 18-19, Washington, D.C.**

**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

Oklahoma Prescribed Fire Council: Burn Survey

The High Plains RC&D is assisting the Oklahoma Prescribed Fire Council by conducting a survey to gather information about interest in burn associations in Oklahoma. The survey is for Oklahoma farmers, ranchers and landowners and must be completed by Aug. 1, 2011. Public meetings around the state will be announced in the near future. If you fall into this group and would like to participate, go to <http://www.oklahomaprescribedfirecouncil.okstate.edu/burnassociations.html> and click on "Burn Survey" and follow the instructions there.

In our thoughts...

Gray Bishop, NRCS district conservationist, Tulsa County CD, lost his father on May 24. Jerry Hunter, Woodward County CD director, lost his mother-in-law Rosemary Ratzloff, on June 3.

Congratulations!

Trent Drennan, Grady County CD engineering aide, and his wife Laurie have a new son, Ryder Dean Drennan, born on June 3.

Wilma Fraley, NRCS clerk, Claremore TSO, and wife of George Fraley, OACD Area III director and Rogers County CD director, retired in May after 12 years of service with NRCS. Those who wish to can drop Wilma a congratulatory note or correspond with her at: Wilma Fraley, 440 West 9th, Chelsea, OK 74016, wilma.fraley@email.com

Rogers County Conservation District recognized in Partnership Project with NSU

The Rogers County Conservation District was recognized recently as a partner with Northeastern State University's Summer Academy on KTUL Channel 8's "Good Day Tulsa" program. The academy runs June 6-10 and is open to 27 students entering the seventh, eighth or ninth grade who are residents of Oklahoma and complete an application and submit the required documents. Three of the five days of the academy are held at the Rogers County Conservation Education Reserve.

Participants explore relationships among the environment, water quality, natural sciences and mathematics. Collaborating in four- to seven-member teams they analyze water quality and ecosystem conditions, determine possible man-made or naturally-occurring impacts and apply their observations to form possible solutions.

There is no cost to the students who participate in the program, thanks to sponsorship by NSU, Rogers County CD and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. To the contrary, students who complete the academy receive a \$50 stipend.

To read more about the Summer Academy online go to <http://www.nsuok.edu/getgre-encamps.aspx>.

OACDE Annual Scholarship Essay Contest

The Oklahoma Association of Conservation District Employees has once again announced the OACDE Annual Scholarship Essay Contest. The scholarship is open to any college or technical school student who is a family member (child, grandchild, stepchild) of a district employee who is a current OACDE member. Students who will be college freshmen through senior are eligible.

Essays must be submitted to the appropriate OACDE Area Director who will forward it to the judging committee. July 1 is the deadline for submissions and the winner will be announced by the third quarter meeting of the OACDE executive board in August.

The winner will be awarded \$500 to be used toward continuing education. A check from OACDE will be sent to the winner when he or she is enrolled in college or technical school. A copy of their registration must be mailed to the Area Director.

ESSAY RULES:

- The essay theme will be the same as the current National Association of Conservation Districts Stewardship Week theme, but must directly reflect what the student has learned about the subject from his or her parent or grandparent.
- The essay will be a minimum of 1,000 words, typed, double spaced and should be the work and words of the student. Any quote should be attributed to its author.
- A handwritten and signed statement by the student stating the work is entirely their own should be included at the end of the essay.
- A handwritten letter from the student telling about themselves — activities, honors, interests, goals, etc. — should accompany the essay.

Essays that do not clearly follow the above-referenced subject, do not meet the length requirements, or do not have the above referenced attachments will be disqualified and will not be considered for the contest for that year. Scoring weight will be given with 50 percent for clarity of thought, 25 percent for originality, and 25 percent for neatness and following instructions.

Awards & Recognition

Nick Huber, OCC/IT information technology specialist, was named Employee of the Year at the May 2011 OCC Full Staff Meeting. He had been named Employee of the Quarter in February.

Lisa Knauf Owen, OCC District Services director, was recognized at the June Commission meeting for 20 years of service to OCC and the state of Oklahoma.

Shellie Willoughby, OCC/IT GIS specialist, was recognized at the June Commission meeting for receiving certification as a GIS Professional from the GIS Certification Institute.

OCC Water Quality and ODAFF Laboratory Services staff were recognized at the June Commission meeting for receiving a Blue Ribbon at the Quality Oklahoma Team Day at the Capitol in May.

Cotton County Conservation District Honors Jack Hudman

Cotton County Conservation District honored board member Jack Hudman for 50 years of service on April 12, 2011. A reception was held for Hudman in the meeting room named in his honor at the district office. Jack was presented with a 50-year service pin from the National Association of Conservation Districts. Ben Pollard, assistant director of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, also presented Hudman with a Conservation Commendation from OCC and a Legislative Citation sponsored by state Sen. Don Barrington.

Hudman served as president of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts in 1974-1975 and was inducted into the Oklahoma Conservation Hall of Fame in 1990. His late wife Joy Hudman was inducted posthumously into the Hall of Fame as a Conservation Friend in 1998 for her active involvement in the OACD Auxiliary.

The following is excerpted from a talk Hudman gave to district directors at a training session in the 1990s:

“From the beginning of time, man has been dependent upon the soil. Soil is different things to different people. To the geologist, it is the barrier between himself and the material he is trying to study. To a small child, soil is mud pies and fun. To the mother it is the stuff that is tracked on her clean floors. To the builder, it serves as the foundation for his structures. To the ecologist, soil is a pollutant. Seafarers and astronauts have knelt and kissed it when separated from it for a period of time. To a farmer, soil is a precious mixture of minerals, organic matter, air and water on which life depends. It is the medium through which he produces food and fiber for himself and the world.

“The conservation movement was conceived in the darkness of the Dust Bowl and was born in Oklahoma in the Dirty Thirties. We were nurtured by a partnership of federal, state and local governments working hand in hand with landowners. We have had some growing pains, scrapes, bruises, and set backs. But because of them, we have become stronger and are still changing with many challenges and opportunities facing us. You — this group — I challenge you now to be prepared to chart the course and steer the wheel, taking the conservation movement into the next century and to **keep the faith!**”



Ben Pollard, OCC assistant director (right) presented Jack Hudman with a Legislative Citation from Sen. Don Barrington and a Conservation Commendation from OCC in recognition of his 50 years of service on the Cotton County Conservation District board of directors.



Jack Hudman, Cotton County Conservation District board member since 1961, stands in front of his portrait in the meeting room named in his honor at the district office.

Grady County Conservation District Honors Ralph Morgan

The Grady County Conservation District held a surprise reception for retiring board member Ralph Morgan on May 31. After 30 years of service on the district board, Morgan decided not to seek reappointment for his term expiring June 30.

State Sens. Ron Justice and Don Barrington and Reps. Joe Dorman and Leslie Osborn presented Morgan with Legislative Citations. Mike Thralls, OCC executive director, presented him with a Conservation Commendation. The district presented Morgan with an inscribed wall clock.

Morgan owns and operates Morgan Cattle Company south of Chickasha. He has been a district cooperater since 1975 and joined the board of directors in 1980. He is credited with initiating many of the programs in which the district is now involved. He hosted the first lagoon pumpout demonstration for applying animal waste in a nutrient management system. He was the first landowner in Grady County to purchase, use and demonstrate operation of a no-till drill. Morgan was instrumental in providing a service to eradicate eastern redcedar, an invasive plant species that has become an increasing problem in Grady County as it has across the state. He was awarded the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award in 2001.



State Sen. Don Barrington (left) thanks Morgan for his 30 years of service to Grady County Conservation District.

Matt Gard, continued from page 1

the OSU Extension Program for Major and Dewey Counties and is a certified instructor for trap and archery under that program. He has served as a board member and president of both the Oklahoma Alfalfa Hay and Seed Association and the Major County Surface and Mineral Owners Association. He served as the director of the membership committee for the National Forage and Grasslands Council. He also serves on the Oklahoma Biofuels Advisory Board.

Gard has a custom applicator business and does custom planting, sowing, and haying and grows cotton, alfalfa, soybeans, millet, wheat, and canola. Gard is a member of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, American Farmers and Ranchers, Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association, and is on the board of OKFREE. He is also a member of the National Corn Growers Association and once placed second in that organization’s National Corn Grower Contest.



Former Lt. Gov. Jari Askins thanked Matt for his service to the state.



From left are Ben Pollard, OCC assistant director; Virginia Kidd, former Area V Commissioner; George Stunkard, Area III Commissioner; Matt Gard, Area I Commissioner (in front); Jim Grego, Area V Commissioner; Mike Rooker, Area II Commissioner; Dan Lowrance, Area IV Commissioner; and Mike Thralls, OCC executive director.

NACD South Central Regional Conference

The South Central Regional Conference of the National Association of Conservation Districts will be held in Oklahoma City Aug. 7-9, 2011. The meeting will be at the Cox Convention Center with lodging and other activities at the adjacent Renaissance Hotel. U.S. Congressman Frank Lucas, chair of the House Agriculture Appropriations Committee, is scheduled to speak during the conference.

Tentative Agenda (subject to change)

Sunday, August 7, 2011

12:00 p.m. Registration
 1:30- S. Central Region Business Meeting
 S. Central NCDEA Business Meeting
 3:00- Opening Session
 5:00- Break
 5:30-7:00 Welcome Reception

Monday August 8, 2011

8:00- Registration opens
 9:00- General session
 Partnership updates, NACD update

and farm policy
 4:15- Adjourn for day
 5:15- Silent auction closes
 5:30- Buses depart for Oklahoma History Center
 6:00- *A Night at the Museum*— Browsing on your own at the Oklahoma History Center followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday August 9, 2011

7:30-9:00- Continental Breakfast
 9:00- Depart for Chesapeake Boathouse

Mailing Tab Area

10:00- Breakout sessions

- New Media*- Reaching the next generation of conservationists through Facebook, Twitter, and all things Internet
- Multi-state Initiatives*- Working through the conservation partnership to build results across state borders
- Building a Market*- How to address natural resource concerns with market-based incentives

11:30- Break
 11:45- Luncheon
 1:15- Breakout sessions
 Repeat of morning breakout sessions
 2:30- Break
 2:45-4:15 General Session
Farm Bill and Beyond: The political landscape in Washington D.C. Something completely different—non-traditional partners and their view of conservation

for a Water Quality Tour
 11:00 Return to hotel, meeting adjourns
 11:30- OACD Executive Board meeting

OACD Spouse Tours

If your spouse is in meetings, go on a tour with the Auxiliary!

Spouse Tour I- Oklahoma National Memorial & Museum

Monday, Depart from hotel at **8:30 a.m.**
 Return to hotel at **11:45 a.m.**

Tour includes a ranger talk, self-guided tour of the museum, and a special talk with a survivor (only for our group) **No Cost!**

Spouse Tour II- National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum

Monday, Depart from hotel at **1:15 p.m.**
 Return to hotel at **3:45 p.m.**

A guided tour of the Cowboy Hall of Fame
No Cost!

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

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