

# 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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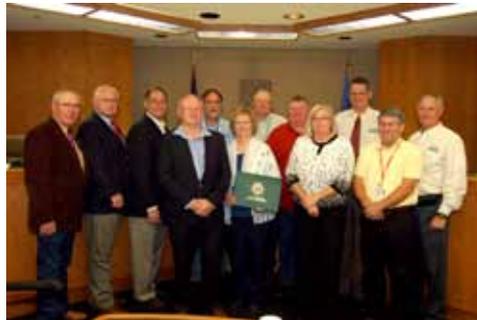
## Watershed Assessment Team Commended

An agreement between the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was signed in September 2009 for the purpose of completing assessments of 141 high hazard watershed dams across the state. The dams, located in 59 watershed projects in 40 conservation districts and 39 counties, are classified as high hazard because of the potential for loss of life should one of the dams fail during a flooding event.

The success of the Watershed Rehabilitation Assessment Project depended on the ability of the team members to work from different locations around the state, including remote sites, but to coordinate work and share data on a daily basis. That was made possible through a central computer server and high speed Internet connections. The following people, several of whom are retired NRCS employees, were selected for the team, operating under the supervision of OCC's Conservation Programs Division in collaboration with NRCS:

- Larry Caldwell, project coordinator
- Jim Henley, GIS specialist
- Ray Riley, engineer and hydrologist
- Dwain Phillips, technical writer/editor
- Lil Holcum, secretary and data mgt.
- George Moore, watershed technician
- Dennis Boney, watershed technician
- Johnny Pelley, watershed technician
- Mike Sharp, OCC IT support
- Gary Utley, NRCS support
- Tammy Sawatzky, OCC support
- Robert Toole, OCC support

Members of the team attended the November 2011 meeting of the Oklahoma



From left are OCC Chairman George Stunkard, NRCS State Conservationist Ron Hilliard and Watershed Assessment Team members Larry Caldwell, Ray Riley, Dennis Boney, Lil Holcum, George Moore, Johnny Pelley, Tammy Sawatzky, Jim Henley, Mike Sharp and Robert Toole. Members not present are Dwain Phillips and Gary Utley.

*Watershed Assessment Team, continued on page two*

## Seventh Annual Wildlife Expo

Rogers County Conservation District and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission's Conservation Education Program hosted the Wildlife Beneath Your Feet exhibit area at the Wildlife Expo, Sept. 23-25. More than 60 volunteers representing local conservation districts, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Project WET, OSU Department of Education, NSU Department of Education, OSU Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation joined together to staff the exhibits.

With the help of these volunteers, one corner of the Lazy E Arena was transformed into an underground classroom where visitors discovered critters that help make healthy soil. Visitors entered the exhibit area through an underground ant colony complete with tunnels and chambers or through an earthworm burrow filled with plant roots and a giant earthworm. Volunteers helped visitors find earthworms



More than 60,000 adults and children attended the 2011 Wildlife Expo.

*Wildlife Expo, continued on page 3*

## In This Issue

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**Denim & Lace: Kay/Noble County Women in Ag Conference Schedule**



## 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!

Also— See "QR Code" on page two!

### 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)

**Conservation Commission Meeting,**  
Dec. 5, Oklahoma City  
**Christmas Holiday, Dec. 26-27**

### 2012

**New Year's Day Holiday, Jan. 2**  
**Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday**  
Jan. 16

**NACD Annual Meeting,**  
Jan. 29-Feb. 1, Las Vegas, Nev.

**Presidents' Day Holiday, Feb. 20**

**OACD State Meeting**  
Feb. 26-28, Oklahoma City

**Oklahoma Envirothon,**  
April 3, location TBA

**National Land & Range Judging Contest**  
May 1-3, Oklahoma City

### QR (Quick Response) Code

Scan the QR Code below with the QR Reader on your smart phone to go to our website. Bookmark it as a Favorite to stay up-to-date on Conservation in Oklahoma.



<http://conservation.ok.gov>

(Free QR Reader applications are available for iPhone, Android and other smart phones.)

### *In our thoughts...*

Ray Riley, OCC employee and retired NRCS employee, lost his daughter Michelle Nichols in a car accident Sept. 20.

Paul Montgomery, former Creek County CD board member 1979-2002, passed away Oct. 23.

OCC/AML director Mike Kastl's wife Teresa passed away Oct. 3.

Ralph Mitchell, Little River CD board member 1989-1995 and 2003-2011, passed away Oct. 29.

Walt Lamar, retired NRCS district conservationist, passed away Oct. 31.

Frank Curan, former Comanche County CD board member 1981-2000, passed away Nov. 2.

### *Congratulations!*

Candy Sexton, Okfuskee County CD secretary, has a new granddaughter, Charlotte Hazel White, born Oct. 24.

Trampas Tripp, OCC WQ conservation planner, and wife Brooke have a new baby boy, Keegan Wesley Tripp, born Oct. 31.

Amanda Zarek, NRCS soil conservationist, Creek County CD, has a new baby boy, Abraham Harlen Fass, born Nov. 8.

*Watershed Assessment Team, cont'd from page one*

Conservation Commission (OCC). OCC Chairman George Stunkard, accompanied by NRCS State Conservationist Ron Hilliard, presented Conservation Commendations to all members present, which stated "In appreciation of your participation in the Watershed Rehabilitation Assessment Project 2009-2011." Project coordinator Larry Caldwell gave a presentation on the purpose, scope and findings of the assessment project.

The assessment process included:

- on-site dam inspections
- video inspection of principal spillway pipes
- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) imagery of sites used with GIS and hydro-logic modeling to develop breach inundation maps
- checking conformance with state dam safety requirements
- development of site-specific rehabilitation alternatives
- preparation of cost estimates for rehabilitation alternatives based on historic cost data

The assessment report for each dam included:

- Description of the condition of the dam and appurtenances
- Breach inundation analysis and map
- Identification of homes and roads within the area flooded should the dam fail
- Verification of hazard classification
- Status of the operation and maintenance of the dam
- Conceptual rehabilitation alternatives, including site-specific restraints
- Estimated cost ranges for rehabilitation alternatives
- Priority ranking spreadsheets

### Findings

- All dams assessed needed some degree of operation and maintenance (O&M), totaling an estimated \$657,000 statewide. Thirteen dams had "urgent" needs related to cuts, seepage, sinks, leakage, spillway blockages or other issues.
- Of 46 principal spillways video inspected, almost all were in good condition, but some had cracks or other problems.
- A total of 1,685 potential damage locations were identified downstream from the dams, some impacted by more than one dam, with inundation depths tabulated. Three dams may have hazard classification reduced because no potential damage locations were found in the breach inundation area.
- The total number of people who could potentially be threatened if a dam should fail was computed for each dam.
- Most breach inundation areas extended further than originally expected. (The median was eight miles.)
- The total estimated cost for rehabilitating the 141 dams to meet NRCS and Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) safety standards is \$225,000,000.

### Recommendations to Watershed Sponsors

Recommendations, resulting from the assessment reports, for project sponsors to complete include:

- Updating emergency action plans for each dam to include breach inundation maps
- Immediately address actions identified as urgent to help keep dams safe
- Follow up with recommended O&M
- Work with OWRB to possibly lower the classification of identified dams
- Determine high priority dams to submit requests for NRCS rehabilitation

### Awards & Recognition

**Lisa Knauf Owen**, OCC/DS director, was recognized at the October Commission meeting for being named Employee of the Quarter at the September OCC Full Staff Meeting.

**Stacy Hansen**, OCC/WQ Carbon Program director, was recognized at the October Commission meeting for five years of service to OCC and the state of Oklahoma.

*Wildlife Expo, continued from page 1*

and other critters at work in a compost container, answer quiz questions and riddles about the critters, identify live animals and learn the roles they play in different soil communities and investigate skins, skulls and tracks of wildlife that live beneath our feet.

The Oklahoma Wildlife Expo is the state's largest indoor and outdoor recreation event. Presented by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and a coalition of conservation organizations, agencies and sponsors, the Expo celebrates our great state's natural diversity and opportunities for the sporting enthusiast. From camping and outdoor skills to shooting sports and fishing,



from bird watching to kayaking, Expo visitors have an opportunity to try their hands at three

days of fun in the outdoors. The exhibit area, sponsored by the Rogers County Conservation District and the Commission's Conservation Education Program, is designed with children and families in mind and provides activities that introduce visitors to wildlife, nature and the outdoors.

Lea Ann Nowlin, Kingfisher County Conservation District, and Jeff Kuhn, Payne County Conservation District, were among the volunteers who helped guide visitors at the exhibit.



Karla Beatty, OCC education coordinator (right), explains about the living things needed to make healthy soil.

## Northwest Oklahoma Land and Range Contest

Six Conservation Districts sponsored the 12th annual Northwest Oklahoma Land and Range Judging Contest on Oct. 26, 2011. The competition was held at the Southern Experimental Research Station at Woodward. One hundred and fourteen students from 10 FFA and 4-H Chapters within the six conservation district area participated in the contest. Prizes were awarded in several team and individual categories.

Dewey County, Ellis County, Major County, Texas County, Harper County, and Woodward County Conservation Districts sponsored the contest with support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The teens match skills in judging the adaptability of land for various purposes including farming, range management and other purposes. They compete in plant identification for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat purposes.



FFA and 4H members and adults in rangeland.

"This is a joint effort among conservation districts in providing conservation education in our local schools," said Coleta Bratten, Dewey County Conservation District secretary, "This program has been a great success and couldn't be done without our partners from NRCS providing technical assistance to setup and judge the contest."

Each district in northwest Oklahoma that wants to participate as a sponsor donates \$200 to purchase trophies and supplies. Any leftover funds are divided between the participating chapters to use for conserva-

tion education purposes in their classrooms. Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma provides food and cooks the meal each year for the event.



Contestant exiting shallow narrow pit that exposes the soil profile.



Teenage participants gather for the contest.

## OACD/OACD Auxiliary College Scholarships

In a joint effort between the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and the OACD Auxiliary, the children and grandchildren of any Oklahoma conservation district director have the opportunity to apply for one of two scholarships, depending on whether they are high school seniors or already in college. Each scholarship will pay \$300 to the college or university of the winner's choice. The winner of the high school scholarship will be entered in the NACD South Central Region Auxiliary Scholarship, which is also worth \$300 for higher education purposes. The current deadline for applications is Jan. 9, 2012. Instructions for submission are included on the application forms. The application forms are available online at <http://conservation.ok.gov>.

Anyone who would like to make a donation to this scholarship fund, which is a 501c3, as an individual or from a farm, ranch or company or on behalf of a conservation district, should make donations payable to OACD, and send them to OACD Treasurer, Brent Mynhier, P.O. Box 496, Wynnewood, OK. 73098. Please mark checks for "Scholarship Contribution."



## Kay and Noble CCD Women In Ag 2012

Kay County and Noble County Conservation Districts have scheduled their next Women in Ag Conference, "Denim and Lace," for Feb. 9, 2012. The conference will be held at the Renfro Center on the Northern Oklahoma College campus in Tonkawa.

Ron Hays, Oklahoma Farm Report, and Jan Matheson, MS, LPC, are to be the keynote speakers. Breakout sessions will focus on the following topics:

- Using a Website, Twitter and Facebook for Your Business
- Quick Meals for the Field and Freezer Meals
- Personal Safety for Women
- Going Organic and Ag Tourism-Turtle Rock Farm
- Made in OK
- Livestock Management after the Drought
- Annie's Project-A Management Tool for Farm Women

There will be informational booths, goodie bags and a catered lunch. For more information or to register contact the Kay County Conservation District, 580-362-2438, kayccd@conservation.ok.gov, or Noble County Conservation District, 580-336-2003, nobleccd@conservation.ok.gov.

### 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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