

# OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

Information for and about Oklahoma's Conservation Districts

Volume 54, Issue No. 9, September 2008

## Deer Creek Conservation District Hosts Conservation Commission

### Chesapeake Energy Presents Sign to Outstanding District OCC Commends State Rep. James Covey

The Deer Creek Conservation District hosted the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for its regular monthly meeting for September 2008 on Thursday, Sept. 4. Deer Creek CD was named as Outstanding Conservation District for 2008 during Conservation Day at the Capitol last March. The annual award is sponsored by Chesapeake Energy and the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts. In winning the award, the district was recognized for its active and varied programs to further natural resource conservation. Among those programs are no-till workshops, equipment rental, programs to monitor water quality and to help volunteers identify pollutants and analyze the health of local streams, among others. During the meeting John Cox represented Chesapeake Energy in presenting a metal, outdoor sign commemo-



From left are Deer Creek CD Director Carol Gaunt; Chesapeake Energy Representative John Cox; Deer Creek CD directors John Flaming, Bertha Miller and Alveta Taylor and Associate Director Sue Harper-Brown; and OACD Executive Director Clay Pope.

*Deer Creek CD, continued on page 2*

## Central North Canadian River Conservation District Hosts "Ground-breaking" Carbon Event

Approximately 40 people including news media gathered at a spot along the North Canadian River north of Geary on Aug. 28 to kick off a new program in Oklahoma. The Central North Canadian River Conservation District hosted the event on the land of Nadyne Burruss to mark the first land contracted in a Carbon Sequestration Pilot Program involving Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC).



Speakers at the Carbon Program kickoff included, from left, Dan Lowrance, OCC chairman; Gary Roulet, WFEC CEO; Sarah Love, OCI director; Scotty Herriman, OACD president; Clay Pope, OACD executive director; and Larry Watkins, OACD general manager.

With help from the local conservation district and a program from the Conservation Commission partially funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Burruss will be able to fence off 80 acres of land bordering the river. Removing the land

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*"I was brought up to believe that the only thing worth doing was to add to the sum of accurate information in the world."  
~Margaret Mead*

### 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)

**Oklahoma Conservation Commission Meeting**, Oct. 6, Agriculture Bldg., Oklahoma City

**Riparian Restoration Planning Workshop**, Oct. 15-16, Albuquerque, N.M.

**Greater Oklahoma Farm Show**, Oct. 24-25, Comanche County Fairgrounds, Lawton

**Blue Thumb Volunteer Rally**, Oct. 24-26, Tahlequah

**NAAMPLP 2008 Conference**, Oct. 26-29, Durango, Colo.

**Governor's Water Conference**, Oct. 28-30, Sheraton-Reed Conference Center, Midwest City

**Okla. Society for Range Management Annual Meeting**, Oct. 29-30, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

**OACD Area I Meeting**, Oct. 31, Alfalfa County Fairgrounds, Cherokee

**For District Employees and Directors:  
Insurance Options Period Meetings  
Program Year 2009  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the following locations:**

Oct. 6, First American Bank, Taloga

Oct. 7, Garfield CCD office, Enid

Oct. 8, Woodward CCD office, Woodward

Oct. 9, Deer Creek CD office, Weatherford

Oct. 13, Comanche CCD office, Lawton

Oct. 14, Love CCD office, Marietta

Oct. 15, Little River CD office, Idabel

Oct. 16, Muskogee CCD office, Muskogee

## In our thoughts...

Betty Bone, Love CCD manager, lost her husband Don on Aug. 24.

Shirley Hudson, Ottawa CCD secretary, lost her mother on Sept. 1.

Ben Berry, OCC/WQ specialist, Lost his father on Sept. 7.

Greg Lyons, Garvin CD watershed aide, is recuperating after being hospitalized Sept. 3 for respiratory difficulties.

## Congratulations!

Roy Green retired June 30 after 42 years as district manager for South Caddo CD.

*Deer Creek CD*, continued from page 1 rating the district's honor.

In recent years OCC has made a practice of holding a monthly meeting at the office of the award-winning district to recognize board and staff. The Deer Creek Conservation District, covering portions of Custer Blaine Washita counties, has its office in Weatherford.

State Rep. James Covey attended the meeting and the Conservation Commission presented him with a Conservation Commission Commendation for "... unfailing support and leadership in the Oklahoma Legislature for conservation districts and initiatives, no-till agriculture, upstream flood control programs and agricultural industry and rural development in the State of Oklahoma." Rep. Covey, a farmer and rancher who lives in Custer City, has represented District 57 for 12 years and by state term limits is ineligible to be elected again.

Following the Commission meeting, Deer Creek CD board and staff, with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, provided the visitors with a tour of Cobb Creek Dam No. 2. The upstream flood control dam, built in 1958, has been undergoing reconstruction as part of a nationwide USDA dam rehabilitation program. Originally construction was expected to be completed in 2007, but heavy rainstorms in May, June and July of that year kept setting back completion. Then, in August 2007, after the concrete spillway pipe had been set in place, the remnant of Hurricane Erin battered western Oklahoma. At Cobb Creek No. 2, pieces of spillway pipe were scattered and tons of soil washed away. Now, in September 2008, the dam is finally approaching completion.



The Conservation Commission presented out-going state Rep. James Covey with a commendation for his support conservation, agriculture and rural development.



Cobb Creek Dam No. 2. Behind the equipment are Deer Creek CD board members Bertha Miller (left) and Alveta Taylor.

## OCC and NRCS Produce Radio PSAs

Late in August OCC in cooperation with NRCS mailed CD-Rom audio disks to the approximately 100 radio stations in the state. The disks contain a pre-recorded 30-second audio public service announcement recorded in three languages — English, Spanish and Lao. The message contained is:

"Attention farmers and ranchers. Do you need help in solving soil erosion, flooding, water quality or other natural resource problems? Do you need help in managing grasslands, forestland, animal waste or wildlife habitat? Free technical assistance is available through your local conservation district and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office. Contact your local conservation district office or for more information go to the website - [www.conservation.ok.gov](http://www.conservation.ok.gov)"

Carbon, continued from page 1

from cattle grazing will allow trees to grow that will result in increased soil carbon over the years (carbon sequestration). Burruss will be paid \$3.50 per metric ton of carbon stored within the ecosystem.

In July the Oklahoma Conservation Commission initiated the Carbon Sequestration Certification Program. The program is designed to



Merrill and Nadyne Burruss

assist Oklahoma landowners and companies to take advantage of opportunities created by recently-established national and global carbon markets.

Carbon markets have been established as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many companies are already taking steps to reduce or offset their emissions, and they are paying to do so. Others are buying up offsets in hopes of using or selling them at a profit should the price of carbon rise higher. An emission offset occurs when greenhouse gases are removed from the atmosphere and stored in vegetation, soil, or underground. For example, trees take in CO<sub>2</sub> during photosynthesis so a certain number of trees can offset a certain amount of CO<sub>2</sub> by storing it in their trunks, roots, and soil. Grasslands and soils under no-till agriculture also store more carbon than degraded lands or soils under conventional tillage. Carbon can also be stored deep underground in geologic formations. The burgeoning demand for emission reductions and offsets is driving up the price of carbon, which peaked at \$7 per metric ton in 2008, twice what it was last year.

The first program of its kind in the nation, OCC will certify and verify emission offsets in an effort to protect buyers and sellers. The agency does not buy or sell carbon offsets, but adds a layer of assurance that buyers are getting what they pay for and not causing harm to natural resources. OACD has created the Oklahoma Carbon Initiative (OCI) to serve as an “aggregator” of carbon offsets. That means the Oklahoma Carbon Initiative will contract with multiple land owners for the carbon offsets, bundle the offsets into quantities and sell them in either on- or off-market transactions. Western Farmers Electric Cooperative is sponsoring the pilot program by committing to purchase \$100,000 of carbon offsets in the North Canadian River watershed over a three-year period. The project is part of a larger water quality improvement program, the North

Canadian River 319 Project, for the North Canadian watershed from Canton Dam to Lake Overholser, involving portions of Dewey, Blaine and Canadian Counties. The 319 designation refers to



section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act that authorizes cost share funds for projects to help improve nonpoint source water quality.

Dan Lowrance, OCC chairman, welcomed those in attendance to “...a historic occasion -- the kickoff of a certifiable carbon credit program, the first of its kind in the nation.” Stacy Hansen, director of OCC’s new Carbon Program, and Sarah Love, OCI director, each explained their organizations’ role in the project. Gary Roulet, WFEC CEO, stated his company is committed to being a good steward of the environment and is eager to participate in carbon sequestration. Larry Watkins, general manager of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) emphasized that “This is real environmentalism in a voluntary, cooperative program.” Shanon Phillips, OCC Water Quality assistant director, explained that in addition to carbon storage the benefits would extend to improving water quality of the North Canadian River. The protected and increased vegetation in the river side, or riparian, area would help water quality by filtering out sediment, pesticides, fertilizers and nutrients carried by rainwater runoff. In closing, Scotty Herriman, OACD president, said that once again Oklahoma leads the nation in natural resource conservation. “This truly is a groundbreaking, milestone setting event as, once again, conservation districts lead the way in working with individuals and industry in protecting and improving our environment,” Herriman said.



Stacy Hansen, OCC/WQ Carbon Program director, explained how credits will be certified and told that this is the first program in the U.S. where a state agency is the certifier.

# OACDE and OCC Provide CPR and First Aid Training to Conservation District Employees

Approximately 75 conservation district employees and a few Conservation Commission staff participated in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Training in August. Five sessions – one in each Conservation Commission Areas – was sponsored by the Oklahoma Association of Conservation District Employees (OACDE) with assistance from OCC. OACDE area directors coordinated the participant signups.

Darrell Gable, an independent safety consultant and trainer, instructed at daylong sessions in Claremore, Woodward, McAlester, Hobart and Shawnee. Participants numbered from 12 to 22 at the sessions. The morning session focused on CPR training with “hands on” activities with state-of the art practice dummies. After a lunch break, discussion and demonstrations centered on First Aid. Gable distributed take-home publications on CRP and First Aid published by the Red Cross organization.



Mailing Tab Area

Among participants in the CPR/First Aid training session at McAlester were (from left) Karen Beek, Little River CD; Darrel Gable, instructor; Frank Acker, Little River; (on floor) John David Burnett, Little River CD; Brad Nelson, Bryan CD; (seated) Robert Hunnicut, Latimer County CD; Henry Roye, OCC/AML; Nicole Norris, Latimer County CD; and Donna Hannebrink, Talihina and Latimer County CDs.

## 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

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