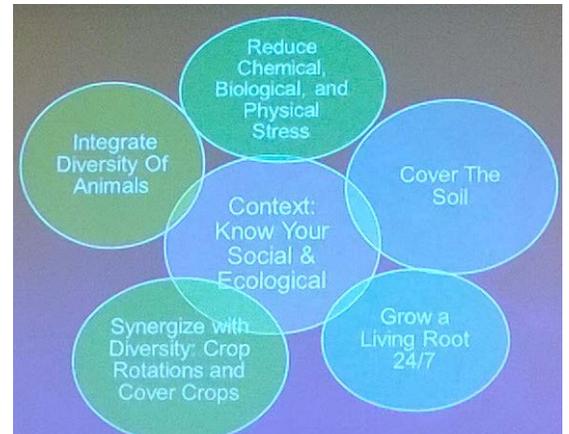


Soil Health Education Program



Our Soil Health Education Program is a statewide initiative to train conservation districts in the importance of soil health and its impacts to air and water quality so that they may share the knowledge with their local communities. Our training program delves into soil health principles by teaching easy to use techniques for understanding, assessing, and restoring soil health through multiple hands-on learning opportunities. Soil health educators are also representing the agency on projects exploring and promoting the use of cover crops on demonstration farms with the goal of increasing the use of cover crops by Oklahoma agricultural producers to reduce wind erosion and water runoff from agricultural lands.



We taught that the rate that water soaks into the ground can be an indicator of soil health, and that soil temperature is demonstrably lower when soil is covered.



We used the NRCS tabletop rainfall simulator to show how rain carries soil particles into waterways when soil isn't covered.



We provided intensive Assessing Soil Health trainings educating on the principles of soil health to more than 60 OCC, NRCS, and conservation district employees.



We partnered with NRCS and OACD to offer soil health education to over 500 conservation district employees and board members, and NRCS staff at all five conservation district Area Meetings. The goal of the sessions was to interest conservation districts in attending an in-depth full day Assessing Soil Health training.



We provided a soil health Make n Take workshop to six conservation districts to provide them with a bucket of tools to use to discuss soil health and water quality with their producers during quick field tests.



We traveled to Washington, D.C. to testify before the U.S. House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy and Forestry at the invitation of Congressman Frank Lucas. The testimony was followed by a rainfall simulator demonstration we led at the NRCS People's Garden in partnership with Virginia NRCS. The rainfall simulator shows in real time the link between soil health and water quality by showing how much soil and debris flow into waterways from different surfaces such as pavement, cropland and grassland.



Other Activities of Note

- Created Soil Health **webpages** that explain the division's and Oklahoma partners' respective Soil Health initiatives.
- Created an Oklahoma Soil Health Partnership **brochure** explaining soil health-related initiatives in Oklahoma.
- Partnered with NRCS to offer soil health education to attendees at the Oklahoma **Wildlife Expo**. Indoor and outdoor rainfall simulators ran all day Saturday and Sunday. More than 30,000 people attended.
- Exhibited soil health at the **Governor's Water Conference** in OKC with over 300 state, municipal, and private sector water quality professionals and legislators in attendance.
- Exhibited soil health at the **Tulsa Farm Show**, which had an attendance of over 30,000 people.
- Presented on soil health at the **Oklahoma Soil and Water Conservation Society** annual meeting.
- Spoke to the **Oklahoma Ag Leadership Program** class about soil health.
- Presented on soil health to **Langston University** students.
- Worked with conservation districts to verify acres for the OACD WFEC **Carbon Project**. We certified 11,000 acres for OACD payments to 23 producers totaling \$16,407 with an estimated sequestration of 4,688 metric tons of CO₂e.
- Represented the agency at the **USDA Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act (RCA) round table discussion** in collaboration with NRCS and the Northeast Climate Hub. Discussion centered around three core topics: water resource management, soil health, and the resilience of soil and water resources to climate change and extreme weather events. Presentations were followed by discussions of regional resource problems and potential solutions to these problems.
- Began a partnership with OSU on a USDA Project called **Soil Health On-Farm Field Trial Demonstrations**. The project's objective is to provide training and tools to county extension educators, conservation district and NRCS staff to establish scientifically sound, replicable, on-farm demonstration trials for practices that benefit soil, air, and water quality.



All eyes were on soil health at our training in Claremore!