



Conservation Conversation

U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas & Ag Personality Ken Root will highlight event OACD 2002 State Meeting to "Double Up" on Topics

This year's state meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, inspired by the double digits in the numerical expression of the current year, will repeat several session topics. "2002: Doubling Our Conservation Commitment," the 64th Annual OACD State Meeting will be held Feb. 24-26 at the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City.



U.S. Sixth District Congressman Frank Lucas is scheduled to speak at the Monday luncheon, and well-known agricultural broadcaster and columnist Ken Root will provide a keynote address and participate in several sessions. Key issues including Watershed Rehabilitation, Grazing Lands Conservation, and water sale issues will be among the discussion topics. Sessions on Working with Volunteers and the Open Meetings/Open Records law will be available twice on the schedule, and an invitation-only new director training session is divided into two parts.

Writing Effective Conservation Education Grants and Kerr Foundation Producer Grants are separate sessions, as are Telling Our Conservation Story, Conservation Education, Urban Conservation Issues, Getting Ready for Legislative Days, and Effective Outreach Programs/Tribal Assistance. The Oklahoma Association of Conservation District Employees is helping to coordinate the District Spotlight this year, featuring several districts' successful activities. The OACD Business Meeting, District Employees Meeting and NRCS Employees Meeting are all planned for Monday afternoon.

Separate breakfast events will be held for both Class One and Class Two Conservation Leadership Alumni. A new group of directors will be inducted into the third Conservation Leadership Class, and those participants are invited to join the Past Presidents' Breakfast on Tuesday morning.

Everyone is invited to a "dessert social" event on Sunday with an admission charge of \$5. A silent auction begins on Sunday and concludes Monday afternoon, while a live auction will be held Monday night. The Legislative Reception and Banquet on Monday evening are followed by an informal attire dance.

NACD Vice President Billy Wilson and NRCS Chief Pearlie Reed have been invited as keynote speakers for the Tuesday morning general session. The Awards Luncheon on Tuesday will close the three-day meeting and honor district directors and employees for years of service. Darrel Dominick, NRCS state conservationist will present Earth Team Awards. The Environmental/Conservation Information Program, sponsored by the Oklahoma Press Association and OACD, will be featured as OPA Executive Vice President Mark Thomas will present awards for four divisions of district news clipping scrapbooks and two outstanding press member categories.

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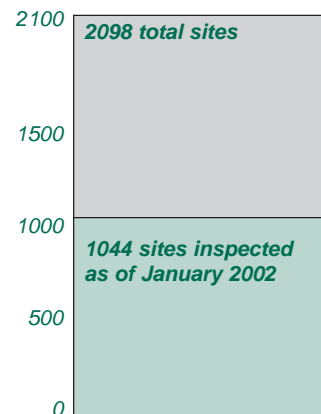
Our vision:

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, on behalf of
the citizens of Oklahoma.

2100 in 2002! Oklahoma Statewide Watershed Inspection Team



Conservation Calendar

Grazing Lands "Dollars & Cents" Seminar
Oklahoma Grazing Lands Conservation Assoc.
Feb. 1-2, Oklahoma City

National Association of Conservation Districts
56th Annual Meeting
Feb. 3 - 7, Reno, NV

Oklahoma State Legislative Session Begins
Feb. 4, State Capitol, Oklahoma City

Introduction to Fluvial Geomorphology
Training Class, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Feb. 5-8, Norman, OK.

Oklahoma Association of Environmental
Education Environmental Expo,
Feb. 8, Oklahoma City, OK

Oklahoma Association of Conservation
Districts 64th Annual State Meeting
Feb. 24-26, Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City

Conservation District Director Elections,
Position No. 1, March 12

Conservation District Week
March 10 - 16

National Land & Range Judging Contest
May 7-9, 2002, Oklahoma City

In Our Thoughts

Karen Potts, OCC/FMHR staff, is recovering from surgery for a brain tumor. The initial surgery went well, but has had some setbacks requiring additional surgery. For anyone who would like to send her a note or card, her address is 113 Cypress Ave., Yukon, OK 73009-5644.

Hessel Purdy, Education/Public Relations at Kay County CD had surgery on his right shoulder Dec. 6.

Congratulations

Linda Bone, Valliant CD secretary, has a new granddaughter, Brennan Alynn Christian, born Dec. 17.

Debi Carnott, CNCR CD manager, has a new grandson, Colin Blair Carnott, born Dec. 21.

Lonnie Stone, Kay County CD secretary, became a grandmother with the birth of Grace Marie Sawyer, born on Dec. 6.

Kenneth Blan and Rebecca Harrison, both Pushmataha CD directors, were married Jan. 12th.

Please inform **Kelly Mockabee** at OCC of district directors or employees who have been ill, passed away or had babies. **Please include dates!!!!!!!**

Latimer County CD Receives 2nd bp Outdoor Classroom Grant

Latimer County CD received \$25,000 from bp (energy corporation) toward completion of the Fourche-Maline Outdoor Classroom at Robbers Cave State Park. bp had donated \$5,000 in May for a gazebo, now under construction, at the site. The latest grant will fund a bridge, walkway, trails, Civilian Conservation Corps display, archeological site and more.

The district will hold its natural resource days and teacher workshops there. Eastern Oklahoma State University is making plans to hold summer science institute sessions for high school students there as well.

Grant Recipient District Directors Acknowledged by Kerr Center

On September 8, the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture sponsored an appreciation day for Oklahoma Producer Grant recipients. Rick Jeans, Kay County CD director; Sam McClure, Hughes County CD director; and Jesse Snyder, Shawnee CD director; were among the grant recipients recognized during the day-long event at the Oklahoma City Zoo.

The Kerr Center is a nonprofit foundation and offers the Oklahoma Producer Grants to help farmers learn from farmers with assistance from specialists. Applications are selected competitively by an independent committee.

NRCS Announces the 2002 Earth Team Poster & Essay Contest

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, (NRCS), Stillwater, has announced the 2002 Earth Team Poster and Essay Contest. Intended to increase natural resources conservation awareness and how it applies to every day lives among students and their families, the contest is open to Oklahoma teens between the ages of 14 and 18.

"*Harmony Between People and the Land*," the national vision of NRCS, is the theme for this year's contests. All entrants will receive an Earth Team patch and letter and become an Earth Team Volunteer. The contests are open to current Earth Team members also. The entries will be judged and first, second, and third place winners will be determined. Prizes and certificates will be awarded and the winners announced as a media event on Earth Day, April 22, 2002. The top entries will also be included in a yearly planner with statewide, and possibly nationwide distribution.

Information including rules and forms can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/>, by clicking on the "Volunteers" link, or for more information, contact Becka Redding, NRCS, 405/742-1204.



OACD State Meeting, continued from page 1

The OACD Auxiliary would like to remind everyone that all spouses of district directors are invited to join in all Auxiliary activities. The group's luncheon Program at the hotel on Monday will feature antique glassware. Those interested are invited to bring their own items for review by guest speaker Molly Keith. At the Auxiliary complimentary continental breakfast Tuesday morning, Tom Bergey, owner of the Golden Trowel Herb Farm in Harrah, will present an herbal cooking demonstration and tasting session. Bergey is the author of a cookbook, "Recipes from the Golden Trowel Herb Farm."

OACD is an independent organization with membership made up of district directors from Oklahoma's 88 conservation districts. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission is a cosponsor of the OACD Annual State Meeting.



Oklahoma Association of
Conservation Districts 

Highlights of the Monthly Meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Jan. 7, 2002, in the Commission Conference Room, Oklahoma City, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

District Director Resignations

Francis Curran - Comanche County
Rick Vickrey - Grady County
Mark McCollom - Kiowa County
Steve Sullins - Noble County
Greg Goad - Osage County

District Director Appointments

Caney Valley - Janet R. Maloney
East Canadian County - Pamela Mach
*Grady County - Calvin Eugene Overton
*Kiowa County - Rod Wald
Mayes County - Bud Osborne
*Noble County - Cody Sullins
*Osage County - Steve Fisher
Rogers County - George Fraley
South Caddo - Ronald L. Walzer
West Caddo - Wayne Spies
Woods County - John Friend

*New Director

Claims/Financial Statement

Commissioners approved the claims and financial statement presented by Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources director, who stated 457 claims were processed for a total of \$1,193,905.08. Coffman provided information regarding the FY2002 transfer of Rural Economic Assistance Program funds to the cost-share and small watershed funds.

NACD Spring Legislative Conference

Commissioners approved a motion for commission members and two OCC staff members to attend the National Association of Conservation Districts' Spring Legislative Conference, March 17-19, in Washington, D.C.

Legal Services

Mike Thralls, OCC executive director, presented an agreement with the state Attorney General's office and OCC for legal services. An attorney will be employed three-fourths time for OCC and one-fourth time for the Scenic Rivers Commission.

Cost-Share Program Year 5

Commissioners approved the following requests from conservation districts for additional cost-share practices for Cost-Share Program Year 5, as presented by Dan Sebert, Conservation Programs director: (NRCS specification numbers are in parentheses.)

1. Beaver County to include terrace reconstruction as a component under the Terrace (600) practice.
2. Cimarron County to use Fence (382) in conjunction with a prescribed grazing plan and Pipeline (516) as a stand alone practice.
3. East Canadian County to include Brush Management (314) for Red Cedar and Pest Management (595) for Musk Thistle.
4. Harper County to include Brush Management (314), Fence (382), and Prescribed Burning (338) to address grazing concerns.
5. Woods County to use Fence (382) in conjunction with a cell grazing system.
6. East Woods County to include Fence (382) in conjunction with a grazing system.
7. Haskell County to include Fence (382) in conjunction with a grazing system.

Revisions of OCC's Strategic Plan

Commissioners approved a revision of OCC's Strategic Plan submitted by Lisa Knauf, District Services director. The revision was made at the request of the Office of State Finance to clarify several key performance measures.

Budget Reduction Proposal

Thralls reported that the Office of State Finance had contacted OCC regarding the need to revise its FY2002 Budget Work Program with a budget reduction of \$82,069 for the remainder of the fiscal year and submit it to OSF by Jan. 11. Commissioners approved the budget reduction proposal as presented by Thralls, with the reduction coming entirely from OCC expenses and none from conservation district allocations.

Commission Member Reports

Commissioner Virginia Kidd reported on a meeting in Poteau regarding the sale of Oklahoma water to Texas. Commissioner J.T. Winters reported participating in the Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association meeting last month and stated OWGA is very supportive of the Conservation Cost-Share Program. He also attended the East Woods County CD board meeting to discuss Cost-Share Program ideas. The Woodward County CD will host a Blue Thumb training session. Commissioner Terry Wyatt has been working with the Congressional delegation regarding the Farm Bill. Commissioner Drummond reported meeting Congressman Brad Carson in Osage County recently.

OCC Staff Reports

Administration: Mike Thralls, executive director, reported on a meeting with Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 personnel to review funding options for a litter processing facility. He also reported on legal action involving a proposed solid waste landfill site in McCurtain County. Ben Pollard, assistant director, stated the Water Quality division director position was advertised again from Dec. 1-31. OCC received 39 applications in addition to 22 applications received during the initial application period. Interviews are planned for January. The new Conservation Leadership Program class will be introduced during the OACD State Meeting in February. He asked each member to rank class applicants in their respective areas. NRCS and OACD will be reviewing the applications also. Pollard reported on an initiative by the Governor and the Office of State Finance in which all state agencies with environmental responsibilities have been asked to meet over the next several months to develop recommendations for eliminating duplication and streamlining operations for better efficiency. A professional facilitator has been retained to work with the agencies, and an initial meeting with the facilitator has been scheduled for Jan. 18. Pollard stated that Mark Harrison, Information officer, now has oversight of OCC's web page with technical support from Dianne Ireton and from the Information Technology division. He provided copies of a brochure on Port Silt Loam and stated an electronic version is available on the OCC web page.

Conservation Programs: Dan Sebert, Conservation Programs division director, reported the watershed inspection team was working in Coal, Atoka and Johnston Counties currently. (See graph on page one.) The Oklahoma Water Resources Board will hold a dam safety hearing Jan. 29 regarding the Cobb Creek, Site 3 water-

shed structure. Conservation districts are proceeding with sign-ups on Program Year 5 of the Conservation Cost-Share Program. Karla Beatty, Education coordinator, held training sessions during the past month.

Water Quality: Dan Butler, Water Quality Program interim director, reported that five vacancies were filled during the past month. He introduced Jennifer Campbell, WQ Education specialist, and Chris Azbell, Water Quality specialist. Matt Mercer, Wetlands Program coordinator, is leaving to accept employment with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in New Mexico. The WQ division submitted seven more projects to EPA for approval.

Abandoned Mine Land: Mike Kastl, AML Program director, reported completion of the AML Annual Report and will provide copies next month. A pre-bid meeting would be held in Claremore for a new project.

Information and Technology: Mike Sharp, Information Technology division director, stated he has been in charge of the office move during the past month. Chris Dunlevy passed a Microsoft certification test. The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Council met on Jan. 4. Chris Hise, former OCC employee, now with the Nature Conservancy, gave a presentation. The next council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 8 at the Department of Environmental Quality office.

District Services: Lisa Knauf, District Services division director, reported working on training materials and revisions to the OCC Strategic Plan.

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

Don Bartolina, OACD executive director, provided copies of OACD Annual Meeting information that was sent to all conservation districts as well as a list of youth contest award winners. The tentative agenda includes U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas, NRCS Chief Pearlle Reed, and NACD Vice President Bill Wilson. Concurrent sessions planned for this year's meeting include a new district director training session. Silent and live auctions are planned and all districts were asked to make a contribution. Kenneth Blan, Kiamichi CD director, has been named OACD Area 5 director replacing Yates Adcock. OACD will be hosting a hospitality room during the upcoming NACD Annual Meeting in Reno. District employees have been asked to participate in this year's legislative days. OACD has been asked by NACD to serve on a planning committee for a regional bioenergy/biomass workshop to be held at the Redlands Community College in El Reno in March. Bill Wilson, NACD vice president, reported on Farm Bill issues.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Darrel Dominick, NRCS state conservationist, reported optimism for conservation funding in the new Farm Bill. Significant increases in appropriations are anticipated in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, the Farmland Protection Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

USDA Farm Service Agency

Jim Reese, FSA state executive director, provided copies of photographs from a dust storm in Grant County in February 1996. He stated that Grant County, Kay County and Caddo County have been approved for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) funds due to drought conditions.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Feb. 11 in the Commission conference room beginning at 9:30 a.m.

How The “Dust Bowl” Got Its Name

The term Dust Bowl first appeared on April 15, 1935, the day after “Black Sunday.” Robert Geiger, a reporter for the Associated Press, traveled through the region and wrote the following:

Three little words, achingly familiar to a western farmer’s tongue, rule life in the dust bowl of the continent, “...if it rains...”

The term “dust bowl” stuck, spreading to radio broadcasts, publications and speeches. Geiger may have been influenced by an earlier image of the plains coined by William Gilpin, who had compared the Great Plains to a fertile bowl, rimmed by mountains.

The USDA Soil Conservation Service later used the term on their maps to describe the western one-third of Kansas, southeastern Colorado, the Oklahoma Panhandle, the northern two-thirds of the Texas Panhandle and northeastern New Mexico. Others included an even larger area when describing the Dust Bowl—an area that covered one-third of the Great Plains, close to 100 million acres.

(Excerpt from a new book, *The History of Conservation in Oklahoma in the 20th Century*, scheduled for release in 2003.)



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Project Learning Tree
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