OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

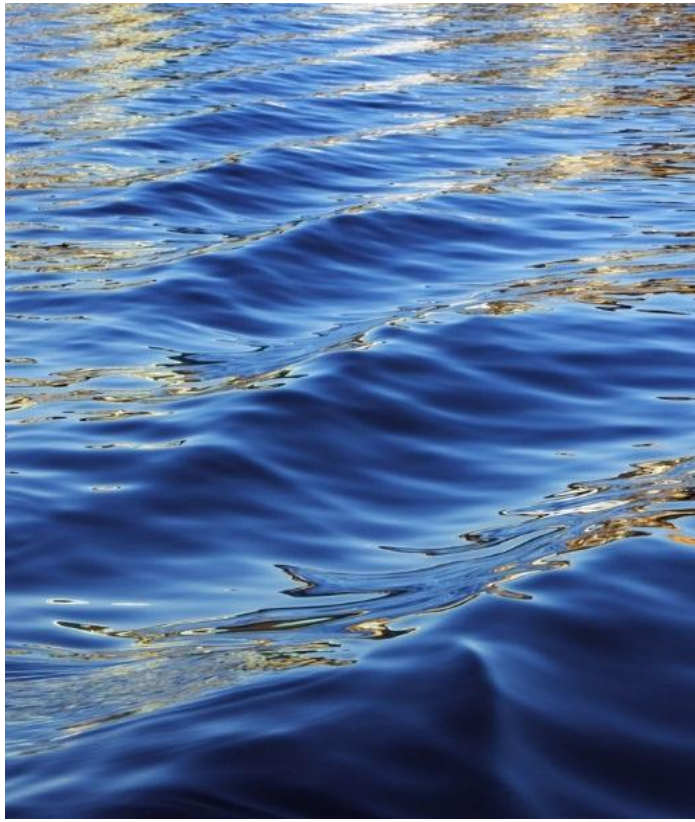


Reaching the choir, but projecting beyond…

Bryan Painter, OCC Public Information Officer

Our Land • Our Heritage • Our Future





Producers are our choir…
but we don't stop there





Radio Oklahoma Ag Network



“Please tell us what’s going on in Conservation in Oklahoma”…
AN OPEN-DOOR QUESTION





Cover Crop - About 80 Degrees



No Cover Crop – About 130 Degrees

SECOND DAY APPROACH



WOULD YOU LIKE A TRACTOR TIRE…OR AN EGG ROLL WITH THAT MAGAZINE?



Home › Farm & Ranch › Infiltration Test Clearly Shows Benefits of Good Soil Health Management

Infiltration Test Clearly Shows Benefits of Good Soil Health Management

BY BRYAN PAINTER

November 16, 2020 bowienews Farm & Ranch 0

Just about everyone's heard of or experienced being dirt poor.

How would you like to be soil rich?

Western Oklahoma producer Jimmy Emmons, featured this summer in Oklahoma Farm & Ranch magazine, has worked with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) to build a bank of sorts in his soil. It's not money he keeps down there, but rather water. However, by using the soil as a reservoir that soil can benefit the land and the producer all the way to the bank.



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A VERY INTERESTING WATERED-DOWN TOPIC…OKLAHOMA'S WETLANDS PROGRAM!

FARM & RANCH

OCC Team Goes the Extra Miles for the Future of Oklahoma's Wetlands

By Bryan Painter, Communications Director for Okla. Conservation Commission and Okla. Natural Resources Conservation Service

The concept seems simple at surface level.

This summer the Oklahoma Conservation Commission's (OCC) Wetlands Program traveled to and studied many of the different wetland areas across Oklahoma for the National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA). Wetlands are one of the five waterbody types in the National Aquatic Resource Surveys (NARS) and are studied once every five years.

This isn't strictly a paper survey.

Nor, at the onset, is it a laboratory survey.

No, at one time or another for this survey of 35 wetlands areas in the state, the OCC staff walked over nine miles, navigated deep water, and trudged through massive ragweed with dead growth reaching over 24 feet in length and the new growth as tall as 12 feet.

Then add on the weather. Due to their nature, humidity in wetlands is almost always near 100 percent. Actual temperatures climbed near triple digits. Toss in the fact that after the team gets in there, they exit the site with backpacks filled with soil samples weighing as much as 150 pounds – and sometimes the bags are passed over barbed wire fences.

Although this sounds like a really challenging summer, most sites were more easily accessed, and each location told a unique and interesting story.

While the survey drains the OCC Wetlands staff physically, the information it produces and the good it will do inspires them, right down to the most specific details.

"Worth noting, is the plant diversity," said Brooks Tramell, Director of Water Quality Monitoring, Assessment & Wetland Program. "We had a few sites with 70 plus species and a couple of sites with over 80 species of plants in the survey plots."



Perpendicular transects and flags were used to systematically place vegetation plots, soil pits and water sampling locations.

The importance…

NARS, a collaborative partnership coordinated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was developed as the first comprehensive statistical survey to assess the status of and changes in the quality of the nation's waterbodies.

State partners, like OCC, work to collect data within their state, and EPA compiles and analyzes the data with input from partners to provide a broad-brush appraisal of nationwide and regional wetland quality.

The project is important because of the functions that wetlands provide, including water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, flood water management, and critical habitat for wildlife important for recreation, such as ducks and fish. Data generated from this project will help wetland managers better understand the types of stressors affecting wetlands, where wetlands are most at risk, and how to improve management so wetlands can continue to provide important services to our citizens.

To accurately assess overall condition of the nation's wetlands, data must be collected across the United States in a standardized approach.

This year, 1,000 sites across the nation, including the 35 in Oklahoma, were assessed. The sites were randomly selected from all areas mapped as wetlands. Those working on the project included: Tramell, Director of Monitoring Assessment and Wetlands and crew Leader for the project; Dan Dvorett, Technical Programs Director and botanist for the project; Sarah Gilmer, Water Quality Specialist and crew member, Cameron Sherbon, Seasonal Intern and crew member, and Greg Klotzin, Assistant Director of the Water Quality Division, who assisted with three of the toughest sites.

"Because wetland maps are not always correct, the first step was to determine if selected sites were indeed wetland and usable for this study," said Dan Dvorett, OCC Wetland Program Technical Programs Director. "Then, we began the arduous task of locating and contacting landowners at the valid locations for permission to complete the assessments."

Where permission was given, the crew studied indicators that help provide insight to the health and functions of the wetlands: vegetation, soil, water quality, water movement, and adjacent land-use.

Within a roughly 1.25 acre "Assessment Area," a vegetation survey was completed, a four-

HELPING OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS

The Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society's Oral History Collection

BY BRYAN PAINTER

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TAKING IT TO THE STREAMS…



THEY HAVE A QUESTION…WE ATTEMP TO HAVE AN ANSWER…WORKS WELL FOR ALL OF US



BRYAN PAINTER
OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
bryan.painter@conservation.ok.gov
(405) 830-1775