THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Est. 2020



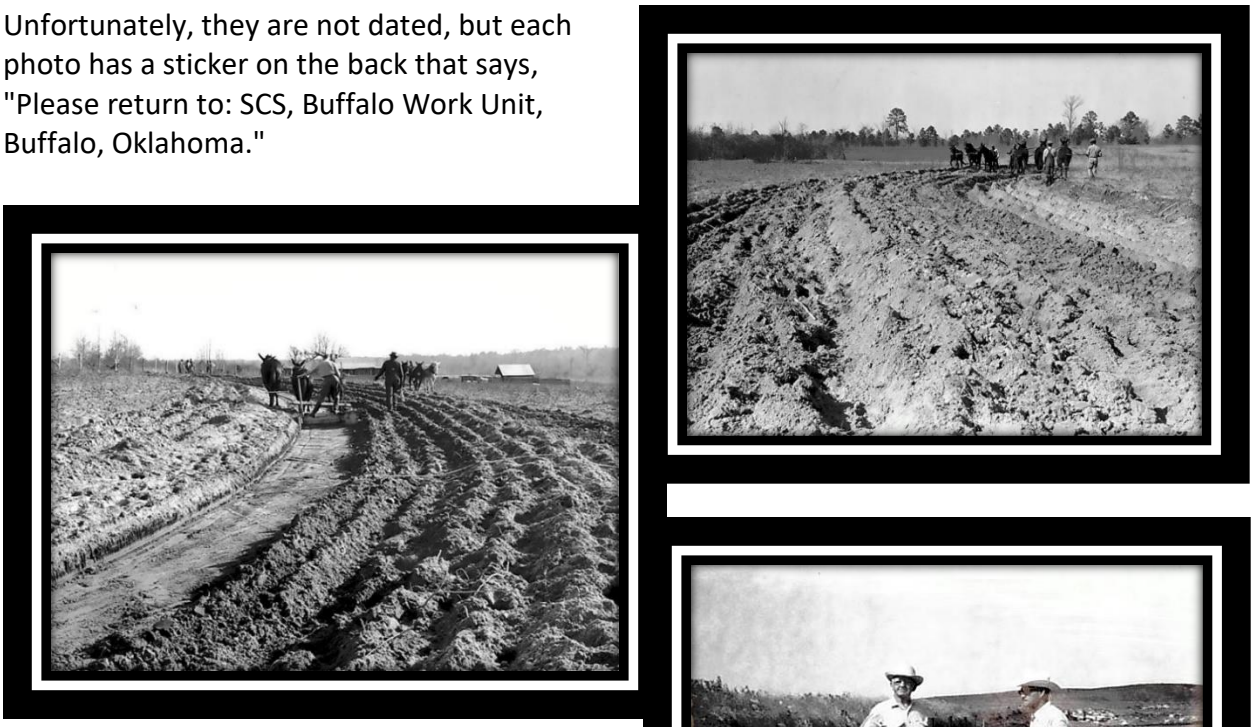
MAY 12, 2021 EDITION

LOOK WHAT SHE FOUND…

Ok, so there's a shelf or there's a closet or there's a corner and on it or in it is a box. Many times you've glanced at it and wondered, "What's in that box?" Or maybe you had an idea but didn't have the time to dig through it. Well Amanda Spradlin of the Harper County Conservation District took the time. She sent me an email that read, "I came across at least several hundred black and white photos from the 40s and 50s of conservation programs in and around Harper County if you are interested." You all know me well enough now to know, I couldn't type the word "Yes" fast enough. So, she followed up the next day. She wrote, "I have attached a few photos. It will take me a while to go through these...there are several hundred, but these I really love! I really love the fact they are using mule teams.



Unfortunately, they are not dated, but each photo has a sticker on the back that says, "Please return to: SCS, Buffalo Work Unit, Buffalo, Oklahoma."





Amanda also found this photo: “Here is a photo of Jim Barth who served on the board many years and we now have a scholarship named after. I believe this was taken at Paint Creek Watershed around the time of construction/completion.” Thank you so much Amanda for sharing these with us. If you have older photos in your office and would like to share, please just email them to bryan.painter@conservation.ok.gov .

DAN HERALD TO SERVE AS AREA I COMMISSIONER BEGINNING IN JULY…

On May 4, the Oklahoma Senate approved the appointment of Dan Herald of Hooker, Okla., in Texas County, to serve as a member of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for a 5-year term ending June 30, 2026.

Herald will begin serving as the Area I Commissioner at the July Commission meeting.

“The Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) is excited that Governor (J. Kevin) Stitt’s nomination of Dan Herald moved through the Senate Agriculture Committee,” said Trey Lam, Executive Director of the OCC. “Dan’s experience serving the people of Oklahoma through many leadership positions in different agriculture organizations will make him a valuable addition to the Conservation Commission. Not only does Dan have a great deal of knowledge on agriculture issues, but his service on the Texas County Conservation District Board and his involvement in conservation programs and community outreach

makes him an excellent fit to serve on the Conservation Commission. I look forward to working with Dan to conserve, protect and restore Oklahoma's soil and water."

The conservation districts in Oklahoma are grouped into five areas in the state. Each area is represented by a Conservation Commission board member. Herald will represent Area I. The conservation districts in that area include: Alfalfa County; Beaver County; Blaine County; Central North Canadian River; Cimarron County; Dewey County; East Canadian County; Ellis County; Garfield County; Grant County; Harper County; Kingfisher County; Major County; Texas County; Woods County and Woodward County.



Herald is a lifelong resident of Hooker, Oklahoma. He is the fourth generation of his family to farm on the Oklahoma plains.
In 1967 while attending Hooker High School he received the State Star Farmer of Oklahoma Award and the Governor's trophy in recognition.

Herald attended Oklahoma State University and graduated in 1971 with degrees in Animal Science and Agriculture Economics. He also earned the American Farmer Degree in Kansas City in 1970.

In 2015 on the 80th anniversary of Black Sunday at the state Capitol, Dan and his family watched his father, Ernest Herald give an account of the events that took place on April 14, 1935. Ernest was one of the last six survivors able to tell the story. He was also invited to speak to the House Chamber.

The farm where Herald's father was born will become a centennial farm in 2025, having remained in the family farming operation since 1925.

Dan Herald has farmed dry land wheat and grain sorghum for nearly 50 years. He has held a seat on the Texas County Conservation Board, the Executive Board of Directors for Oklahoma Crop Improvement and the Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association. He has been selected as an Outstanding Director by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and a Premier Seed Producer by the Oklahoma Crop Improvement Association. Herald also serves as an elder of his local congregation. In 2016, he was named the Outstanding Conservation District Director in Oklahoma and was praised for his dedicated work with his local board, the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Herald has been married to his wife, Marva Fast for 51 years. They have a daughter and two sons. The highlights of their later life include spending time with their children and 8 grandchildren.

After 10 years of outstanding service, Karl Jett of Slapout chose not to run for the position again. Please watch for a story on Karl in a June edition of The Ripple Effect.

“REGENERATIVE AG”

We recently took the opportunity to explore a closer look at Regenerative Agriculture with Amy Seiger, Oklahoma Conservation Commission Soil Health Coordinator, and Jimmy Emmons, Oklahoma Conservation Commission Soil Health Mentoring Coordinator. We hope you enjoy this special Q&A on Regenerative Agriculture.

Amy Seiger: What is your definition of Regenerative Agriculture? Regenerative Agriculture is very much the same as using Soil Health systems in agriculture. However, Regenerative Agriculture is nothing new. It takes into consideration working with nature instead of against nature, just as the Tribes have known for thousands of years. In these systems, soil is considered an important part of the ecosystem and function of the whole farm. Traditional systems consider soil as a medium for holding nutrients and water (like a sponge) and not a living dynamic ecosystem. However, in Regenerative Agriculture/ Soil Health Systems, soil's ecology and physical properties are important. It focuses on rebuilding soil to work as nature intended. We focus on implementing 5 to 6 soil health principles to establish a system that works best for the producer. All production agriculture can consider soil health. Crop, pasture, and rangeland all have a unique system that can use soil health principles.
Jimmy Emmons: What is your definition of Regenerative Agriculture? My definition of Regenerative Agriculture is a soil health systems approach and using the Principles of soil health to rebuild and revitalize our soils starting with the biological community.

Amy Seiger: Why is it important? It is important in Oklahoma because we have very abused soils. After years of traditional practices, we have depleted the soil's ability to function correctly. When soils are considered as part of a whole ecosystem, we are seeing organic matter being restored and soil physical properties corrected from the years of abuse in a short amount of time. Before tillage usage, our soils would have contained more than 2% organic matter. Now across Oklahoma in a traditional system we see .5 or less. This restoration is important because of the nutrient and water holding capacity organic matter plays within the soil. Organic matter and improved physical properties in soil will help reduce water runoff, capture more water, and hold nutrients in place next to the plants and not in our streams. When the 5 to 6 principles are used, producers can capture more water for the next crop, keep nutrients near the plant and capture more micronutrients and prevent loss downstream.
Jimmy Emmons: Why is it important? This is most important to save our soils from extinction. We have lost well over half of our soil and that was the best half.



Amy Seiger: What is the Oklahoma Conservation Commission doing in terms of Regenerative Agriculture? The Oklahoma Conservation Commission and our partners have been assisting producers since the early 2000s in soil health practices. We will continue to work with the Noble Research Institute, Tribes, Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, Universities, and private partners to share education and

assistance to producers across the state. We are now teaming up with General Mills to provide more resources to producers. General Mills felt confident in our resources and partnerships to financially back our efforts in the state. They too feel strongly about soil health practices being used in production ag.
Jimmy Emmons: What is the Oklahoma Conservation Commission doing in terms of Regenerative Agriculture? OCC has dedicated a whole division to Soil Health with a full diverse staff to assist producers and provide conservation districts the tools they need along with the technical support for learning, applying and practicing a full soil health system. The goal is to rebuild, regenerate as much of our soils as we can.

Amy Seiger: What are the goals? Within that, what is your role in this regenerative agriculture area? As the state soil health coordinator, it is my goal to continue to communicate with our soil health partners and to further develop quality education to our producers. We have also developed an ESRI (lovingly called WORMS-Working on Regenerative Management Systems) database and map to start collecting soil health data on farms participating in soil health "Regenerative Agricultural Systems" practices. We hope this will help to tie back to our successful water quality stories, but also serve as a resource to producers. We want to provide them an easily accessible opportunity to see success and changes on their land. We also want others to see what is available to their unique ecosystem across the state. This public map can help producers find other successful production systems near them. Lastly, protection for our producers is in the forefront of my mind. I am confident in our partners across the state to provide quality education. As with all new trends, scams, misleading information, and snake oils are being developed and pushed upon producers. I would encourage producers to contact someone from the partnership to get more knowledge of any new trend or products.
Jimmy Emmons: What are the goals? Within that, what is your role in this regenerative agriculture area? My Role at OCC as The Coordinator of Mentoring is to assist new producers and the public to be our next champions of soil health. Leading by example is the way we learn and by that we are helping others do the same. My personal roll is to be the best role model for the way we practice a soil health system and to share my trials and tribulations too.

FOR MORE INFORMATION FROM THE OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION: If you are a large or small producer wanting more information, please feel free to contact Amy Seiger, Amy.Seiger@conservation.ok.gov or (405) 250-5851. Seiger said, “I feel fortunate to have so many experienced and educated staff and partners to help any producer willing to try Regenerative Agriculture.”



AML Update: Owen Cherokee West- Muskogee County Conservation District

Work on the Owen Cherokee West project in Muskogee County Conservation District has slowed down due to some weather delays. The site received 4.5" of rain over the course of three days in late April. The pit has been filled on both landowners' properties. The site is very muddy due to the volume of rainfall. The construction crew is currently spreading the mud, so it dries more quickly, allowing construction to get back on schedule. Below and to the right are pictures of the site taken on April 30, 2021.









DON'T BE LATE

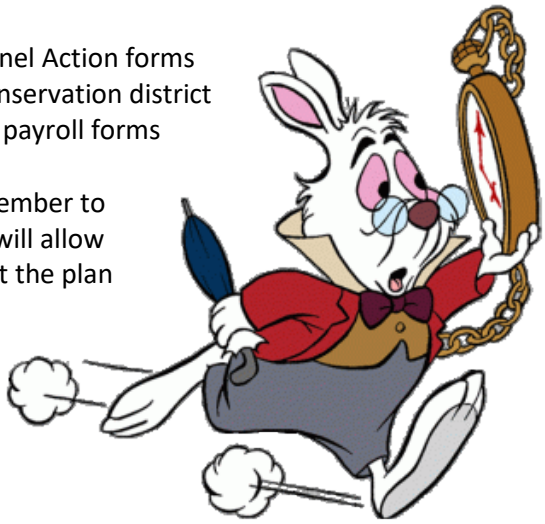
May, June, and July are very busy months for Conservation Districts with a long list of items that are coming due, wrapping up the fiscal year and starting a new one, plus elections and appointments that need to be handled on schedule. With that in mind a few reminders -

First, elections and appointments:

- Filing Period ends at close of business on May 14, 2021. Only candidacy forms completed during filing period are valid. If no one files for the position, notify Clancy Green at the Commission at COB on the 14th. If you have two eligible candidates file, you will need to begin the process of putting everything into place for your election immediately.
- District Director Elections will be held June 1, 2021.
- Appointments for terms expiring 06/30/2021 should be submitted for OCC approval no later than June 23rd.

And, the other things:

- May 12 & 13 – District Teams Training sessions covering payroll worksheets and preclaim forms.
- May 15 – Terms of At Will Employment and Personnel Action forms due; these should reflect the raise that full-time conservation district employees were given effective May 1, 2021. May payroll forms and preclaims are also due for review by this date.
- June 15, 2021 – Joint Plans of Operation due. Remember to submit your plan for review prior to this date; this will allow time for additional updates to be made in the event the plan does not meet requirements or needs editing.
- June 22 & 23 – District Teams Training sessions covering claims.
- June 30 – end of FY21. (Now is a good time to review your operating expense allocation and plan how you will use it up prior to June 30.)
- July 1 – start of FY22
- July 16, 2021 – FY23 budgets due. Remember to submit both file formats.



The above is not a complete list; if you have questions about items, please reach out. One additional reminder – unless it is a claim, preclaim, or other form that is specifically requested as a hard copy, please email all items to the correct person, and retain the originals in your office.



"AG ON LINCOLN…MAY 13"

Please plan to join the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and many others at the "Ag on Lincoln" event tomorrow (May 13) at 2800 N Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City. The OCC exhibits are scheduled to include a Feral Swine Trap Demonstration, a stream trailer, a Blue Thumb exhibit, a rainfall simulator, a skid steer from our Conservation Programs Division, a truck and pipe inspection camera trailer from the Conservation Programs Division and an exhibit from the Office of Geographic Information & Technical Services. We look forward to seeing you there!