

Calendar of Events

- March 2-4
OACD Annual Meeting
- March 5
Monthly board meeting
- March 24
Conservation Day at the Capitol
- April 2
Monthly board meeting
- April 23
NRD with Rollingwood Elementary
- April 24
ScienceFest at OKC Zoo
- April 29-May 1
National Land & Range Judging Contest
- May 7
Monthly board meeting
- May 8
NRD with Jones Elementary

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District Leaders Plan to Attend OACD Annual Meeting

District directors and staff are planning to attend the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD). The meeting will be held at the Reed Center in Midwest City, March 2-4, 2014.

The annual meeting will bring together over 400 agriculture producers and conservationists from across the state. Guest speakers will include Governor Mary Fallin, Senator Clark Jolley, and Chris Clayton, Ag Policy Editor, DNT/Progressive Farmer. Senator Jolley will be the keynote speaker on Monday morning, Chris Clayton will be the Monday luncheon speaker, and Governor Fallin will address the group on Monday afternoon.

Attendees will have a chance to participate in a number of breakout sessions related to earning local income, building local support through outreach, using call Okie and google earth to assist in watershed operation and maintenance, and conservation education on soil health.

On Monday evening, several special awards will be presented including the OACD President's Award, Hall of Fame Award, Outstanding Director, District, and Cooperator Awards, and the OACDE Employee of the Year award.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



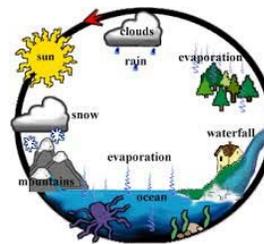
District employees will receive their service awards during the Monday afternoon employees meeting. District secretary Becky Inmon will receive a 25-year service award. Inmon has been with Oklahoma County CD for the past seven years and she had 18 years prior service with Pawnee County CD.

Some of the special activities scheduled are the Youth and Conservation Partners Awards program, the OACDE 'Games for Guns' night co-sponsored by the Wild Turkey Federation and the Live and Silent auction fundraiser events.

Directors and staff planning to attend the meeting are directors Richard Parker, Jan Kunze, Debbie Straughn, and Rick Godfrey, secretary Becky Inmon, and district manager Don Bartolina.

Educational Program Given at Oklahoma Christian Academy

Where does water come from and where does it go? Fourth and fifth grade students at Oklahoma Christian Academy explored answers to that question as they participated in the Project WET activity, *The Incredible Journey*, on February 19. District staff Don Bartolina and Becky Inmon led students through the activity as they learned to recognize solar energy as the main driver for movement of water on the earth and how the movement of water occurs through the water cycle. Students learned to recognize the three forms of water and how water transitions between the forms as it



moves continuously through our planet's earth system. Powered by the sun, water is constantly moving, being used and reused, as it travels over, under, and above the earth's surface. During the activity, students simulated the movement of water through the water cycle and made a bracelet to record their personal journey.

The '*The Incredible Journey*' activity can be used to support educational curriculum in areas such as earth, life, and physical science.

Our thanks to 4th grade teacher Gabrielle Fithian for inviting us into her classroom.



In many areas, the encroachment of Eastern Red Cedar has increased the risk of spreading wildfires especially during times of extreme wildfire conditions with high winds, low humidity, and high temperatures.

OSU has estimated the annual economic loss caused by the Eastern Red Cedar to the state is about \$447 million a year.



Eastern Red Cedar: Facts and Management

Eastern red cedar (ERC) is a native evergreen tree that has spread because of the suppression of naturally occurring lightning fires and fires historically used by Native Americans to manage plant growth. Lack of prescribed fire management and misguided tree planting have also led to the spread of cedars along with the lack of appreciation for prairie and shrubland ecosystems and indigenous wildlife.

- ◆ ERC grows year round whenever temperatures are above 40° F. It is somewhat tolerant of shade and can grow into forests and woodlands. This makes it a strong competitor in forest stands.

- ◆ ERC has a thin bark and fine, flammable foliage that easily ignites. This makes it susceptible to fire.

- ◆ ERC does not sprout when cut below the lowest live branch, or when the top is killed by fire. This makes cutting and prescribed burning an effective means of control.

- ◆ ERC is spread by birds and small mammals that eat the berry-like cones. When these treated seeds are passed onto soil, they sprout and become established as seedlings. Ungrazed or undisturbed areas are prime sites for infestation to begin.

- ◆ ERC start to produce seeds at six to ten years of age. This makes control easiest when trees are young and not actively producing.

- ◆ Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. Trees do not change gender. This makes it possible to control spread by killing or cutting seed producing trees, when costs or aesthetics are a factor.

- ◆ ERC grows on a wide variety of soils, is drought tolerant, and has few natural pests. It can invade almost any site in the absence of fire.

There are several things you can do to help protect your home including:

1. Have at least 30 ft. of space surrounding your home that is lean, clean, & green.
2. Carefully space the trees and shrubs you plant.
3. Take out the 'ladder fuels' - vegetation that links the grass and tree tops.
4. Create 'fuelbreaks' - driveways, gravel walkways, or lawns.
5. Mow your lawn regularly and maintain your irrigation or sprinkler system.
6. Prune shrubs and cut back tree branches, especially within 15 ft. of your chimney.
7. Remove all dead plant material from around your home, including dead leaves, dry vegetation, and stacked firewood.
8. Have tools available such as a shovel, rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw.
9. Keep combustible materials from beneath decks and elevated porches.
10. Use construction materials that are fire resistant or noncombustible.

For more information, visit these helpful websites: www.forestry.ok.gov/firewise or www.firewise.org.

Information above taken from publications available from our conservation partners: Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Food, and Forestry Service, US Department of Agriculture Forestry Services, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.

Time to Think about Improving your Pastures

Now is the time of year to think about your pasture management plan. The most common grasses used are Bermudagrass and Old World Bluestem.

According to the Oklahoma County Cooperative Extension Service website on pasture management, Bermudagrass will grow under a wide range of soil conditions, but it is best adapted to well-drained sites.

Old World Bluestems are warm-season bunch grasses that possess good forage potential.

These grasses respond well to fertilization, are drought and cold tolerant, withstand close grazing, and are palatable to cattle.

Contact the district office for more information on pasture planting and management. Other sources of information are:

The OSU website at: <http://oces.okstate.edu/oklahoma/agriculture/pasture-management>; or OSU fact sheet ANSI-3020 on Old World Bluestem management or OSU fact sheet PSS-2591 on bermudagrass management.

OACD Praises National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum for Upcoming Symposium Focused on Natural Resource Issues

The Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) recently offered praise for the work of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum and their upcoming symposium focusing on natural resource issues “Surviving the Elements: Land & Water Issues of the West.”

“Oklahoma and the rest of the Western United States face several growing natural resource challenges and it is extremely encouraging to have a facility of the caliber and reputation of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum bring these issues to the forefront,” Kim Farber, President of OACD said. “We are excited to see this educational forum take place and hope all Oklahomans, not just landowners or farmers and ranchers will come and take part in this event.”

Made possible by a grant provided by the Coca-Cola Company (NYSE: KO), through a partnership with Great Plains Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Oklahoma City and the Coca-Cola Foundation in honor of the Browne Family, *Surviving the Elements; Land and Water Issues of the West*, will bring together nationally recognized speakers in a series of lectures and panel discussions on topics such as land and pasture management, water usage, conservation measures, and livestock/herd management as well as facilitating a discussion on new resource preservation and enhancement strategies.

Each Friday in March 2014 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. a symposium will be held at the Museum featuring world-renowned experts on several topics including:

On March 7--*Past Influences; Should Ranchers Study History* by Rancher and Conservationist Jan O’Brien; *The Culture of Water Law in the American West* by Donald J. Pisani, Merrick Chair of Western American History, Emeritus, University of Oklahoma; *Dust Bowl and Beyond – A Lesson for the Future from Past Hard Times* by Timothy Egan, Author of the National Award Winning book *The Worst Hard Time* and contributor to the PBS series “The Dust Bowl;”

On March 14--*Current trends; The Challenge of Changing Climate: From the Cowboy to Today* by Climatologist Evelyn Browning-Garriss; *A Look at the Economics of Drought—Challenges for the Agriculture Industry and Affected Communities* by M. Ray Perryman, Ph.D. Economist; *Drought and Rangeland Stewardship* by Patrick E. Reece, Ph.D. Range Scientist, Prairie & Montane Enterprises;

March 21--Future Demands & Solutions part 1; *The Oklahoma Mesonet: A State-of-the-Art Network for Weather and Soil Monitoring* by Ronald Elliott, Ph.D, Registered Professional Engineer, Environment and Natural Resources, Emeritus, Oklahoma State University; *America’s Water Crisis and What To Do About It* by Robert Glennon, Author and Water Resource Expert; *What is the Future of Rangelands? Natural Resources and What Can Be Done to Restore Them* by Allan Savory, President & Co-Founder, Savory Institute;

March 28--Future Demands & Solutions part 2; *How can you love the land and still use it?* Chet Vogt, Rancher, Silversmith; *Innovative Solutions for a Dry Future* by J.D. Strong, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Executive Director; *The Farm Grandpa Gave Me* by Seth Pratt, Emerging Leader and Former Western Region Vice President of the National FFA Organization.

Those wishing to attend these symposiums can register online or call the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum at [405-478-2250](tel:405-478-2250), Ext. 280. There is a \$10 fee with lunch included.

“We would encourage everyone to come and take advantage of this symposium on these important issues,” Farber said. “This seminar is a great way to help understand how our natural resources have shaped our past, how they influence our world today and the challenges we have to address in the future. We hope everyone will come and hear this important information.”



“Oklahoma and the rest of the Western United States face several growing natural resource challenges and it is extremely encouraging to have a facility of the caliber and reputation of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum bring this issue to the forefront.”

**Kim Farber
President, OACD**

How much water do you and your household use? Check out the **‘Water Footprint Calculator’** from the Grace Communication Foundation at: <http://www.gracelinks.org/1408/water-footprint-calculator#.UuFJ9qFsj4w.email>

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We are on the web at:
www.okcountyconservation.com

Congratulations to the Grazinglands Research Laboratory in El Reno for being named as one of seven Nationwide Climate Hubs by the US Department of Agriculture.

Climate Hubs will support USDA agriculture and land management program delivery by providing tools and strategies for climate change response to help producers cope with challenges associated with drought, heat stress, excessive moisture, longer growing seasons, and changes in pest pressure. The Hubs will also help develop partnerships and coordinate applied research.

The Oklahoma County Conservation District Board of Directors holds its monthly meetings the first Wednesday of each month (unless otherwise noted) at 1:30 p.m., at 4850 N. Lincoln Blvd, Ste B, in Oklahoma City. The meetings are open to the public. All programs and services of the Oklahoma County Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, marital status or physical impairment.

Dust Bowl Curriculum Available

A special Educator's Edition of THE DUST BOWL, a four-hour, two episode documentary from acclaimed filmmaker Ken Burns, is available to check out from the District office. THE DUST BOWL chronicles the worst man-made ecological disaster in American history; when a frenzied wheat boom on the southern Plains, followed by a decade-long drought during the 1930's, nearly swept away the breadbasket of the nation. Menacing black blizzards killed farmer's crops and livestock, threatened the lives of children, and forced thousands of desperate families to pick up and move somewhere else.



The documentary contains vivid interviews with more than two dozen survivors of those hard times, combined with dramatic photos and seldom seen movie footage, brings to life stories of incredible human suffering and equally human perseverance. THE DUST BOWL also tells a story about our relationship to the land that sustains us. Ignoring the lessons we learned from those dark days could be at our own peril.

This special edition disk includes:

- Classroom resources correlated to junior and senior high school curricula
- Lesson plans correlated to the national standards in U.S. History, Economics, Geography and Environmental Studies, Journalism, and more
- Video clips that visually emphasize lesson themes
- Special features that include: Behind the scenes, deleted scenes, and additional interviews

Call the District office at (405) 524-4450 to check out this valuable resource.