

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- August 6
Monthly board meeting
- August 7-8
State Women in Ag Meeting
- August-September
Annual Poster Contest
- September 1
Labor Day Holiday
- September 3
Monthly board meeting
- September 6
Water well testing at Spencer
- September 26-28
Annual Wildlife Expo at Lazy E Arena in Guthrie
- October 6
Poster contest entry deadline
- October 8
Monthly board meeting

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NEDC Recognizes District and NRCS for Training Support

Each year the NRCS National Employee Development Center (NEDC) holds training sessions for new employees with parts of training taking place in Oklahoma City. The latest training session was held here the week of June 9-13.

The group of new employees stays in Oklahoma City and visits a number of sites during its week here. On Tuesday afternoon, the class visited the Eagle Ridge Institute and Shilo Camp, a facility that provides young mothers and their children with prevention and treatment programs that address issues such as drug abuse, gang violence, juvenile crime, child abuse, youth leadership and family preservation.



(L to R): Michael Trusclair, NEDC Training Specialist, district manger Don Bartolina, and NEDC Director Jeffery Dziedzic.

On hand for this session was Director of NEDC, Jeffery Dziedzic, along with Michael Trusclair, Instructional Training Specialist, NEDC, Delivery Team, Ft. Worth, TX. During the visit to Eagle Ridge, Trusclair presented Certificates of Appreciation to district manager Don Bartolina, district director Rick Godfrey, district conservationist Rod Shaw, and State Soil Scientist Steve Alspach. The certificates state "Thank you for your contribution and dedication to training and the mission of NRCS. You have truly made a difference in conservation and the investment in our employees." Each of the men has been involved in training sessions held in the Oklahoma City area for the past several years.

Godfrey provides a Board members perspective of the partnerships between NRCS and the Conservation Districts and urban facilities such as Eagle Ridge Institute.



(L to R): Michael Trusclair, NEDC Training Specialist, district conservationist Rod Shaw, State Soil Scientist Steve Alspach, and NEDC Director Jeffery Dziedzic.

Bartolina talks to the class about the pond and wetland development that took place at Eagle Ridge. He discusses the challenges of urban planning and implementation of practices and the partnerships needed to accomplish these practices in urban areas.

Steve Alspach, NRCS State Soil Scientist, provides soil health information and demonstrations for the class.

Shaw is involved in scheduling visits to various locations including Eagle Ridge and others in the metro area.



(L to R): Michael Trusclair, NEDC Training Specialist, district director Rick Godfrey, and NEDC Director Jeffery Dziedzic.

National Land and Range Judging Contest Held in May

The idea of a land judging contest was invented by three Oklahoma conservationists in 1942. They decided which soil qualities could be judged and developed score cards to test skills. The idea caught on and Oklahoma City has been hosting the national contest since 1952. On April 29-May 1, the 63rd annual National Land and Range Judging Contest was held here with 157 teams competing in the FFA and 4-H competition.



This year's event was hosted by Breshears Trucking Farm in Mustang. Contestants qualified by winning contests in their home states before traveling to Oklahoma for the national competition.

Teams match skills in judging the adaptability of land for various purposes including farming, range management, and homesite construction. Contestants take turns examining the soil in pits and trenches dug especially for the contest. Skills tested during the contest involve principles that can be valuable in career fields like environmental and agricultural management, natural resource conservation, home building and construction.

At the conclusion of the event, an awards banquet was held in the Great Hall of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum where the award winners were announced.

Primary sponsor for contest is the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts. Other cosponsors include the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau, Oklahoma Farm Credit, Sirloin

Club of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, American Farmers & Ranchers, Oklahoma Farm Bureau, the Oklahoma Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and Oklahoma Society for Range Management, plus other businesses and organizations.

Oklahoma County Conservation District staff members are very involved with the contest and preparations. Don Bartolina serves as the contest coordinator and Becky Inmon does all the pre-registration and assists with registration at the contest. District Conservationist Rod Shaw helps with field activities at the practices sites and the official contest site.

"Events such as these give members of FFA the opportunity to explore contest in FFA pertaining to material learned in agricultural education classrooms and information learned outside of the classroom. ...We had a great time exploring the state and seeing how different Oklahoma soil is from Iowa soil."

*The Iowa Colo-Nesco FFA
Soil Judging Team*

MARK YOUR CALENDER!

Oklahoma's Statewide Women in
Agriculture & Small Business Conference

August 7-8, 2014

Moore Norman Technology Center
13001 S. Penn Ave. in Oklahoma City

EMPOWERING THE WOMEN OF RURAL AMERICA

- ◆ Entertaining and educational keynote speakers: Jane Jenkins-Herlong and Matt Rush
- ◆ "Dine Around" OKC, featuring locally owned Oklahoma restaurants
- ◆ Concurrent breakout sessions
- ◆ Mini mall showcasing made-in-Oklahoma products
- ◆ Networking opportunities

For registration and additional conference information, call (405) 744-9826 or visit:
www.OKWomeninAgAndSmallBusiness.com

Oklahoma NRCS Staff Develops Soil Health Card

Soils staff with the Oklahoma Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have developed a soil health card. **“Soil Health”** is the capacity of the soil to function, cycle nutrients to sustain plant and animal productivity, and to maintain or improve water quality.

While the card was developed as a field tool for use by NRCS planners, it can be used by farmers, gardeners, and educators.

Soil Health is important to all of us. Healthy soil means greater production, cleaner water, cleaner air and a cleaner environment. Since management greatly affects soil,

monitoring the same site in a field or garden over time will help you develop a record of management practices and how changes affect the soil.

With the card, you can record indicators such as soil structure, organic matter, compaction, soil life, water infiltration, plant health, percent cover, erosion, salinity and pH.

Call the NRCS office at (405) 521-1332 for questions about ‘Soil Health’ or to pick up a soil health card.



Outdoor Education Provides Great Atmosphere for Learning

Each spring and fall, Oklahoma County Conservation District staff work with local schools to sponsor or assist with outdoor education events. The benefits of outdoor learning are many. Students show increased motivation and enthusiasm for learning, have better performance in math, science, reading, and social studies, receive higher test scores, and have increased physical health—just to name a few.



Secretary Becky Inmon demonstrates the ‘Enviroscape’, a watershed model that helps students understand different types of pollution and their affects on our water bodies.

Since one of our district’s primary goals is providing environmental education for our youth, many of our activities are planned outside, often at Lake Arcadia’s education area. In planning our outdoor events, we try to plan activities that will help students “understand the need for sustainable relationships between people and their environment.” Our goal is to get students involved in hands-on activities that are fun, thought-provoking, and promote the role of conservation in creating a healthy environment.

On May 2, we worked with Putnam City Harvest Hills Elementary to provide outdoor education activities for 70 students. On May 8, the district sponsored a Natural Resource Day with Jones Elementary with 85 students participating.



(Above) Jones students participate in a wetlands activity at Lake Arcadia. (Below) Students participate in a hands-on activity where they learn the parts of a tree and role play how each part functions.



We appreciate the Oklahoma Wildlife Department volunteers who conducted a fishing clinic for the students. We also thank Jeri Irby, Oklahoma Department of Forestry, and Karla Beatty, Oklahoma Conservation Commission for assisting with our activities.



(Above) District manager Don Bartolina looks on as Harvest Hills students participate in the ‘Incredible Journey’ a hands-on activity that teaches students about the water cycle. (Below) Jones students proudly show off the bracelets they made during their own incredible journey through the water cycle.



OKLAHOMA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Don Bartolina, District Manager
Becky Inmon, District Secretary

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

We are now on Facebook at:
[https://www.facebook.com/
oklahomacountyconservationdistrict](https://www.facebook.com/oklahomacountyconservationdistrict)

Hope you will go on Facebook
and LIKE our page!!

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.

District Assist with Rose State KIDS College

"Do we have the same, less, or more water than we have always had on planet earth?" is just one of the many questions students can find the answer to during the Project WET activity, *The Incredible Journey*, a hands-on activity about the water cycle. The Project WET activity was just one of the activities led by district personnel Don Bartolina and Becky Inmon during Rose State KIDS College held the week of June 9-13. Students also participated in the Project WET activity, *The Rain Stick*, where they learned about the origin and use of rain sticks by ancient peoples. Students decorated their own rain sticks and took a rain walk around the school building. A snack of 'edible soils' was enjoyed by the students as they learned all their food, clothing, shelter, and 'well virtually everything' is dependent on the soil. The morning and afternoon sessions concluded with students learning about wildlife habitat and some of the animals found here in Oklahoma. Students were able to feel animal skins from the badger, bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, deer, fox, possum, raccoon, and skunk and learn interesting facts about each one. The district was invited to KIDS College by teacher Lisa Pitts. There were 31 students in attendance.



Don Bartolina (left) talks with students about wildlife as teacher Lisa Pitts looks on.



**Soil
and
water
for
life!**



(Above) Students show off their rain sticks before heading outside for a RAIN WALK, and (left) students make bracelets on their journey through the water cycle.