



Earth Team Volunteer Newsletter

April 2009



*Tulsa County Conservation District
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tulsa County Blue Thumb*

Contact: Gary Bishop, District Conservationist
(918) 280-1596

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide up to \$145 million to eligible landowners nationwide through the floodplain easement component of its Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced March 9, 2009. The funds will be used to restore an estimated 60,000 acres of frequently flooded land to its natural state and create jobs.

District Conservationist, Gary Bishop, for the Oklahoma Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), said that eligible landowners can sign up for these easements until March 27, 2009, at their local USDA Service Center. NRCS administers the EWP Program. NRCS provides the following services free of charge: Natural Resource Assessments, Conservation planning assistance, Technical assistance for conservation and wildlife practices, and Cost share programs for conservation and wildlife assistance.

"The local NRCS staff will be working with landowners who voluntarily agree to place their land into easements," Bishop said. Land eligible for the program must have clear title, be privately owned, and free of any hazardous material. The property must have been damaged by flooding at least twice in the previous 10 years, or once in the past 12 months, or located in the breach area of a dam. The lands also cannot be in any other federal program such as CRP, WHIP, or WRP.

The easements that NRCS purchases from participants are permanent easements, and they stay with the property if it is sold. The payment is a one-time payment. Easement compensation is based on a cap set for each county and ranges from \$317 to \$1,633 in Oklahoma. If restoration work is done on a site, NRCS can pay for 100 percent of the costs.

Once the easement is obtained, the land cannot be cropped, grazed, hayed, or any type of harvesting take place. No structures may be placed on the land, and the land is no longer eligible for any disaster assistance from the USDA.

NRCS is an equal opportunity Provider and Employer. Interested landowners can contact their local USDA Service Center for more information about the EWP Program floodplain easements during the sign-up.

All programs and services of the Natural Resources Conservation Service are provided in a nondiscriminatory manner.

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QA and Earth Team Volunteer Meeting

Change of Date: April 23rd

We have had to change the date for QA and Volunteer meeting. Please mark your calendar. For those of you that have not signed up yet...Don't forget we will also be doing **bug picking** April 23rd and the 24th. We still have numerous shifts available!

April 23rd - QA - 10:00 am - TCCD office
Volunteer Meeting - 6:00 pm - Water on The Run
(on 51st just west of Memorial- next to Food Pyramid)
QA - 7:00 pm - TCCD office

Environmental Term for the Month

Low Impact Development (LID) is a term used in the United States to describe a land planning and engineering design approach to managing storm water runoff. LID emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality. This approach implements engineered small-scale hydrologic controls to replicate the pre-development hydrologic regime of watersheds through infiltrating, filtering, storing, evaporating, and detaining runoff close to its source. Planners select structural LID practices for an individual site in consideration of the site's land use, hydrology, soil type, climate and rainfall patterns. There are many variations on these LID practices, and some practices may not be suitable for a given site. Many are practical for retrofit or site renovation projects, as well as for new construction. Frequently-used practices include: rain gardens (see picture for example), cisterns and rain barrels, green roofs, porous pavement, and grassed swales.

Benefits of LID practices include:

- Habitat protection
- Improved management of water quantity (reduced risk of flooding)
- Reduction of impervious surfaces and runoff
- Groundwater recharge through infiltration
- Water quality improvements
- Community value (i.e. increased aesthetics)
- Cost savings.



NRCS Announces Opportunity to Apply for EQIP Conservation Funds

Oklahoma NRCS State Conservationist Ron Hilliard has announced an extension of the EQIP ranking cutoff period to April 1, 2009. This will expand the opportunity for producers to apply for conservation payments under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for fiscal year 2009. With the publication of the interim final rule, 2009 program activities can now be initiated. NRCS provides the following services free of charge: Natural Resource Assessments, Conservation Planning Assistance, Technical Assistance for Conservation Practices, and Cost Share Programs for Conservation Work. New rules are currently under development for the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, or 2008 Farm Bill.

On January 15, 2009, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced changes to EQIP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's largest conservation program for working agricultural lands. USDA published an interim final rule containing the statutory changes to EQIP in the Federal Register. USDA is seeking public comment on the rule through March 16, 2009.

USDA-NRCS administers EQIP, a voluntary conservation program that provides technical assistance and payments to help crop and livestock producers address environmental concerns through conservation improvements on agricultural and non-industrial private forest lands. Farmers and ranchers can use EQIP to farm in an environmentally friendly manner and still meet their agricultural production goals. It is designed to produce significant environmental benefits to the public, such as improved soil, water and air quality; and enhanced wildlife habitat. In addition, farmers and ranchers use EQIP to meet federal, state, tribal and local environmental regulations.

Under the amended EQIP, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as well as beginning and limited resource producers are authorized to receive payments of up to 90 percent of the costs of installing or implementing a conservation practice.

The 2008 Farm Bill reduced the overall payment limitation from \$450,000 to \$300,000 for a six-year period, except for environmentally significant projects.

In order to be eligible to participate in EQIP, an applicant must be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, have an interest in the agricultural operation, and have control of the land for the proposed contract period. If the applicant is a tenant, written concurrence of the landowner is required to apply a structural conservation practice. Legal entities that apply for the program must provide a list of all members of the legal entity and embedded entities along with members' percentage interest in the operation. Potential applicants are encouraged to update their USDA eligibility at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) prior to making application for EQIP. EQIP applications will not be ranked or considered for funding until the applicant meets all eligibility requirements.

"We are accepting applications for participation in the EQIP program on a continuous basis," adds Gary Bishop, District Conservationist, Tulsa Service Center. "However, only applications received by April 1, 2009 will be ranked and considered during this expanded selection period." Evaluated applications will be grouped and selected for funding from a list of high priority applications until the funding allocation is obligated." Unfunded applications will be maintained for future funding consideration if the applicant chooses to remain on the waiting list. Successful applicants with high priority resource concerns will be contacted to develop contracts to obligate the current funding allocation. Producers that have high priority resource concerns and are interested in participation in EQIP may apply at any time at their local NRCS or Conservation District Office. In Tulsa, these offices are located at 5401 S. Sheridan Rd, Suite 201, Tulsa, OK 74145; or by calling (918) 280-1596.

Wildlife Habitat Opportunities with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) has much to offer local farmers, ranchers and landowners of Oklahoma. By submitting applications now, while the final program rules are being finalized in Washington, NRCS will provide the following services free of charge: Natural Resource Assessments, Conservation planning assistance, Technical assistance for conservation and wildlife practices, and Cost share programs for conservation and wildlife assistance.



The WHIP program, administered by NRCS, provides both technical and financial assistance to individuals interested in establishing and improving wildlife habitat on private agricultural lands and non-industrial forestland. The financial assistance can include incentive payments for management activities and cost-share for the installation of certain conservation practices.

Many local landowners are interested in managing their lands for wildlife, but need technical advice and financial assistance to help cover the costs of habitat enhancement and WHIP may be able to provide the help they need. NRCS will work with participants to develop a wildlife habitat development plan which becomes the basis of the financial assistance agreement. Conservation-minded landowners are encouraged to participate.

NRCS has identified four priorities for the 2009 WHIP Sign-up:

- Promote the restoration of declining or important native wildlife habitats.
- Protect, restore, develop or enhance wildlife habitat of at-risk and threatened and endangered species.
- Reduce the impacts of invasive species on wildlife habitats.
- Protect, restore, develop or enhance declining or important aquatic wildlife species' habitats.

For more information on conservation planning, visit the Oklahoma NRCS Web site at: www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/

For current information on WHIP, go to: <http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/index.html>

NRCS is an equal opportunity Provider and Employer. If you have any questions please contact Gary Bishop, NRCS, District Conservationist at (918) 280-1596 or by email: Gary.Bishop@ok.usda.gov .





Bug Picking Schedule Spring 2009

Expect to be here for 3 hours! Two people per shift please

Creeks that have Bug Samples to be picked!	
Osage County	
1.	Delaware: Hwy 97
2.	Sand: Osage Hills State Park (Adele Register and Chris Chauncey)
3.	Sand: OHSP (Replicate)
Tulsa County	
4.	Harlow: Edison
5.	Coal: Hwy 11
6.	Coal: Hwy 11 (Replicate)
7.	Flat Rock: Hwy 79
8.	Mill: McClure
9.	Mingo: 46 th St. N.
10.	Ranch
11.	Meeser: Pepsi
12.	Crow: Zink
13.	Little Joe: LaFortune

Thursday, April 23rd

QA 10-11	Marie Martin	Kathryn Spencer
12:00	Julie Monnott	
1:00		
2:00		
3:00	Chris Chauncey and Adele Register	

Friday, April 24th

8: 00	
9:00	Nan Ray
10:00	
11:00	Diane Hartung
1:00	Steve Schaal
2:00	
3:00	Graham Brannin
4:00	
5:00	
6:00	
7:00	

Calendar of Events

Resource Management Conference

Come hear presentations about green topics including recycled building supplies, low impact development, and green development

April 1st 8 AM—4 PM

Tulsa Home Builders Association
11545 E 43rd St Tulsa, OK 74146

3rd Annual Land Judging Contest

April 17th

TCC - North Campus

Begins at 8:30 am

Earthfest at the Tulsa Zoo

We will be making fish prints

April 18th 9 AM—5 PM

Tulsa Zoo and Living Museum

Down Town Environmental Expo

April 22nd 10 AM - 2 PM

Main and 4th Street

Earth Team Volunteer Meeting and QA

New format - morning QA session from 10-11 AM

ET meeting from 6-7 PM & evening QA from 7-8

PM

April 23rd

Tulsa County Free Fair

Join 4-H for this free fair in the summer

July 22-24

Tulsa State Fairgrounds

15th Annual Creek Clean Up & Water Festival

The morning will begin with a run followed by a creek cleanup. Then a fair-like water festival with food vendors, kids zone, art show, earth friendly vendors, a live auction and much more.

September 12th

Tulsa River parks from 21st to 41st

Tentatively scheduled from 7 AM—7 PM

Blue Thumb Training

Become a certified Blue Thumb monitor

September 26th-27th 8 AM—4:30 PM

TCCD Offices

5401 S Sheridan Tulsa, OK 74135

Volunteer Opportunities

We are still in need of help at all of the below events. If you can help with any of them please let us know!

⇒ Resource Management Conference

⇒ Land Judging Contest

⇒ EarthFest

⇒ Down Town Environmental Expo

⇒ Bug Picking

⇒ Free Fair

We are still looking for volunteers to assist in the planning of our 1st ever Watershed Festival.

Thank you to: Stephen Pendleton Cassidy McCants Richard Jordan Drew VanZandt Zam Mung Kathryn Spencer Jack Sherred Jonathon Sofian Sara Maali Jessica Harris Karen Pope Joe Dutton Joan McCleary Heather Crain Sandi Thomas Erin Bird Johnny Jones Lauren Rudichuck and Kristen Consten; **for making the Home and Garden Show a success!**

Reminder... **Household Pollutant Collection event** at the Tulsa State Fairgrounds on April 4-5, 2009 from 10 AM—3 PM. Items accepted include: household cleaners, pesticides, fertilizers, automotive fluids, cooking oil, batteries, all fluorescent light bulbs, small ammunition, smoke alarms, aerosol paint, hobby paint, pool chemicals, items containing mercury and unused or out of date prescription medications. Items NOT accepted at the event include latex paint, tires, computers, radioactive waste and commercial waste. To dispose of latex paint, remove the lid and let paint completely dry. Place cans of dry paint next to trash for pick up.

The Earth Team Newsletter is published by Tulsa County Conservation District, 5401 S. Sheridan Rd., Suite 201, Tulsa, OK, Phone: (918) 280-1595. Tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov Tulsa County Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service are equal opportunity providers and employers. Visit the web site at www.tulsacountyconservationdistrict.org