



Earth Team Volunteer Newsletter

September 2009



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

Tulsa County Free Fair Celebrates it's 100th year!



The theme of this year's 4-H Tulsa County Free Fair was "100 Years of Making the Best Better" and was this year great! With the renovation of the Central Park Hall building, the Free Fair crew from OSU Extension has taken this event to new places. There were over 2000 visitors in 3 days to this event that showcases the talents of young and old alike. The indoor exhibits covered such topics as table settings, photography, vegetable growing, creative art, needle works, and fabric work and were open to all age classes. The 4-H youth division had categories such as informational exhibits, photography, science projects, personal development, environmental stewardship, food science, entomology, house plants, and many more. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place ribbons were awarded to participants. The district had a booth in the indoor exhibit portion of the fair. At our display, we highlighted the programs that the district offers and also had a chance to utilize our storm-sewer-in-a-suitcase display where we teach kids about the effects of nonpoint source pollution. This is one of our most popular and memorable presentation. We even had a few kids that came up and told us that they remember us coming to their class and sharing the presentation with them. They then proceeded to do the presentation. It was really impressive and we are thrilled to see that so many young kids are getting our message. It is important to keep our water clean for future generations. The livestock and horse show followed the indoor exhibits and wrapped up the event on Aug 2nd. We are really glad to participate in this event and talk to the wide variety of folks that call Tulsa County home.

TCC Northeast Human Ecology Class Interested in SIS

Dr. Dan Hougardy was nice enough to invite the District to come speak to his human ecology class again this year. The sewer-in-a-suitcase was brought to the class and the students and some of their children were encouraged to come and hear the presentation. Not only did we talk about water quality and ways to help protect our water, but we also spoke about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCPs) in our water, eutrophication, stream sedimentation, and water availability issues. Dr Hougardy's students had lots of great questions and experiences to share in our discussion. It was great to have some younger kids in the audience. We talked about making environmental concerns known to kids at a younger age. In hopes that they will be inspired to make a difference. It is always a pleasure coming to TCC and meeting with Dr Hougardy's classes and we sincerely hope that he has us back again.





Please make sure to mark the next Earth Team meeting, **October 1st at 6 PM**, on your calendar. We will also be having Blue Thumb QA session at 11 AM and 7 PM. Chad Burden, featured in June's newsletter, will be giving a presentation about green building and remodeling. It will be a very informative and enjoyable talk. We hope to see lots of you there. If we are going to invite presenters it is very important that they end feeling like it was worth their time to come as well.

Don't forget to bring your monitoring kit to update your supplies!

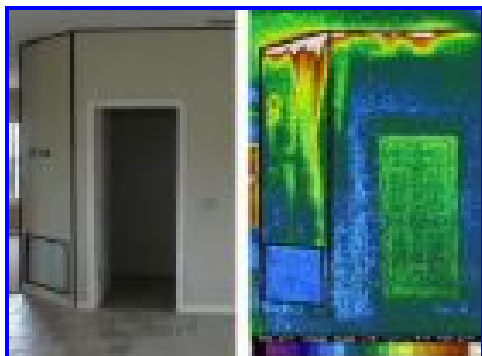
Environmental Term of the Month

A **home energy audit** is a process that may involve recording various characteristics of the building envelope including the walls, ceilings, floors, doors, windows, and skylights. For each of these components the area and resistance to heat flow (**R-value**) is measured or estimated. The leakage rate or infiltration of air through the building envelope is of concern which are strongly affected by window construction and quality of door seals such as weather-stripping. The goal of this exercise is to quantify the building's overall thermal performance. A simplified approach called the UA delta-T method can be used for good approximate results. The audit may also assess the efficiency, physical condition, and programming of mechanical systems such as the heating, ventilation, air conditioning equipment, and thermostat.

A home energy audit may include a written report estimating energy use given local climate criteria, thermostat settings, roof overhang, and **solar orientation**. This could show energy use for a given time period, say a year, and the impact of any suggested improvements per year. The accuracy of energy estimates are greatly improved when the homeowner's billing history is available showing the quantities of electricity, natural gas, fuel oil, or other energy sources consumed over a one or two-year period.

Some of the greatest effects on energy use are user behavior, climate, and age of the home. An energy audit may therefore include an interview of the homeowners to understand their patterns of use over time. The energy billing history from the local utility company can be calibrated using **heating degree day** and **cooling degree day** data obtained from recent, local weather data in combination with the thermal energy model of the building. Advances in computer-based thermal modeling can take into account many variables affecting energy use.

A home energy audit is often used to identify cost effective ways to improve the comfort and efficiency of buildings. In addition, homes may qualify for tax credits from local and central governments.



NEWS

For Immediate Release

Terri Daniel
Office of Public Affairs
405.742.1244
Terri.Daniel@ok.usda.gov

STATEWIDE SIGN-UP FOR THE NEW CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM BEGINS

Continuous Sign-Up Begins Aug. 10

STILLWATER, OKLA --- Aug. 10, 2009—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will begin continuous sign-up for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) on August 10 in Oklahoma. The first cutoff for ranking purposes is scheduled for Sept. 30, State Conservationist Ronald L. Hilliard announced today.

"The Conservation Stewardship Program changed dramatically in the 2008 Farm Bill," said Hilliard. "NRCS took the time to develop a program that would appeal to our diverse customers and offer them an equal chance to participate. We hope that agricultural and forestry producers in Oklahoma take full advantage of the benefits this newly revised program offers."

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) authorized the Conservation Stewardship Program. Congress renamed and revamped the former Conservation Security Program completely to improve its availability and appeal to agricultural and forestry producers. The Conservation Stewardship Program will be offered in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups with announced cut-off application dates for ranking periods. The maximum annual enrollment is capped at nearly 12.8 million acres nationwide.

NRCS administers CSP, a voluntary conservation program designed to encourage agricultural and forestry producers to adopt additional conservation practices and improve, maintain and manage existing ones.

To apply for the newly revamped CSP, individual producers, legal entities and Indian tribes will be encouraged to use a self-screening checklist first to determine whether the new program is suitable for them or their operation. The checklist is available on NRCS Web sites and at NRCS field offices.

After the self-screening, the producer's current and proposed conservation activities are entered in the conservation measurement tool (CMT). This tool estimates the level of environmental performance to be achieved by a producer implementing and maintaining conservation activities. The conservation performance estimated by the CMT will be used to rank applications.

A producer must treat at least one resource concern and one priority resource concern during the length of the CSP's five-year contract. Oklahoma will select between three to five priority resource concerns, one of the criteria that will be used to rank applications. The State Technical Committee in Oklahoma will advise the NRCS State Conservationist as he selects Oklahoma priority resource concerns. Oklahoma will establish ranking pools to rank applications with similar resource concerns in the East, West and Panhandle regions. Resource concerns can differ by region and are listed as such: East Ag Land Resource concerns: animal, plants, soil erosion and water quality; West Ag Land Resource concerns: air quality, animal, plants and soil erosion; Panhandle Ag Lands: air quality, animal, soil erosion and water quantity. Included in each region is a funding pool for socially disadvantaged farmers/ranchers and beginning farmers and ranchers.

NRCS field staff will conduct on-site field verifications of pre-approved applicants' information provided for the CMT.

Another major change in the program is the method of payments. CSP will offer two possible types of payments—annual and supplemental. The annual payment will be established using the conservation performance estimated by the CMT and calculated by land use type for enrolled eligible land. A supplemental payment is also available to participants who also adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation. The annual payment limitation for a person or legal entity is \$40,000. A person or legal entity cannot exceed \$200,000 for all contracts entered into during any five-year period.

– more –

Helping People Help The Land
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

STATEWIDE SIGN-UP FOR THE NEW CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM BEGINS

Continuous Sign-Up Begins Aug. 10

Continued from previous page

Individual producers, legal entities and Indian tribes must meet several requirements to obtain a Conservation Stewardship Program contract. They must be listed as the operator in the USDA farm records management system for the operation being offered for enrollment. They must document that they control the land for the term of the contract and include all eligible land in their entire operation in that contract. They must comply with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions and comply with Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forestland—a new land use for the program—and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe

Land enrolled in the Conservation Security Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program and Wetlands Reserve Program are ineligible for the new Conservation Stewardship Program.

The new CSP is very different from the old Conservation Security Program. Under the old program, producers were eligible if they were in the selected watersheds. All contracts under the old CSP will be honored until the end of the contract term.

For more information about the new CSP, please visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp/. For more information about conservation programs in Oklahoma, please visit www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov. NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer. All programs and services of NRCS are provided in a nondiscriminatory manner.

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press release for immediate release



Gary Bishop
District Conservationist
(918) 280-1596

NRCS – Tulsa Field Office
5401 S Sheridan Rd Ste 201
Tulsa, OK 74145

Oklahomans Receive Three Conservation Innovation Grants

On July 13, 2009, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced \$18.4 million in Conservation Innovation Grants to fund 55 projects across the nation to develop and refine cutting-edge technologies and approaches to help farmers and ranchers conserve and sustain natural resources. Vilsack made the announcement in a speech at the Soil and Water Conservation Society annual meeting in Dearborn, Mich.

"New technology can play an important role in addressing environmental problems, and the Obama Administration is committed to developing innovative solutions to natural resource management and conservation issues facing farmers and ranchers," Vilsack said. "These Conservation Innovation Grants will benefit both agriculture and the environment by getting 21st century ideas in the hands of our producers across the country."

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Ron Hilliard, who was in attendance at the meeting, added, "Three grants were awarded in Oklahoma." "The Conservation Innovation Grant program enables USDA to review, field test, and demonstrate practices and ideas that have yet to be successfully mainstreamed into our portfolio of practice options and the field office technical guides."

The Conservation Innovation Grant program is designed to speed the transfer and enhance use of technologies and methods that show promise in solving the nation's top natural resource problems by targeting innovative, on-the-ground conservation. Approved projects address issues such as water quantity and quality, grazing lands, soil and forest health, and air quality, as well as proposals to help Native American Tribes and limited resource producers address natural resource issues, energy efficiency, and market-based approaches to conservation.

The projects funded in Oklahoma include:

- The Nature Conservancy, \$349,571, project: Integrated Management of Sericea Lespedeza in Tallgrass Prairie. The purpose is to demonstrate the effectiveness of integrating patch burn grazing and spot-application of herbicides to manage sericea lespedeza prairie.
- Oklahoma Farmers & Ranchers Association, \$254,340, project: Grass-finished & organic livestock production technology education for limited resource farmers. The purpose is to develop a whole farm approach using prescribed grazing technology and/or organic techniques to help socially disadvantaged, limited resource producers.
- The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc, \$267,697, project: Switchgrass and Native Rangeland Management for Grazing and Bioenergy. The purpose is to educate producers, farm managers, and the general public of best management practices for use in the establishment and production of switchgrass and native rangeland in grazing, bioenergy, and conservation systems.

Additional information about CIG, including summaries of all approved projects, is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig. For more information about USDA's conservation programs visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/> or the nearest USDA Service Center.

15th Annual Creek Cleanup

Tulsa County Conservation District



What? - Little Joe Creek Cleanup

When? - September 12th from 9:00 AM-12:30PM

Why? - To clean up trash from the creek and surrounding park and also to learn about what measures citizens can take to help our streams.

Where? - Memorial High School at 5840 S Hudson

Highlights

- ◆ Helping out water quality by removing trash and other items from the creek and adjacent areas.
- ◆ FREE Food!!!! We will be having bagels and donuts before and will be grilling hotdogs after trash pickup.



Local Sponsors Include:

5401 S Sheridan Suite 201
 Tulsa, OK 74145
 Phone: 918-280-1595
 Fax: 918-280-1594
 E-mail: tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov

Calendar of Events

Summer Macroinvertebrate Collections

We will be collecting bugs from the Tulsa area creeks which will help us to evaluate the overall health of the water body
Rescheduled to August 25th-28th

Little Joe Creek Cleanup

We will be picking up trash and having a cookout afterwards for the hardworking volunteers. We will meet at Memorial High School, break into groups, pick up some trash, and then meet back at Memorial for a cookout.

September 12th from 9-12:30 at 5840 S Hudson

Blue Thumb Stream Monitor Training

Become a certified Blue Thumb water quality monitor. One day will be spent in the office learning why and how we do the chemical testing and the other day will be spent playing in the stream learning how to take samples and what to look for at your site.

September 26th-27th 9 AM—4:30 PM
5401 S Sheridan Tulsa, OK 74135
Call 280-1595 or email

Earth Team Volunteer Meeting and Blue Thumb QA Session

Blue Thumb QA session will be held at 11 AM and 7 PM and the quarterly Earth Team meeting will be held at 6 PM at the district office. Guest speaker Chad Burden will be speaking about green building and his green remodel project.

Oct 1st 10 AM, 6 PM, and 7 PM

Tulsa State Fair Booth

We need volunteers to man our booth at all times during the fair to assist patrons with any questions that they may have and to help distribute some literature

October 1-11th 10AM – 10 PM Mon-Thur and Sun
10AM - 11 PM Fri and Sat

Environmental Education Workshop

This workshop will help you grow as an educator and will highlight new programs and methods to utilize in the classroom, summer camp, or youth group.

October 29th from 6-10 PM at our office and will cost \$10

Volunteer Christmas Party

It's never too early in the year to put a Christmas Party on the calendar! We will be having our usual potluck party where the district provides the proteins and you bring a side dish. A game of Dirty Santa will also take place.

Dec 8th from 6-8:30 at OSU Extension
4116 E 15th St Tulsa, OK 74112

Volunteer Notes

- **The Tulsa State Fair is right around the corner and we are in need of lots of volunteers to man our booth. The building hours are 10 AM—10 PM Mon-Thur and Sun and 10 AM—11 PM on Fri and Sat. Please give us a call if you would be able to work a 3 or 4 hour shift during any of those dates. You do get free admission to the fair the day that you work.**
- **The Tulsa County Conservation District Board meeting are open to the public and are held at the district office on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 4:30. There is a portion of the meetings to allow for Public Comments. We would love to have some visitors for our meetings.**

Quotes

As the wagon driver said when they came to a long, hard hill, 'Them that's going on with us, get out and push. Them that ain't get out of the way.'

~Robert Fulghum

"I'm fascinated with the concept of distinctions that transform people. Once you learn certain things—once you learn to ride a bike, say—your life has changed forever. You cannot unlearn it. For me sustainability is one of those distinctions. Once you get it, it changes how you think. It becomes automatic and is part of who you are."

~Robert B Shapiro

"Forests precede civilizations, deserts follow them."

~Francois-Auguste-Rene de Chateaubriand

And last but not least, one of my personal heroes.....

"We know what to do. Perhaps we will act in time."

~Edward O. Wilson

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