



## Ottawa County Conservation District

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# Ottawa County Conservation District

*Annual Report July 1 2019 – June 30, 2020*

### **Mission Statement:**

Helping People Help the Land by providing and administering programs to help people conserve, improve and sustain our natural resources and environment. Promoting stewardship of our natural resources.

Ottawa County Conservation District is a local subdivision of state government. The district was formed in 1946 to ensure local people are involved in conservation activities.

The main goal of the district is to provide services to land users in protecting and conserving natural resources and to provide a link to state and federal conservation agencies and programs.

A board of five conservation district directors (three elected and two appointed) governs the conservation district.

The district has cooperator agreements with over a thousand landowners in the county.

The board of directors submits this annual report to inform the public of this past year's conservation accomplishments.

We invite all citizens to become familiar with the activities of the Ottawa County Conservation District and to visit our office and get acquainted with our staff.

We also invite people to attend our monthly board meeting held at the office on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m.



Directors: Grant Victor, Member; Gerald Grimes, Treasurer; Justin Miller, Chair; Lyndon McKibben, Vice-Chair; not pictured, Dustin Jarvis.



Michael Ramming Team 16 District Conservationist, Grayson Fields, Soil Conservationist, and Shirley Hudson, District Secretary. (Not Pictured: Kyle Johnson, Soil Conservation Technician)

*Office hours are Monday- Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*



The Ottawa County Conservation District is now in PY-22 of the State Cost-Share program. Practices include: Herbaceous Weed Control, Brush Management, & Watering Facilities



### *Oklahoma Conservation Cost Share Program*

The Oklahoma Legislature established the program in 1998. It is an annual program requiring funding from the legislature. Since the beginning of the program 228 contracts have been developed in Ottawa County providing \$246,715.30 in cost share funds for conservation practices such as pond construction, watering facilities, pipeline, critical area planting, cross fencing, brush management and herbaceous weed control.

The Ottawa County Conservation District administers this Cost Share Program for local landowners. For Cost-Share Program Year 22, the district received \$30,000.00 for the program, which will fund the districts obligated contracts.

The Conservation District Board obtains input from citizens to determine which conservation practices will be included in the program each year.

### *Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)*

The Ottawa County Conservation District Board of Directors has entered into an agreement between the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the Ottawa County Conservation District for the purpose of providing services that are of mutual interest to both parties, concerning the middle and lower Neosho River. Ensuring clean, abundant water, healthy soils, and well-managed working farmland is in the interest of farmers and the public – and bringing together the expertise and local knowledge of farmers, conservation and farm organizations, and state and local agencies helps make it happen. Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), state agencies, and non-governmental organizations work together to provide financial and technical assistance to farmers to install conservation activities to tackle priority natural resource concerns in specific watersheds in Ottawa County.

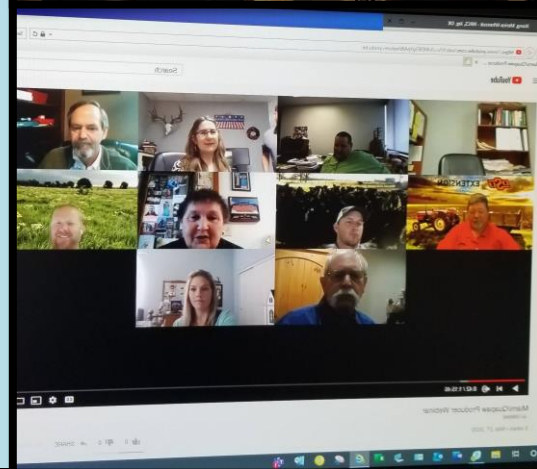
Available through a grant the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the Ottawa County Conservation District will have cost-share funds available for local landowners involved in this project.



The Ottawa County Conservation District assisted with the Eastern Shawnee Tribe with Water Festival.



OCCD and the NRCS Miami F.O. assisted with three Soil Health Workshops with OTAC & the Quapaw Nation, May Meeting was by Zoom, due to Covid 19.



## *Information and Education*

The district carried out a variety of educational outreach activities and events during the year; however, many of the spring activities were cancelled due to Covid-19.

- ❖ District Secretary and NRCS intern provided free seeds at the Ottawa County Farmer's Market. (July – August)
- ❖ Provided news releases to local newspapers to help keep landowners informed of conservation programs and available assistance.
- ❖ Assisted Wyandotte Nation with Nonpoint Source Pollution Workshop for local landowners, ranchers & farmers (August)
- ❖ Provided conservation program information at the Ottawa County Free Fair. (August)
- ❖ Provided educational conservation materials to local elementary and high school classes. (September, October)
- ❖ The District sponsored local OACD Poster, Essay and Speech Contest. (September)
- ❖ Hosted Locally-Led and Local Work Group Meetings for determining priorities for conservation programs. (October)
- ❖ Full Circle Citizenship: Land, Water & Wildlife Around us Meeting. (Major Project – October)
- ❖ During Covid-19 shutdown, students were encouraged to take field trips in their yard, nature scavenger hunt was shared on Facebook, children encouraged to share photos.
- ❖ Fishing Clinics were cancelled, children encouraged to fish and share photos via Facebook and email. (May & June)
- ❖ Pollinator Week – Daily pollinator facts and photos were shared on District Facebook Page (June)
- ❖ Preparations and invites were made for the Craig/Ottawa CCDs Trade Show. (Feb./March) Trade Show cancelled due to Covid 19.
- ❖ Assisted OTAC and Quapaw Nation with hosting (3) Soil Health Workshops for Ottawa County land owners. The March meeting was postponed and was held in May via Zoom. (July, November, May)
- ❖ Works closely with Tribes of Ottawa County:
  - ❖ Modoc Tribe
  - ❖ Wyandotte Tribe
  - ❖ Eastern Shawnee
  - ❖ Peoria Tribe
  - ❖ Quapaw Nation
  - ❖ Shawnee Tribe
  - ❖ Seneca – Cayuga Tribe
  - ❖ Miami Tribe
  - ❖ Wyandotte Nation

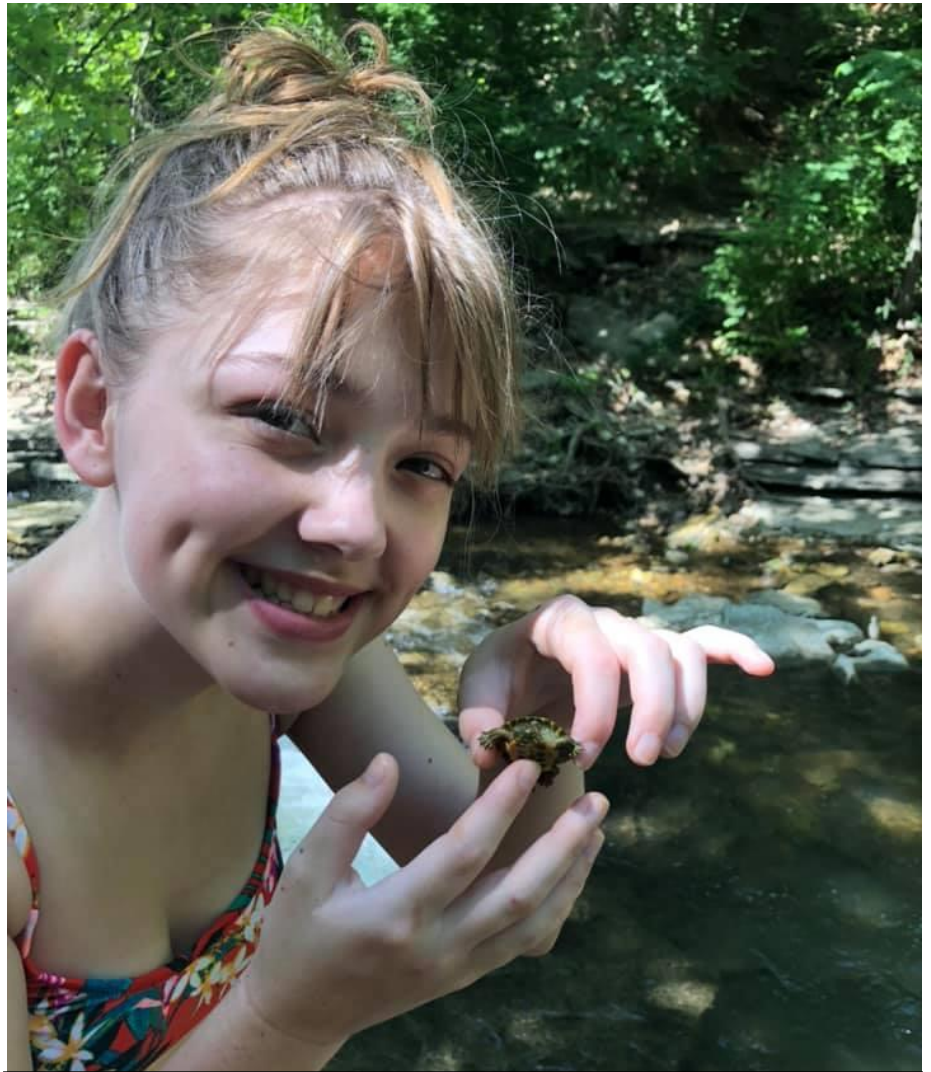




Playing in the mud inspires children to feel a connection to nature and develop an appreciation for the environment.. Due to the Corona Virus and the shutdown of large gatherings, fishing clinics and natural resource days were cancelled. The District encouraged students via Facebook to go fishing with an adult at a local pond, lake or river and share their picture. Children were also encouraged to take a nature walk and share their photos.







Since education was halted in the classroom, OCCD encouraged students to find adventures outside and share their hands on experience of the great outdoors!







Samuel Grant Victor, presenting "A Conservation Story" at the OACD 2020 Meeting.



Ottawa County Conservation District Board of Directors meet at 8:00 a.m. the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at the District office, located at 630 E. Steve Owens Blvd., in Miami.



During the Covid 19 Pandemic, OCCD has been practicing social distancing board meetings.



## Spotlight on Directors

**Justin Miller** – Chairman of the board. He has been on the board since July 2009. Mr. Miller is dedicated to the citizens of Ottawa County, giving of his time to serve as director, increasing awareness of the care for the natural resources through cooperation, education, and agricultural endeavors. Justin is co-owner of Miller Pecan Company. He and his brother farm over 1000 acres of pecans and operates an Angus cow/calf operation. Justin and his wife Carrie have one son, Seth and one daughter, Katie.

**Lyndon McKibben** is a native Oklahoman, born and raised in Eastern Ottawa County, and a graduate of Wyandotte High School. Lyndon is a self-employed rancher of 23 years and a former dairyman. He and his wife Phyllis have been married for 36 years. Together they own and operate McKibben Farm, LLC, a contract cattle and cow/calf operation. They have 3 children, two of which are involved in the cattle operation. He and his family are members of the Splitlog Baptist Church.

**Gerald Grimes** has been a cooperator with the Ottawa County Conservation District since 1964. A life-long, full-time farmer and veteran of the U.S. Army, Gerald and his wife Mary of over 50 years, own & operate a farm west of Miami. Mr. Grimes has served on the district board since 2003 and currently serves as treasurer. Gerald and Mary have 2 sons and daughters-in-law, 5 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

**Dustin Jarvis** was appointed to the Ottawa County Conservation District Board of Directors in June 2014. Dustin and his wife Stacy have a daughter, Alysha and a son, Denton. A native Oklahoman, Dustin is a graduate of Afton High School; he owns and operates a farm southwest of Miami.

**Grant Victor** was appointed to the Ottawa County Conservation District Board in October 2018. He is a fourth-generation farmer. He and his wife Donna live on his family's original Indian allotment which dates back to 1892. Mr. Victor realizes that soil is the great connector of lives. He understands that through conservation programs being implemented on his land he is leaving a future for his children and grandchildren. He and his family are heavily involved in their community. Grant's grandfather James Y. Victor served as one of Ottawa County Conservation District's original Directors in 1946.

Services and programs provided by the conservation district and NRCS are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, marital status or physical disability.

## Our Partners Natural Resources Conservation Service

### USDA Conservation Programs

The conservation district works closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in carrying out conservation work in the county. The NRCS staff provides technical assistance to the conservation district and to county land users. The NRCS also administers several federal cost share programs.

Listed below are accomplishments through federal conservation programs in 2019 – 2020.

- ❖ Seven Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) contracts were developed providing cost-share assistance.
- ❖ Seven Strike Force Initiative EQIP contracts were developed in 2019.
- ❖ Nine new Conservation Stewardship Program contracts have been preapproved for funding.
- ❖ One contract developed on the Middle and Lower Neosho River Basin RCPP program remains active.
- ❖ Two Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) contracts were developed for funding.
- ❖ Fifty-eight contracts were developed in the New CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative (CSP-GCI)
- ❖ Assisted Ottawa County Conservation District with State Cost-Share Program Years 20, 21 and 22. The Cost-Share program practices are currently being completed.
- ❖ Assisted the Ottawa County Conservation District with the Soil Health Training that was held in November 2019.
- ❖ Assisted Eastern Shawnee Tribe with 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Water Festival held in September 2019.
- ❖ The Miami Field Office staff assisted with the Locally-Led and Local Work Group Meetings, held in October 2019.
- ❖ Provided presentation for the OSU Extension Farm Bill Meeting held in November 2019.
- ❖ The Miami Field Office staff has managed to serve cooperators throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, continuing field visits while practicing social distancing.
- ❖ Assisted with 3 Soil Health Workshops co-sponsored by the Quapaw Nation, OTAC and the Ottawa County Conservation District. The meeting in May was held via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



In November 2019, Director, Grant Victor allowed the use of his land for OCCD to sponsor a Soil Health Training for NRCS Teams 15 & 16.



Field office staff, Shirley Hudson, Grayson Fields, & Kyle Johnson.

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## ***Major Project***

### ***Full Circle Citizenship Meeting***

**In July 2019 the District Director, Grant Victor and Secretary Shirley Hudson began to focus on developing a hands on workshop for community leaders, teachers, and concerned citizens of Ottawa County. Through the help of specialists from OCC, Amy Seiger, Cheryl Cheadle, and Candice Miller; and OACD's Sarah Blaney a committee was formed to put the plan in motion.**

#### **The timeline for the event:**

- ❖ July 2019 – Initial planning meeting – round robin discussion-determining the goals and objectives of what we wanted.
- ❖ Mid July - District Secretary, Shirley Hudson spends several days making face to face invitations with Civic Leaders, County Commissioners, NRCS Resource Conservationist, Teachers, State Legislators and local landowners.
- ❖ End of July – Visit possible indoor and outdoor meeting sites. (The workshop had two sessions one indoor and one outdoor).
- ❖ August 2019 – Group meeting – developed agenda and completed targeted group.
- ❖ Mid August – Additional face to face visits and invitations to targeted group.
- ❖ September 2019 – Second Field visit to location of outdoor site.
- ❖ September 2019 – Second visit to Indoor location (Vo-Tech) to finalize the layout of the classroom site.
- ❖ September 2019 – Mail out personalized invitations.
- ❖ October 2019 – Final plans for Full Circle Citizenship Meeting.
- ❖ October 24, 2019 – Full Circle Citizenship Meeting held.
- ❖ October 28, 2019 – Send thank you letters to the participants of the Full Circle Citizenship Meeting.





## *Major Project*

### *Full Circle Citizenship: Land, Water, and Wildlife around us*

Full Circle Citizenship: Land, Water, and Wildlife around us, was presented as an introductory education course specially designed for the Ottawa County Community. Discussions included

- ❖ Our Watershed – We all live in a watershed. Ultimately, we all live downstream from someone else and we are responsible for the quality of our water. Water quality and quantity have great impacts on every area of life – environmental health, economic health and physical health.
- ❖ Can one person do anything to improve Water and Soil Health? YES! We know that sediment and pollution from nonpoint source runoff is causing lakes and reservoirs to fill, affecting water quality and quantity for urban and rural areas. Everyone can do something to prevent nonpoint source pollution.
- ❖ Healthy Water: Water can be affected by point source and nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source comes from many different sources carried to our waters by melting snow or rainwater running over the ground.
- ❖ Healthy Soils – are interwoven with the health of the water, it is an integral part of the water cycle. Soil and water need each other and both need to be healthy to work efficiently. Soil health affects public health, the economy, our food supply, and the health of the environment.
- ❖ On-Site Management Practices for Healthy Soils and Healthy Water
  - ❖ Cover Crops or Permanent Vegetation – Decrease Erosion
  - ❖ Livestock Exclusion – Less phosphorus loading to the water, lessens erosion
  - ❖ No Till or Reduced Tillage – Decreases soil erosion and compaction
  - ❖ Grazing Management – Better soil with less compaction
  - ❖ Nutrient Management – Protects water quality by preventing overuse of fertilizer
  - ❖ Terraces and Contouring – Conserves soil and saves water
- ❖ Off-Site Management Practices for Healthy Soils and Healthy Water
  - ❖ Manure/Litter Storage – Reduce loss of nutrients to runoff
  - ❖ Stormwater Control Basin – Reduce sedimentation, reduce erosion and gully formation
  - ❖ Septic Tank Maintenance – Protects your health, prevents water & soil pollution
  - ❖ Rain Gardens – Save energy, water, & money; Attract pollinators, reduce mowing
  - ❖ Low Impact Development (LID) - Reduce sedimentation & runoff, saves energy
  - ❖ Stream Bank Stabilization – Less soil loss, Improved soil & water quality, fish habitat
  - ❖ Streamside Forestry – Flood control, fish & wildlife habitat, timber & nut production
  - ❖ Native Prairie – Provide food and habitat for native species & pollinators
  - ❖ Filter Strips – Reduce sediment & nutrients in waterways, improve water quality
  - ❖ Drug Take Back Programs – Protects fish & wildlife from chemical contaminants
  - ❖ Household Hazardous Waste Collections & Recycling – Reduces litter & illegal dumping

***Conservation is a state of harmony  
between men and the land.***

***-Aldo Leopold***