

**Oklahoma Civil Rights Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Stillwater State Office Conference Room**

**May 1, 2008**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Present**

David Hungerford – Chair  
Rattana Kittitornsup-Nantz – A/PIEPM  
Nicholas Jones - BEPM  
Melanie Oliver – NAEPM  
Paul Parham – DEPM  
Carri Manley – HEPM  
Julie Adams - FWPM  
Shelly Oliphant – Zone 1 Rep.  
Kenneth Hitch – Zone 2 Rep.  
Brandy Pietz-Jones – Zone 3 Rep.  
Thomas James – Zone 4 Rep  
Mark Habiger – Advisor

**Not Present**

Jasper Parker – Outreach/Civil Rights  
Ron Hilliard – State Conservationist

**Opening Remarks:** The May meeting was called to order by David Hungerford - Chair. David thanked the group for getting their SEPM and Zone Representative reports in on time.

Julie Adams stepped down from the recorder of the OCRAC. David stated the importance of the position and thanked Julie for her work. Melanie Oliver volunteered to take the recorder duties starting with the current meeting.

**Review and Approval of Minutes from February 7, 2008 meeting:** The minutes were reviewed and discussed. Kenneth Hitch moved to accept the minutes. Nick Jones seconded, motion carried.

**SEPM / Zone Representative Reports:** See Attached reports

Discussion of bringing or emailing reports and minutes to each meeting was held. It was decided that each SEPM or zone representative will email their report to the Chair and recorder (David and Melanie). Then recorder (Melanie) will forward the complied reports to the entire committee with the minutes of the last meeting and the agenda for the next meeting. It will not be necessary for members to bring copies of their reports to the meeting for all other members.

**Training:** David asked that all members send him an email of the SEPM or Civil rights advisory training they have received since being on the Oklahoma CRAC. David will maintain a list and forward to State Conservationist to request trainings.

There was a discussion about the trainings that are suggested / required for the members of the committee.

Roles and Responsibilities of the EEO Advisory Committee  
Managing a Special Emphasis Program

**National and Oklahoma Web Pages:** Rattana had been working with Terri Daniel, visual information specialist; updating the Oklahoma Web page to include the committee's information. David will send Rattana fiscal year 2008 approved minutes to include on the web site.

**Required Civil Rights Posters:** The committee continued discussion on an official list of Civil Rights posters that should be posted in the field offices. We would like to establish and send a bulletin to the field that lists and gives an electronic link to all of the required posters and keep it updated as policy statements change. Rattana is working on this as one of the Goals of our 2008 Business Plan

**Mentorship Program Discussion:** Julie and David, with input from the committee, condensed the Colorado mentorship document. It describes the program and forms needed for implementation. This is a shared responsibility of the Human Resources and civil rights committee. The committee would like to accept request to be mentors and submit them to HR. HR would be responsible for assigning mentor and mentees, especially for the CIP positions. A letter is drafted for requests to be mentors and others who would like to have a mentor once the document is adopted. Corrections were made that included grammatical errors, repeated information and formatting consistency. Julie will email a corrected copy to the committee for review. Mark will take it to the State Leadership Team for review and to get recommendations on how to proceed.

**New Business:**

National Civil Rights Committee has issued vacancy announcement for those that are interested.

Paul requested discussion on recruitment of minority employees. Mark stated as a committee we are responsible for getting the information to potential minority employees and inform them of the process for application. Human Resources and selecting official complete the process.

**Old Business:**

CRAC business Plan: David will work to have an official copy signed and get it to Rattana to be posted on the website. David will maintain an official copy to document accomplishments of the committee at the quarterly meetings.

Rattana noted that a change needed to be made in the business plan. Objective 2, Action 1, Staff / Task Required: Change Harold Kane as a contact for the website to Public Affairs.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Nicholas Jones made motion that the meeting be adjourned, Kenneth Hitch seconded. Motion passes, meeting adjourned.

**Next meeting will be August 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am at NRCS State Office Conference Room.**

# **Combined Reports for Civil Right Advisory Committee May 1, 2008**

## **Black Emphasis Program Manager Report Nick Jones**

Sent out reports during Black History Month. One report I met with the wife of the 1<sup>st</sup> Black Board Member of CCCD. I met with her family and they told me a brief history of his life and gave me pictures to put in my report. It was posted on our Oklahoma CRAC page.

Sent Dwight Guy info on internships and entry level positions for Langston Students. He reported that they have 2 students graduating, one going to Kansas as a Soil Scientist. One going to Minnesota as a SC. 1 internship is going to Wisconsin this summer. I sent him some info on some internships in New Mexico and he and the students have been talking with HR about applying for these positions.

I had 2 Outreach meetings in Creek County in April 2008. One in Mounds on the 10<sup>th</sup> and another in Slick on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Minorities in attendance.

## **Native American Program Report Melanie Oliver**

### **1. Osage Nation Grazing Symposium**

Scheduled for May 10<sup>th</sup>, Pawhuska. Set up for Indian Landowners, but anyone is welcome. The conference subjects include grazing management, wildlife management, noxious weed control and other land management topics.

This may be something that other Tribes might like to copy in their areas.

2. Arkansas has been chosen as the lead NRCS state, in the American Indian Alaskan Native Employees Association (AIANEA) South Central Region, to develop the 2008 American Indian Heritage Month poster for this November's heritage month celebration. Each year a theme is selected for the poster. The purpose of the theme is to reflect the connection between American Indian culture and protecting our natural resources. They are now accepting suggestions for themes for 2008. They can be submitted to Neal Anderson, [anderson.neal@ar.usda.gov](mailto:anderson.neal@ar.usda.gov), by May 5, 2008, 12:00 pm.

Once the theme has been selected; notification of theme and poster criteria will be sent to the State Conservationists in Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas so press releases can be sent out to newspapers, tribal contacts; in order to solicit for American Indian artist to develop a paint that will reflect the theme selected for 2008.

## **DEPM/VEPM REPORT**

I attended the USDA Disability Employment Program Managers Forum on Dec. 4, 07, in Bethesda, MD. There were approximately 35 NRCS attendees from across the U.S. Topics covered included:

- Affirmative Action
- Role of DEPM
- Targeted Disabilities
- Recruitment Resources

I have forwarded 3 resume's to HR. These were specifically for disabled individuals looking for work with our agency. I also sent to HR several emails about the Workforce Recruitment Program. There are approximately 1900 disabled college students in this year's program, looking for anything from internships to full-time employment. As I understand it, this program will pay salaries for summer help. I would highly encourage our agency to participate in this program. It has the potential to improve our rather dismal numbers of disabled employees within the agency.

As the agency Civil Rights DEPM, I am also on the Okla. AgrAbility Council. In that capacity, I attended my first AgrAbility meeting in Stillwater in Jan, 08. Representative John Enns (also a client of the AgrAbility Project) was honored with a plaque and luncheon for his support of the program. Rep Enns is a paraplegic, in a wheelchair, and through the AgrAbility Project he received help in obtaining a lift for his tractor so he could continue farming. Over 25% or 17,000 Oklahoma agricultural producers report a health impairment that is creating a condition of disability. Those are the individuals the AgrAbility Project hopes to help.

The April meeting was devoted to preparations for the upcoming AgrAbility Day at the Capital on May 5, 08. Its stated purpose is to increase state legislative awareness of the importance of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project to the success of agricultural producers who have disabilities. They will also be asking for additional funding in the amount of \$200,000 to help pay for additional handicap devices and services needed throughout the coming year.

Approximately 30 individuals who are clients of the AgrAbility Project will be there to share their story with their respective legislators. I will be there to assist in getting them around to meet with the legislators. Approval for my attendance has been granted from the NRCS State Office.



## **Federal Women's Program Manager Report**

### **Submitted by: Julie Adams**

I met with mentor program committee (David and Melanie) to review Colorado guidebook and summarize document for our possible use. I worked on draft guidebook to send out to civil rights committee for review.

Statewide Women in Ag and Small Business Conference committee is gathering ideas and speakers for their conference at the Moore Norman Technology Center in OKC. They are meeting monthly making plans for speakers around the theme of "Managing Risk Successfully." I will attend the next month's meeting.

March was Women's History Month. I sent out information statewide and had a brown bag lunch at the State Office while showing video on managing your finances from the beginning of your career through retirement. I also provided several library books regarding Women's History in the conference room for check-out. The President's Proclamation was late being issued and sent out at the end of the month.

## **Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager Report**

### **Program Manager Activities**

- Participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter HEPM National Teleconference
  - Learned that translation of documents are to be contracted locally
- Researched English-Spanish Dictionaries and Translation Documents and decided on Colorado's version to model after
  - The Pocket Design is convenient and the words translated relate the closest to our day to day work in the field
  - Presented it at the Zone 1 DC Meeting – received feedback from one office – the translation is appropriate for the Castilian Dialect which is commonly used in the Panhandle Counties
  - Fernando Morales, Colorado HEPM, is currently working on converting this to an electronic version for us to use
  - I will still like to have feedback from other areas throughout the state which will most likely take place through email
- When time allows I am gathering interesting facts and articles to highlight during Hispanic Heritage Month
- Creating Emails to be sent out to all employees – Ex: Information Gathering Emails for Spanish Communicating Employees and Known Dialects Spoken in Communities across the state and Cinco De Mayo Email

## Current Bulletins and Activities for Oklahoma

- OK-Bulletin 250-8-8 – NOPHNRCSE Training Conference
  - Action Requested by May 29, 2008
- NOPHNRCSE Hispanic Conservation Farmer or Rancher Award Nomination
  - Deadline Extended to May 16, 2008

## HEPM Calendar of Events

- April 15, 2008 Hispanic Heritage Month Poster Contest Opened
- July 7-11, 2008 NOPHNRCSE Conference Madison, WI
- July 7-11, 2008 LULAC Conference Washington, DC

## Current Goals

1. Establish a working English – Spanish Dictionary for Oklahoma
2. Conduct Assessment of Spanish Dialects throughout the state
3. Conduct Assessment of Translation Needs throughout the state
4. Compile list of Spanish Communicating Employees who are willing to assist other employees (with Supervisor Approval) in communication areas such as Speaking, Writing and Reading
5. Update and Modernize Hispanic Program Website Information

## Zone 1

### Boise City Field Office

The Cimarron County Conservation District and Boise City NRCS Field Office hosted **two producer meetings** this month. March 4, 2008: Selection and Tree Care Seminar with guest speaker Mary Marek, Service Forester with the State of Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry. The meeting had a great turn out with many interests in tree care. Mary discussed types of trees that were native to the Cimarron County area and other trees that might be adaptable to this area. She also discussed proper planting techniques for different sized trees and proper maintenance for tree establishment and growth. Also presented at the meeting by the NRCS were backyard conservation techniques.

On, March 11, 2008 the Boise City Field Offices hosted **Subsurface Drip Irrigation Workshop** with guest speakers Jan Windscheffel of Netafim, Ross Roberts of Diversity D, Monty Teeter of Teeter Irrigation, and David McKay- Resource Engineer with Woodward TSO. The workshop had two sessions. The morning session: Basic Design and Benefits of Drip Irrigation was presented for NRCS personnel. The second session was for the producers and the topics discussed: Why Drip Irrigation, Basic Design and Components of SDI, Installation of SDI, and NRCS Programs and Engineering. We had a full house and many interested producers that enjoyed a delicious lunch and an ample amount of information about SDI.

### Alva Field Office

On February 29th, the Woods County Conservation District, NRCS, and the Woods County Extension worked together to provide hands on **prescribed burn training** to local producers and burn association members. Denise Turner (Grazing Land Specialist) was the "Boss" for the day, and with assistance from local District Conservationist Shelly Oliphant "Gopher" they had a very successful burn. About 20 local producers along with their equipment showed up to participate. All producers had a job and everyone worked together under Denise's lead which made for a very safe and productive burn.

### El Reno Field Office

#### Prescribed Burn Training

A **prescribed burn training** sponsored by the NRCS El Reno Field Office, Central North Canadian River Conservation District (CNCRCDD) and the Canadian Rivers Prescribed Burn Association was held on February 27, 2008. Canadian County landowners David and Ann Moore hosted the burn which was planned and designed by John Mustain, Resource Specialist Perry TSO. Roy Burns of the CNCRCDD and the Geary Volunteer Fire Department provided fire protection backup. The weather cooperated well for textbook implementation of a well designed burn plan.

#### Flood Control Structure Maintenance

Performance Plus came to Logan County's Cottonwood Watershed structure #8 on Friday March 14 for a tower replacement. They arrived around 10:30 am with a truck load of equipment, a new tower, and a crew of 3. They excavated and removed the old leaky tower, prepared the existing concrete pad to accept the new tower and installed the new tower. In 7 ½ hours the installation of the new plastic tower was complete and the crew was headed out. **Old tower that needed replacing. New tower the will help the dam function properly.**

### **Medford Field Office**

#### **Ground Breaking Ceremony**

Recently at a **groundbreaking ceremony** in Medford, OK, board members from the Grant County Conservation District signed a contract intent on future construction of the new Grant County USDA Service Center. Ground was broken on the building pad and representatives were on hand from the Welch State Bank to oversee the contractual agreement and answer questions. The Conservation District, NRCS and FSA employees remain enthusiastic as construction will begin very soon. Grant County employees and several district board members donated time and equipment to begin the initial phases of dirt work and pad preparation.

#### **Training Burn**

A **training burn** was recently completed on the Rytha Kirby WRP in Grant County. A training burn gives NRCS employees the opportunity to work with more experienced employees and obtain training requirements. John Mustain, Resource Specialist, has scheduled some other training burns to be held in Zone 1.

### **Noble County**

Noble Co. Conservation District Wade Warren and NRCS Rusty Peterson speak to **90 Perry 6th graders about watersheds** and the importance of the Watershed program to them in Noble Co. There are 89 of the dams in the county and 3 are used for municipal water sources. NRCS and the BIA partnered with Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) and Noble Co. Conservation District to siphon down a **4 acre pond on tribal land to repair the pipe**. The 30 inch pipe was installed on the dam in 1999 and the rains of 2007 caused buoyant forces to bend the pipe upwards. The spring fed pond was flowing around the spillway constantly and threatening to cause the pond to fail all together. OCC made available the siphon to allow BIA to cut the pipe off at an appropriate level.

#### **Tallgrass RC&D**

Tallgrass RC&D recently began planning a statewide conference focusing on **Rural Communities**. They are currently hosting meetings to create the partnerships to create this event. In addition, Tallgrass is meeting with the RC&D's from Kansas and the City of Tulsa looking at doing some stream cleanup work along the Verdigris River.

#### **Wheatland RC&D**

The Council received a grant for \$17,000 to purchase **15,000 trees** from the American Tree Foundation. These trees will be planted by the inmates at the William S. Key Correctional Center at Fort Supply, OK. After a two year grow-out they will be available to be planted on public lands around Oklahoma. There are 9,300 trees of 13 different species available at the present time. Call Wheatland RC&D at 580-234-8331 and talk to Jeanne McCulloch or e-mail wheatlandrcd@att.net or carl.smith@ok.usda.gov for more information.

### **Garfield County**

Approximately 20 NRCS employees attended the **3<sup>rd</sup> annual Conservation Tillage 101 Workshop in Enid** on February 15, 2008 where they earned continuing education credits. The workshop which was sponsored by the Oklahoma State University extension center, the Garfield County Conservation District and the NRCS gave producers in the area enough background information about conservation tillage to help make educated choices for managing their cropping operation. Topics included: Economic related no-till decisions, soil issues and considerations, nitrogen contribution from crop rotation, making a plan for technology adoption and herbicide considerations in planning a rotation of crops. Various vendors were present to offer their products and services to producers as well.

### **Harper County**

On Feb. the 6<sup>th</sup> the Buffalo Field Office and Harper County Conservation District attended a **multicounty crop production meeting** at Gate, Oklahoma. The meeting was put on by OSU extension and covered several topics. The main topic was the situation with the wheat crop in NW Oklahoma being behind and what a producer can expect at harvest time. The second major topic was the situation with high grain prices as well as fertilizer prices, and when it is feasible for a producer to spend the money on top dressing. The meeting had an excellent turnout with about 40 producers showing up for the information as well as a good bowl of chili. It was an excellent opportunity for the Field Office to visit with many producers on the issues that they are facing and what NRCS can do to help.

### **Kay & Noble Counties**

On February 7, Kay and Noble counties held a **Women in Ag conference** in Tonkawa. There were 110 people in attendance. Sessions topics included Financial Risks on Today's Farm, Landowner Liabilities, Sheep and Goat Management, Understanding Your Credit Score, and The Sandwich Generation Caring for Parents, Children, and Grandchildren. Also Joe Kreger entertained everyone with his poetry and Mark Gibson spoke on rural crime. The Kay County Conservation District received the **award for District Excellence in Education and Stewardship** at the National Association of Conservation District (NACD) annual meeting in Reno, Nevada on February 12, 2008. Susan Henning, District Manager as well as board members, Rick Jeans and Nancy Bowling attended the meeting.

### **Guthrie**

District Conservationist, Wayne Fjeseth and District Manager Kathy Schmidt provide out reach to Coyle High School Students with the **“Soil: The Foundation of Life”** program. Mr. Burris’ eighth grade science class was given an opportunity to texture a soil sample. They identified the sand and clay constituents of the sample by listening to the sand grains grind together as they moved the sample between their thumb and index finger. They then observed the organic clay stain on their fingers. The students identified the red color as indicating the presence of iron in the sample. Half of the 25-member class was minority students. Mr. Fjeseth discussed soil development and how fertility effected plant growth. We discussed a request by the school to provide resource data to assist in developing a new athletic field at the high school.

### **Garfield County**

Garfield County Conservation District and NRCS were very visible at the **Enid Farm Show** held at the Garfield County Expo Center on January 11 and 12, 2008. The Conservation District and NRCS had booths to provide information to attendees. Jason Skaggs, District Manager and Michael Sheik, District Conservationist gave a presentation on programs offered by the conservation district and conservation programs available through NRCS.

## **Zone II Report**

For the period 2/7/2008 to 4/24/2008

Submitted by: Kenneth L Hitch

### **Events Held**

The Miami Field Office operated a booth at the Wyandotte Nation Environmental Festival in March. They provided information on conservation and environmental programs to students and adults. There were ~475 people in attendance representing the Wyandotte Nation, Eastern Shawnee Tribe, and Modoc Tribe.



The Bristow Field Office conducted an Outreach meeting in Mounds on April 10<sup>th</sup>. There were 13 producers from this small community in attendance.

The Tahlequah Field Office held a Conservation Day for the Sequoyah High School on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Sequoyah High School is a Native American school in Cherokee County.



The Vinita Field Office held a Pest/Nutrient Management workshop for local landowners on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Erik Friend, District Conservationist, took the opportunity to discuss NRCS program availability to those in attendance.



The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Soil Stewardship Breakfast was sponsored by Wagoner County Conservation District, Wagoner County Cattlemen Association, American Farmers and Ranchers, Wagoner Chamber of Commerce and the Cherokee Hills RC&D



Melissa Thompson, District Conservationist and Paula Templeton, District Programs Coordinator of the Wagoner County Conservation District handed out pine seedlings at the Wagoner Wal-Mart re-grand opening of the garden center on March 28, 2008. Melissa and Paula handed out 500 seedlings and information on conservation programs. The District also held a drawing on the bird feeder seen on table.

- The Okmulgee Field Office operated a booth at the Deep Fork cattleman Conference on March 28 at the Green Country Technology Center in Okmulgee. There were ~35 people in attendance for presentations on a variety of topics including Assistance/Programs available through NRCS.
- The Nowata Field Office presented information on NRCS programs and services to the Green Country Cattleman's Association at their March meeting. There were ~100-150 producers in attendance.
- The Pryor field Office assisted with the planning and implementation of the Forestry on the Grow Conference in Wagoner. The conference is regional in scope and attendance, with participants from several states. NRCS representatives operated an exhibit detailing assistance available for forest landowners.

## Upcoming Events

- The Miami Field Office is planning an outdoor classroom event for ~160 4<sup>th</sup> graders on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and a fishing clinic is scheduled for June.
- On May 12<sup>th</sup> the Payne County Field Office will hold a Poultry Litter Meeting in cooperation with OSU Extension at the Payne County Fairgrounds. With the rising costs of commercial fertilizer, there has been an increasing interest in this alternative for nutrient management. Josh Payne, OSU Extension Poultry Litter Specialist, will be present at the meeting. NRCS and OCC manure transfer programs will be discussed along with updated cost data and benefits.



Zone 3 by Brandy Pietz-Jones  
May 1, 2008

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Southwest Oklahoma Women in Agriculture and Small Business Conference** was held in February. At this conference there were 77 registered participants that heard a variety of speakers and visited numerous booths to gather information that would assist them with their farming operation or small business.

The **Annual Winter Agriculture Conference** was also held in February. The topics discussed included the 2008 Wheat Outlook, Nutrient Management, NRCS Programs, Farm Bill Outlook, and others. This conference had 31 individuals in attendance. Both programs were held in Altus at the Southwest Technology Center.



*A good turnout for the Women and Ag meeting in Altus*

**Signup for the 2008**

**Conservation Security Program (CSP)** was announced to start April 18th for 51 watersheds nationwide including the Upper Washita River Watershed in southwest Oklahoma. The Upper Washita River Watershed includes 1.7 million acres in Dewey, Custer, Washita, Kiowa, Caddo, Grady, Comanche and Canadian counties. **Eleven public meetings** were held prior to sign up with 389 interested individuals attending.



*One of the 11 meetings held for potential applicants for the 2008 CSP sign up.*

Respectively Submitted  
Brandy Pietz-Jones

#### **Zone 4**

Poultry/ Nutrient Management Workshop, March 18, 2008, Bowlegs High School Cafeteria  
6:30-10:00 P.M.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service in conjunction with OSU Extension Service held a Poultry/Nutrient Management Workshop. The Workshop was held Tuesday March 18, 2008 at the Bowlegs High School Cafeteria starting at 6:30 p.m. and run until around 10:00 p.m.

Guest speakers included Josh Payne, Area Animal Waste Specialist (OSU), Travis Hanks (OSU Extension), and Thomas James District Conservationist Seminole County OK.

Topics of discussion included Poultry Litter vs. Chemical Fertilizer cost and comparison, Nutrient Management (Chemical) and EQIP and State Cost share financial assistance. About 25 producers attended this workshop. Contractors holding an Oklahoma Waste Applicators License received 3 CEUs to maintain their License.

This program was heavily advertised in the paper, fliers, and the Seminole Nation was invited to attend this meeting.