

**Oklahoma Civil Rights Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Stillwater State Office Conference Room**  
**November 6, 2008**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Present**

David Hungerford – Chair  
Pooh Vongkhamdy – A/PIEPM (09-11)  
Nicholas Jones - BEPM  
Cleaon Bradford – BEMP (09-11)  
Melanie Oliver – NAEPM  
Carri Manley – HEPM  
Julie Adams - FWPM  
Shelly Oliphant – Zone 1 Rep.  
Joy Martin – Zone 1 Rep. (09-11)  
Kenneth Hitch – Zone 2 Rep.  
Brandy Pietz-Jones – Zone 3 Rep.  
Thomas James – Zone 4 Rep  
Gilbert Guerrero – Advisor  
Jasper Parker – Outreach/Civil Rights  
Paul Parham – DEPM

**Not Present**

Ron Hilliard – State Conservationist

**Opening Remarks:** The November meeting was called to order by David Hungerford - Chair. David welcomed new members Pooh Vongkhamdy – A/PIEPM, Cleaon Bradford – BEMP, Joy Martin – Zone 1 Representative. The group introduced themselves.

**Review and Approval of Minutes from August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meeting:** The minutes were reviewed and discussed. Paul Parham made a motion to approve the minutes and Shelly Oliphant seconded to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

**SEPM / Zone Representative Reports:** Discussed the content of the SEPM reports and zone reports. The committee concerned about the content being repeated in other reports and if the report content is being used. A database is being developed in Zone 2 to avoid duplication and gather specific reports. As a committee we will continue to review guidelines for what should be in the Zone reports and the SEPM reports. See Attached reports.

**Training:** David reviewed a letter he sent to Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, requesting suggested/required trainings for the committee members. We discussed the USDA Graduate School trainings that are suggested for civil rights committees, Roles and Responsibilities of the EEO Advisory Committee and Managing a Special Emphasis Program.

Gilbert Guerrero reported Managing a Special Emphasis Program was on hold due to budget and that the SEPMs are being allowed to attend their respective SEPM national meetings for information about duties as a SEPM. Oklahoma is inquiring about bringing the Roles and Responsibilities of the EEO Advisory Committee training to Oklahoma and will partner with other states to increase attendance. Also, it was brought up to open Civil Rights committee vacancy announcements for the individuals that would start their service in 2010, so that they could attend the training. The current member's term could possibly be extended. The date will have to be worked out with the USDA Graduate College and their instructors.

**Mentorship Program Discussion:** Assignments are needed for CIP students. David reviewed the available mentors. The CIP students were assigned to mentors that had volunteered. David will review the recommendations with the individuals and forward to Human Resources. At this time all requested mentees have been paired with a mentor. Employee may request or volunteer at anytime for the mentoring program, information is on the Civil Rights link of the Oklahoma website.

**New Business:**

It has been brought to the committee the opportunity for Oklahoma to host the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees annual meeting. A proposal will have to be developed and presented to the NHPHNCSE to bid for the national meeting. Gilbert Guerrero will assist with information and process.

Reasonable Accommodations Verbiage – The committee did not have the necessary information to address this issue. It was tabled until the next meeting.

David H. has spoken to Dwight Guy about attending the civil rights meeting. He would like to extend his assistance to the committee and will attend the next meeting.

David H. forwarded the 403.130 Memorandum of Understanding to the new members of the committee. He requested that they sign and forward to their supervisors to be signed so that the MOU can be signed by the State Conservationist and Human Resources and filed with HR.

The committee discussed the dates for the CRAC meetings in 2009, the committee wanted to accommodate all the members. Dates were set for Thursdays, February 19<sup>th</sup>, May 21<sup>st</sup>, August 20<sup>th</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Carri M. asked about the status of a bulletin or email requesting Spanish speaking employee to volunteer and be listed as contacts for interpretive needs with Spanish speaking customer. It was decided a bulletin will be forwarded through David H. as the Committee chair to Becka Redding to be sent though the State Conservationist to all employees.

Dismissed for lunch.

**Documentation of Accomplishments of FY 2008 Business Plan.**

Objective 2 Action 2: Committee Members attend one zone all employee meeting per year

This is traditional done at the December all employee meetings. Zone representative will present a short program to bring awareness of civil right to employees. Small spot awards are usually awarded to all attendees that participate. David and Melanie will look into the program information to be presented and find out what small awards are acceptable. This informational will be forwarded to Zone representative.

Objective 4 Action 5: Recognize outstand efforts of Oklahoma Employees in the Civil Rights Arena.

The committee discussed nomination for the State Civil Rights award. Decision was made and information to document the success of the individual will be gathered and announced when award is presented.

**Development of FY 2009 Business Plan** – the committee reviewed each Objective and updated goals and measurements for success. The new business plan will be emailed to all members for review. Then 2009 plan will be approved at the February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009 meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Nick J. made motion that the meeting be adjourned, Shelly O. seconded. Motion passes, meeting adjourned.

**Next meeting will be February 19th at 10:00 am at NRCS State Office Conference Room.**

# Combined Reports for Civil Right Advisory Committee November, 2008

## **Disability and Veterans Employment Program Manager Paul Parham**

1. I have been working with Terry Dupree ( U.S. and Wildlife Service, Private Lands Biologist) on constructing an Outdoor Classroom at the Atoka Elementary School, Atoka, Ok. One of his programs has made available a \$6000.00 grant and the school has a \$1000.00 grant to build this classroom. For Terry's program, the outdoor classroom must have a water component and a gazebo. The material for the gazebo has already been donated and awaiting someone to construct it. Being my idea, I guess you would say that I am the instigator/initiator for this classroom. I do have my DC's approval to work on this.
2. I put together an Environmental Field Day for all Atoka County fourth grade students in September. We had 152 students and 10 teachers participate in this event. As far as I know we have never had anything like this in Atoka. It was very successful and I plan on doing it again next year. We rotated the students through 10 stations, each 20 minutes long. Some of the presenters were: K.C. Kraft (archeologist), Carl Woods (soil scientist), Pat Whitley (state trapper), 2 students from Southeastern Oklahoma State University (ornithology and herpetology), a state forester, and an OSU extension agent with the soil erosion trailer. Fun was had by all. The District Secretary was a great help in keeping things moving in the right direction that day.
3. A display was set up at our County Fair in September. It's not a large event but quiet a few people got a chance pick up brochures and ask questions about our programs.
4. I participated in 4 Field Office Civil Rights Reviews in September within our Zone. This was my first time participating in the reviews and was a learning experience.
5. I have also put together a Veterans Outreach event or (maybe it's just a good thing to do) for the entire Atoka Public School System on November 3rd. I have contacted a group that presents a program called "*Building the Flag*" and they will present this program four times that day. They build the flag, stripe by stripe and star by star, and explain what each means as it is put together. This is a program that promotes patriotism and Americanism and could not come at a better time with the elections and Veterans Day coming up.



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

**Submitted by: Julie Adams**

I forwarded the Presidents Proclamation honoring "Women's Equality Day" out to all employees in the last of August.

I created a 3 round Jeopardy Quiz to get employees involved in the history of Women's Equality and Right to Vote. I encouraged participation by offering Koozie's as prizes. I was surprised at the large number of responses.

Chief Lancaster came to visit Oklahoma October 6th and 7th. I shared range NRI info with him in relation to the Tallgrass Prairie in Oklahoma. His trip included a visit to the field. He spoke to state office employee's on the 7th.

Participated in a nationwide FWPM teleconference October 28th, discussed FWPM events around the country, training attended and upcoming training needs.

## **HISPANIC EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT**

**CARRI MANLEY**

### **Program Manager Activities**

- Distributed Hispanic Heritage Month Emails and Poster (by email)
- English-Spanish Dictionaries
  - Fernando Morales, Colorado HEPM, is currently working on converting this to an electronic version for us to use
  - Requested price and printing information for the Glossary from Colorado
- Conducted Civil Rights Reviews for Zone 1
- Recruited at Texas A&M Kingsville, TX

**NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM REPORT**  
**MELANIE OLIVER**

American Indian Alaska Native Heritage Month is observed from November 1 through November 30. American Indian Alaska Native Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives. American Indian Alaska Native Heritage Month enhances our efforts to honor tribal sovereignty by working on a government-to-government basis with American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The 2008 Natural Resources Conservation Service American Indian Alaska Native Heritage poster theme for this year is *Conservation.....Our Passion....Our Heritage*. The artist is Kathy Sturch, a member of the Choctaw Nation in Boswell, Oklahoma. Ms. Sturch titled her painting *Touch of Earth....Conservation.....Our Passion....Our Heritage*.

The Department of Agriculture will celebrate its observance of American Indian Alaska Native Heritage Month on November 5, 2008, in Washington, D.C.

So far I have sent "all employee" email information about the directive for American Indian Alaska Native Heritage month, Oklahoma's flag and seal, and the poster signing of Kathy Sturch. I will continue to send daily information throughout the month.

I will attend the poster signing in Durant on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>.

September 11<sup>th</sup>, I assisted Debra Ruark with the Oklahoma State University Agriculture Career Fair. At the time HR was taking applications for student positions for next summer.

I have also begun initial contacts the Native American Student Organizations at Oklahoma State University and Oklahoma University.

**BLACK EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER  
NICHOLAS W. JONES**

Attended Langston Career Fair on September the 9<sup>th</sup>. Met with several students, took some resumes that HR took back to the state office.

Worked a booth at The State Fair September 19<sup>th</sup> along with other NRCS employees.

Bristow Field Office had two outreach meetings. One in Milfay, the other in Kellyville. I also attended Creek County Cattlemens Association meeting in Creek County.

Sent out information on The Battle of Honey Springs. This was after I attended the reenactment of the battle in McIntosh Co.

Attended Langston Ag. Alumni Banquet

I completed annual accomplishment report for our National BEPM. Also they are putting together a report together as the number of blacks hired in FY2008 to show the work of the BEPM's. I sent in the number of new employees.

Took part in a quarterly BEPM teleconference.

Have made reservations to attend Annual Training Conference in Atlanta for next month.

**ZONE 1 REPORT**  
**BY SHELLY OLIPHANT**

Cimarron County – Boise City Field Office – Ag producers meetings were held in Kenton and Boise City on August 6, 2008, and on the Sandhill Ranch on August 7 th.

Beaver County – Beaver Field Office – Beaver County hosted a Grazinglands Stragies Workshop at Gate, Oklahoma on August 6, 2008.

Dewey County – Taloga Field Office – The Taloga Field Office hosted a one day Grazinglands Strategies workshop in Oakwood, Oklahoma.

Noble County – Perry Field Office – Perry NRCS and Noble County Conservation District held a Pond Management Workshop on July 30, 2008. The Noble County Conservation District held a Round Table Exercise of the Emergency Action Plan and A Watershed banquet for landowners. The Field Office also had a booth at the Noble County Fair this fall.

Kingfisher County – Kingfisher Field Office - The Kingfisher office held a outreach/locally led meeting on Sept 4, 2008.

Alfalpa County – Cherokee Field Office – the Alfalfa County Conservation District and the NRCS held a booth at the Alfalfa County Fair on Sept 3-5, 2008.

Harper County – Buffalo Field Service Center – A Locally Led meeting along with a Celebration of 70 years was held on October 14, 2008. The district also participated in the NW Oklahoma land judging contest on October 22.

Garfield County – Enid Field Office – A workshop was presented to Enid 5<sup>th</sup> graders on soils and on Nov 20<sup>th</sup>, the Field office will attend a Carbon Sequestration Educational Forum.

Logan County – Guthrie Field Office – The Logan County Conservation District held its annual Logan County Speech Contest on Oct 8, 2008.

## **ZONE II REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD 4/25/2008 TO 8/1/2008**

**SUBMITTED BY: KENNETH L HITCH**

### **Events Held**

- ***Bristow Field Office*** - The Bristow NRCS staff held an outreach meeting in Milfay, Oklahoma, Creek County. In attendance were 20 concerned citizens. Nick Jones, D.C., cooked hamburgers and hotdogs and explained NRCS programs as well as the CCCD state cost share program and services. Melanie Oliver, Tribal Resource Conservationist, explained to participants how to complete the Creek County Conservation District Survey. Amanda Zarek, Soil Conservation Technician, introduced herself and contributed to the success of the meeting.



Nick Jones, D.C., Bristow Field Office, explains NRCS programs to attendees of the outreach meeting in Creek County.

- ***Claremore Field Office*** - The NRCS Claremore Field Office staff and the Rogers County District staff manned a booth at the Rogers County Fair during mid-September. NRCS literature and literature on the Rogers County Conservation Education Reserve was available as staff members visited with attendees

- ***Dewey Field Office*** - An information and outreach booth was maintained all three days of the Washington County Free Fair which was held August 21, 22, and 23. This booth provided conservation and program information to hundreds of Washington County residents.

An outreach meeting was held for Washington County residents on September 16, 2008. The primary purpose of this Locally Led Meeting was to obtain input from local landowners and producers on their current natural resource concerns. A short program on USDA-NRCS Conservation Programs was presented to the attendees.

- ***Jay Field Office*** - On September 6, 2008, Eric Daniels, D.C.,



George Seals, retired OSU Extension Agent for Washington County, observes conservation information regarding trees. He is shown holding a slab from an oak tree he planted 38 years ago.

NRCS, and Sam Grasso, Delaware County Conservation

District Information Education Coordinator, participated in the Annual Jay Farm Fest held at the Delaware County Fairgrounds. Inclement weather cut the event short.

On September 13, 2008, Eric Daniels, D.C., participated in the National Wild Turkey Federation Field Day held at



NRCS/Delaware County Conservation District booth at Jay Farm Fest.

the Delaware County Fairgrounds. Approximately seven producers were in attendance. Inclement weather from Hurricane Ike prevented many producers attending.

The Delaware County Newsletter was mailed in August to approximately 750 producers in Delaware County

- **Miami Field Office** - The NRCS Miami Field Office staff and Rick McCright, Resource Soil Scientist from the Claremore Technical Service Office, assisted with a soils lab for Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College. Soils maps with soils descriptions were provided to the 12 students enrolled in the class. Rick brought his soil probe truck and obtained profiles of three different soil types. The students were given hands-on experience in observing the difference in the soils profile and different soil types. Questions were asked and answered and the instructor was very pleased with the results of the demonstration.
- **Nowata Field Office** - The Nowata Field office set up a booth display at the Nowata County Free



Nowata County Free Fair attendees visited the Booth set up by the Nowata Filed Office, which included a conservation quiz board.

Fair August 13<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>. The display consisted of handouts and brochures on services provided by NRCS and the NCCD to Nowata residents. A new attraction brought to the booth was a conservation quiz board that attracted many fair goers to the booth.

On October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> The Nowata Field office held its annual Conservation Day at 2 county schools. A total of 500 students participated in Conservation Days ranging from 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Conservation topics discussed were soils, wildlife, the water cycle, pollution, forestry, and train safety.

The Nowata Field office conducted the annual Nowata County Conservation Speech

Contest. All three school districts were represented.

- **Okmulgee Field Office** - Approximately 300 Fifth Grade students from the Preston, Wilson, Twin Hills and Beggs schools attended Okmulgee Conservation Days on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Students were able to construct their own stream and see the effects vegetation has on stream erosion.
- **Pawhuska Field Office** - The Osage County Conservation District staff held an outreach meeting at the Braden School house, 9 miles east of Ponca City, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency. There were about 20 people in attendance and programs available from the NRCS were discussed with the producers. Local resource concern surveys were distributed and collected to help steer NRCS programs. Other program literature and EQIP application forms were also distributed.
- **Pawnee Field Office** - On October 22 the Pawnee Field Office hosted the Bankers Conservation Awards banquet. The event was attended by over 140 individuals from throughout the county. On October 24<sup>th</sup> the Pawnee Field Office working with the Pawnee Tribe, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife, and the Payne County Conservation District conducted an outdoor classroom at the Pawnee environmental Education Center. The event was attended by ~100 students from throughout the area.



Rishell Bowler, Soil Conservationist, with students at the stream trailer.

- **Pryor Field Office** - On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the Pryor Filed Office hosted a workshop for local area producers and technical service providers interested in improving the management of wetlands. Pryor Field Office staff partnered with Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to present information to 24 individuals during the morning event. Despite intermittent rainfall and the threat of downpours the participants indicated that the information delivered in the program would be very useful in the future management of wetlands.



Alan Stacy, ODWC, discusses the management of moist soils and its effect on plant composition.

On Thursday September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the Pryor Field Office in Cooperation with OSU Extension, FSA, and the Mayes County Conservation District held a lunch lecture at the Mayes County Agriculture Center. Participants were treated to lunch of sub sandwiches, chips, cookies, and drinks as Bob Woods NE Area Agronomy Specialist discussed the pros and cons of planting legumes in introduced pastures. The 30 minute lecture spawned a multitude of questions and some productive discussion. About a dozen local producers representing crop, dairy, beef, and truck farmers listened intently as Bob Woods provided information on species selection, protein benefit, management options/requirements, and how legumes could affect fertilizer needs. Following the legume presentation, representatives of FSA and NRCS presented information on a variety of programs, including technical assistance, farm loans, cost-share assistance, disaster relief, and commodity payments available to area producers.

- **Sallisaw Field Office** – The Sequoyah County Conservation District and Sallisaw NRCS Office staffs held their annual District FFA/4-H Speech Contest on October 2, 2008, at the field office. There were 13 students from Roland and Gans FFA that participated. The first and second place winners of both the junior and senior divisions will progress to the OACD Area III Speech Contest in Wagoner on November 13, 2008.
- **Stilwell Field Office** –Tashina Mitchell, Illinois River Project Coordinator with the 319 Water Quality Program, Stilwell Field Office, Jerry Starkey, Conservation Plan Writer with Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Stilwell Field Office, and Andrew R. Inman, District Conservationist with Natural Resources Conservation Service, Stilwell Field Office, spoke about conservation programs at the Adair County Cattlemen’s meeting held at the Fair Grounds in Stilwell on August 8th. 129 people were present. A meal was provided by the Adair County Livestock Auction. Tashina, Jerry and Andrew talked about programs available and the possible benefits. Several new cooperators have resulted from the outreach efforts. John Auffet, State Representative District 86, and Mildred Hamilton, Chair of the Adair County Conservation District, spoke about agriculture concerns at the Adair County Locally Led Meeting. The meeting was held Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, at the Stilwell Field Office. After several minutes of interactive discussion, the conclusion of the group was that water quality is still the # 1 issue in Adair County.
- **Stillwater Field Office** - An outreach meeting was held on the morning of September 24, 2008, at the Payne County Fairgrounds to inform local agriculture producers of preliminary information regarding the 2008 Farm Bill. There were presentations by representatives from NRCS, FSA and the Payne County Extension Service. David Hungerford presented details concerning conservation programs available for all producers in Payne County. Jim Ellis, Soil Conservation Technician

in the Stillwater Field Office, assisted with the NRCS booth and event. Approximately 41 were in attendance and enjoyed the meal provided by NRCS and FSA.

- **Tahlequah Field Office** - Cherokee County NRCS hosted their annual outreach/locally led meeting Oct 21, 2008. The event was announced via radio spots, news paper, website/e-mail, and distributed flyers across the county. There were representatives from NRCS, RC&D, FSA, OSU Extension, Cherokee County Conservation District, OCC-CREP, and ODWC. Approximately 29 people attended the event that lasted from 6:00 to 9:30. A meal was provided at the event and was well received. Valuable input was gained from citizens in Cherokee County that will help direct funding towards targeted practices selected by local producers.

- **Tulsa Field Office** - The Tulsa NRCS Field Office, in cooperation with the Tulsa County Conservation District, set-up and established the outreach education and information exhibit at the 2008 Tulsa State Fair. The fair was held during the period of September 25 - October 5, 2008. This year's exhibit, displayed by NRCS and the Tulsa County Conservation District, was obtained through LANDCARE, and titled "Restoring America's Wetlands". The exhibit was available for approximately 987,000 people to view during the fair. According to Gary Bishop, District Conservationist, Tulsa Field Office, staffing the exhibit was one of the biggest challenges. With support from NRCS and Conservation Districts employees, supported by Earth Team Volunteers from across the state, we were able to successfully staff the exhibit throughout the fair, reported Bishop. Information and resource materials were provided to the youth and adults at the NRCS / Tulsa County Conservation District Exhibit; located at the Tulsa State Fair. Information on programs and services was also given to the public at the event which was held from September 25 - October 5, 2008. This year's exhibit theme was "Restoring America's Wetlands". The educational booth was available for approximately 987,000 fair attendees to view. NRCS advertisements were submitted to the Native American Times and Oklahoma Eagle for publication during the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter.



Earth Team volunteer, Donna Grant, helps kids, at one of the 2008 Tulsa area Neighbor Fest events, create their own "dirt babies". The dirt baby activity teaches kids the importance of soils in a plant's life and illustrates the four things plants need to live—soil, water, air and sunlight. In 7-10 days, their dirt baby will sprout grass hair.

Three news articles were developed and submitted for area media publication. During August, other outreach activities included participation in Tulsa Neighbor Fest at Veterans Park (reaching approximately 350 people) and a Volunteer Recruiting Fair at Bishop Kelley High School (reaching approximately 850 high school students and 5 teachers). Six minority Earth Team Volunteers were recruited at the Tulsa Field Office during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

- **Vinita Field Office** - On October 7, 2008 an all day program for area 5<sup>th</sup> graders was held at the Craig County fairgrounds. Over 280 local students from the Vinita, Ketchum, White Oak, Bluejacket and Welch public schools and the Cowboy Junction Christian School were invited to participate. The Craig County Conservation District and the Vinita NRCS sponsored the event. Opening the day was a presentation by the Vinita Police Department's officer Jarod Langley and Doc, the police dog. Doc demonstrated his many skills including drug detection and taking down a suspect



A varied group of community planners and policy makers toured the Kadashan Bottoms Watershed Site to learn about the role of NRCS and Conservation Districts in establishing and maintaining flood control structures.

using his stainless steel capped teeth! There were 8 stations for the kids to visit, these were plants, soils, water quality, Native American culture, insects, forestry, wildlife and electricity by GRDA. A grilled hotdog lunch was prepared by the Craig County Conservation District directors and the field office staff. The food was provided by the conservation district and several area businesses. There were water quality comic books and NRCS children's books given to each 5<sup>th</sup> grader. Many letters of appreciation



have been received from the grateful students.

- **Wagoner Field Office** - A group of approximately 32, including 5 legislators were welcomed to The Golf Club of Oklahoma on August 14, 2008 for an evening of food and a tour of the damaged watershed site (Kadashan Bottoms Watershed, Site #2) located on the golf course. This event was held to let everyone see the damage caused by the flooding on April 10, 2008 to Kadashan Bottoms Watershed Site #2, located on the golf course. Golf carts were provided by the club to allow everyone to travel to the watershed and actually view the site. Sponsors were the Wagoner and Tulsa County Conservation Districts and the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts. Robert Toole, Director of Conservation Programs, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, and Chris Stoner, State Conservation Engineer, NRCS, presented information and a slide show showing the damages caused by the heavy rainfalls. Senators Mary Easley, Bill Brown, Earl Garrison; Representatives John Wright and Ben Sherrer and Wagoner County Commissioner, Jim Hargrove were applauded for the support of the Watershed Program for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the Conservation Districts of Oklahoma.. The Golf Club of Oklahoma was recognized for the working relationship they have with the Districts and NRCS. They have been great partners through all the problems created by the flooding. Personnel of The Golf Club of Oklahoma were individually recognized
- **Other Zone Activities** - On August 12, 2008, Matt Ward, Program Liaison, and Gilbert Guerrero, ASTC (FO), Zone 2, attended an outreach event at the Four Mile Branch Missionary Church, at Ft. Gibson, in Muskogee County. Also in attendance from the USDA was Verna Frakes, Rural Development in Muskogee; Jody Harris, Rural Development in Stillwater; and Latonya Gardner, Farm Loan in Tahlequah. The area in which the meeting was held is largely comprised of Native American and black producers who grow a multitude of vegetable crops and beef cattle in both Muskogee and Cherokee Counties. Matt discussed the availability of technical assistance to agricultural producers for the building of ponds, cross fencing, pest management and brush control on their property. Also discussed and illustrated with handouts were the different conservation programs the NRCS offers for cost share assistance with Matt answering questions from the attendees. Gilbert discussed employment opportunities and internship programs offered to students in the area. He also discussed NRCS outreach activities and methods. Rural Development and Farm Loan employees from Muskogee and Cherokee counties discussed FSA assistance and services. They distributed outreach materials to inform producers how they can be better assisted with their loan and business needs. Approximately 37 producers were at the meeting to listen and ask questions about their property.

## Training

- 5 Zone II employees attended the Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery training held in Oklahoma City October 21-23. In attendance were Erik Daniels (Jay Field Office), Kenneth Hitch (Pryor Field Office), Dennis Ware (Tahlequah Field Office), Andy Inman ( Stillwell Field Office, and Chris Lester (Muskogee Field Office).

### **Upcoming Events**

- Stilwell Field Office – An outreach meeting is planned, for possible new cooperators, on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **ZONE 3**

#### **BRANDY PIETZ-JONES**

Civil Rights reviews have been conducted in the Purcell, Sayre, Norman FO's and now Walter's FO for 2008. Teresa Stewart, ASTC for FO Operations, Shelley Hungerford, Office Assistant, and Brandy Pietz-Jones, Zone 3 Civil Rights Representative conducted the reviews. Interviews were given to NRCS employees, Conservation District Board Members, and local producers covering Civil Rights Issues.

Teresa Stewart, ASTC for FO Operations, spoke at the fifth annual statewide Women in Agriculture & Small Business conference at the Moore Norman Technology Center in Oklahoma City. Nearly 200 registered participants attended the two-day conference in September. She talked about NRCS Programs.

Many Field Offices attended their local county fairs. Washita County CD and Cordell FO provided information on watersheds at the Washita County Free Fair. The information was displayed from Aug. 27 to Aug. 30, 2008. An NRCS/FSA booth was set up at the Cleveland County Fair by the Purcell Service Center that provided materials about programs available through both agencies. The Jefferson County CD won a first place ribbon for their display at the Jefferson County Fair.

The Mangum FO, Cheyenne FO, and Norman FO held Locally Led Meetings to present updates on the new farm bill, producers were helpful in providing local resource information to be utilized in conservation programs for 2009. The resource concerns of attendees are being incorporated into some preliminary EQIP ranking changes for the upcoming funding cycle.

The Choctaw Nation held their annual Labor Day Festival August 29 through September 1 at Tuskahoma, Oklahoma which is the Choctaw Nation capitol. Carol Crouch, District Conservationist from Purcell and the NRCS National Special Emphasis Program Manager for American Indian Alaska Native and Ann Colyer, Tribal Resource Conservationist, for the Choctaw Nation worked the NRCS booth on Friday and Saturday during the festival. The tribal member attendance for Friday and Saturday was approximately 42,000, with a total attendance for the four-day event being approximately 65,000 Choctaw tribal members and their families. NRCS services, programs and employment opportunities were discussed with festival attendees who included tribal members and high school and college students. The highlight at the booth was the Choctaw Nation artist, LaDon Smith, winning artist for the 2007 NRCS American Indian Heritage poster who autographed posters for the festival attendees. NRCS handed out 500 of the 2007 NRCS American Indian Heritage posters.

**ZONE 4**

**BY THOMAS JAMES**

FISH POND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

A Fish Pond Management Workshop was held Friday Sept. 26, 2008 at the Mekusukey Mission Grounds, North Community Center starting at 9:00 A.M. Guest speakers included Mickey Douglas, SNEPO Water Quality Program, Travis Hanks, OSU Extension,(Weed Control and Algae), Chad Goodson, Oklahoma State Trapper (Beaver Damage Control), Thomas James District Conservationist , NRCS, Brent Pannell, Programs Liaison Zone 4 and Kenneth Williams Langston University, Fish Farm Management/ Field Demonstration.

This workshop was sponsored by the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Environmental Protection Office. A Catfish Fry with all the trimmings was provided for all workshop attendees. Thomas James and Travis Hanks cooked up 54 pounds of Catfish, and there was not much left. About 6 pounds is all. I believe Pooh took about 10 pounds home with him.