

OACD STATE MEETING

NO. 87

Norman, OK

February, 23, 24, 25

SOIL EROSION: A NATIONAL MENACE

H.H. BENNETT
BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY AND SOILS
1928

GROUND GAINED, GROUND LOST

FROM 1935 TO 2025; HOW FAR HAVE WE COME IN 90 YEARS

REGISTRATION





OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

January 3, 2025

Dear Conservation District Directors, Employees, and Partners,

As 2024 closes and we look ahead to 2025, OACD is entering its 87th year in operation. Without your continued commitment to this organization and natural resource conservation all the *Ground Gained* would not have been possible. The board of directors, staff, and myself are honored to host the 87th annual meeting again this February at our NEW location in Norman, OK.

To create a meaningful and rewarding experience this state meeting was planned taking into consideration YOUR requests for training, networking, and bringing in expert perspectives on regenerative agriculture. The theme for the 2025 OACD annual meeting, *Ground Gained; Ground Lost*, highlights all the progress we as partners, stakeholders, and land stewards have made over the past 87 years. However, there is more work to be done preserving our natural resources. We hope you'll join in this mission and plan to attend the OACD Annual Meeting where we will learn about building community, professional development for employees, program opportunities for districts, and implementing tangible regenerative practices from farmers and ranchers.

In the spirit of community and gathering with our conservation family there will be ample networking opportunities for you to engage with local, state, and national leaders in conservation as well as peer-to-peer knowledge exchanging.

We warmly invite you to join us on February 23rd, 24th, and 25th 2025. The meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites located at 2501 Conference Drive, Norman, OK.

Thank you,
Joe Caughlin, OACD President

AGENDA TOPICS AND GUESTS FOR THE MEETING INCLUDE:

- Jason Brown, retired NFL Center, founder & farmer of First Fruits Farm, "*From Gridiron to Green Fields: Cultivating Conservation and Community*"; Instagram @wisefarmerbrown
- Christine Martin, holistic management trainer and regenerative ranching consultant of "The Regen Ranching Consulting"
- Nic Vos, NW OK regenerative farmer, Vos Farms
- Casey Merrifield, Ph.D, cofounder of ConneXtion Worldwide, Leadership Coach & Consultant

LOCATION: Embassy Suites Norman | 2501 Conference Drive Norman, OK 73069 | ph: 405-364-8040

**Send completed form and payment to:
OACD PO Box 2775 Oklahoma City, OK 73101**

Questions: Jean Lam at jeanlam@okconservation.org or ph: 405.207.7260

***New* Register Online: okconservation.org/statemeeting25**



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting





Registrant Name: _____ District/Title: _____

Name to appear on name badge: _____

Personal Email Address: _____ (not the district email address)

Cell Phone Number: _____

Spouse Name (if attending): _____

Packages (please circle):	Early Bird (Feb.3rd)	Regular	Onsite
Registration (no meals)	\$240	\$260	\$280
 Registration Package Includes Monday lunch & banquet Tuesday lunch	\$301	\$317	\$343
 Single Day Registration Includes lunch Choose Monday ____ or Tuesday ____	\$156	\$161	\$177
 Spouse Registration Package Include Auxiliary meeting & meals	\$229	\$234	\$244
 Ala Carte Meals Monday Lunch Monday Banquet Dinner Tuesday Lunch Legislative Sponsorship	\$45 \$70 \$45 \$75	Total: _____ Check#: _____	No refunds for meals or registration will be made after Feb. 14, 2025. All credit/debit cards will be charged a 5.4% processing fee. credit cards call Jean Lam: 405-207-7260

Send completed form and payment to:

OACD PO Box 2775 Oklahoma City, OK 73101

Questions: Jean Lam at jeanlam@okconservation.org or ph: 405.207.7260

New Register Online: okconservation.org/statemeeting25



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

DATES

Sunday February 23th, Monday February 24th, and Tuesday February 25th

LOCATION

Embassy Suites Norman, 2501 Conference Drive, Norman, OK 73069

HOTEL INFORMATION

The hotel attached to the conference center is the Embassy Suites Norman. The room rate ranges from \$110- \$140/night and includes breakfast and evening reception each night. Parking is free. The cut-off date for the group rate is Sunday **February 2th**. If you make reservations after this date, they may charge you a higher rate. **The group code is:9IU**

To make a reservation at the Embassy Suites Norman please call 1-800-EMBASSY. Our group name is "Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts" The group code is: 9IU. You may book online at the link below:

[87th Annual OACD State Meeting](#)

If you are booking rooms for multiple people, and would like to utilize a Purchase Order, please contact Pam by email the information detailing the entire list of rooms, names of guests, and dates of their stay to Pam Gentry at pam.gentry@atriumhospitality.com. Please include the purchase order and tax exemption so that it can be set up in the system.

Do not include NRCS staff on your reservation list. NRCS must follow their own guidelines for booking a hotel room and registering for the meeting.

The first overflow hotel option is Hampton Inn and Suites located at 2300 Conference Dr, Norman, OK 73069. The phone number is 405-310-3014. The room rate is \$107/per night. The cut off date for this room block is Feb. 2. Link to Booking is Provided below.

[Hampton Inn and Suites Norman Conference Center](#)

MEETING REGISTRATION

Everyone must pay a registration fee. Please use the attached form and mail payment to OACD. There is a 5.4% credit card processing fee for any credit cards or debit cards.
No refunds will be made after Feb. 14, 2025. After Feb. 16th, please register online or in person. If your registration is postmarked after 2/16 it may not be received in time.
Register Online at: okconservation.org/statemeeting25

YOUTH CONTEST

The speech contest is Sunday February 23th at 1:30 p.m. Contestants must check in by 1:15 p.m. The youth awards program will begin at 4:00 p.m. Districts are responsible for notifying their youth contestants and picking up their awards.



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION & BANQUET

OACD will mail invitations to all state legislators for the legislative reception and banquet on Monday February 24th. If you are a tribal conservation district, please invite your council members or send their addresses to OACD for us to mail an invitation. It is also very important that districts personally invite your legislators to attend. Please let Trey Lam & Sarah Blaney know that you have invited your legislators and their response by Feb. 20th. If your district is financially able, please consider underwriting the cost of your legislator to attend. The cost is \$75/per legislator. If you are unsure of who your legislator is, please visit okconservation.org and click on the resources tab.

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES BREAKFAST

The breakfast will be held on Monday February 24th at 7:00 a.m. For those staying at the conference hotel, breakfast is included. For those not staying at hotel, breakfast may be purchased.

OACD Auxiliary Program

The Auxiliary board meeting will be held on Monday afternoon.

The Auction

OACDE, OACD, and the OACD Auxiliary are hosting a live and silent auction. The silent auction will be on Sunday February 23th and Monday February 24th. The live auction will be during the legislative banquet on Monday February 24th. Bring your items to the registration table at the meeting or contact Jean Lam at jeanlam@okconservation.org or at 405.207.7260

Agenda

Included in the packet is a general agenda. A complete agenda will be sent out January 17th and be added to the website. Please note some guests are invited and have not yet committed to attend.



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

Sunday February 23, 2025

1:00 p.m. - Registration Opens for Attendees & Vendors

1:00 p.m. - OK Conservation Historical Society Annual Meeting

1:00 p.m. - OACDE Executive Board Meeting

1:00 p.m. - OACDE & OACD State Speech Contest Sign In Opens

1:30 p.m. - OACDE & OACD State Speech Contest Begins

2:00 p.m. - OACD Resolutions Committee, Chair Joe Caughlin

3:00 p.m. - OACD Nominations Meeting, Chair Scotty Herriman

3:30 p.m. - Orientation for First Time Attendees **NEW SESSION** Area District Coordinators, Come connect with other attendees and learn about upcoming presentations, content, and events that will take place over the next 2 days to strategically plan which sessions to attend and best advise board members and colleagues. Session is not limited to just first-time attendees - everyone is welcome!

4:00 p.m. - Youth Awards & Auxiliary Scholarship Program, Ed Casey, Presiding
Winners of the poster, essay, and speech youth contests will be announced. The Auxiliary will present their scholarship award to one high school senior

5:30 p.m. - Care Champion and Leadership Class, Networking Session, Invite Only

7:00 p.m. - OACDE Games for Guns

Purchase tickets and play a variety of games to win guns and gun related items. All proceeds benefit the Employees Association



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

Monday February 24, 2025

7:00 a.m. - Registration Opens

7:00 a.m. - OACDE Breakfast and Program, *Belinda Dimitratos, OACDE President, Presiding*

9:00 a.m. - Opening Session, *Joe Caughlin, OACD President, Presiding*

Keynote: "From Gridiron to Green Fields: Cultivating Conservation and Community,"
Jason Brown, retired NFL Center, founder & farmer of First Fruits Farm

11:00 a.m. - Welcome & Agenda Overview, *Sarah Blaney, Executive Director, OACD & Trey Lam OCC Executive Director*

11:15 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions

1. Watershed Dam Operation & Maintenance

Tammy Sawatzky, Director, Conservation Programs

2. Field Office Safety and Navigating Conflict

USDA - FPAC Homeland Security Division, hear from NRCS on best practices for deescalating tense cooperator interactions and next steps for ensuring office safety (Repeated in afternoon)

3. District Funds are Public Funds and Other Legal Nuggets You Need to Know

OCC District Services, Janet Stewart, General Counsel, and Stephanie Acquario, Counsel
As stewards of public money, learn from and engage with OCC Legal Counsel about rules, laws, and how to navigate various District scenarios regarding fiscal responsibility

4. Farm Bill Update & Engaging with your elected officials, *TBD*

5. Peer to Peer Office Efficiency *OACDE & Conservation District Staff*



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

Monday February 24, 2025

(continued)

11:45 a.m. - Networking Break

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday

12:00 p.m. - Partnership Awards Luncheon, Joe Caughlin, OACD President, Presiding

Legislative Remarks

NRCS Partnership Awards; Director & Employee Service Awards

1:30 p.m. - Networking Break *Pre-function Area*

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday

1:45 p.m. - OACD Auxiliary Board Meeting

1:45 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

- 1. Leadership Styles & Identifying Your Voice** *Casey Merrifield, Ph. D, cofounder of ConneXtion Worldwide, Leadership Coach & Consultant;* gain insight on creating a culture where everyone thrives and the people at all levels feel heard and valued. Implement the skills learned in your district, office, boardroom, or personal life
- 2. Claims and Forms,** *OCC District Services,* Forms, forms, forms; OCC District Services will lead an interactive discussion providing tangible takeaways & insight on submission standards to expedite and ensure everything gets paid on your claim
- 3. Field Office Safety and Navigating Conflict** *USDA-FPAC Homeland Security Division,* hear from NRCS on best practices for deescalating tense cooperator interactions and next steps for ensuring office safety
- 4. Yard x Yard: Get Involved!** *Marcus Long, Urban Agriculture Specialist, OCC, The Yard by Yard Community Resiliency Project* bridge conservation knowledge and practices from Conservation Districts to a new audience: urban homeowners. Discover the benefits of the Yard by Yard project, explore how it can become a valuable resource for your community, and connect with new audiences to promote conservation practices in urban landscapes
- 5. Cost Share Program PY 27 Launch/Drought Update,**
Tammy Sawatzky, Director, Conservation Programs, OCC



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

Monday February 24, 2025
(continued)

2:45 p.m. - Networking Break *Pre-function Area*

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday

3:00 p.m. - NRCS Business Meeting

This meeting is for NRCS employees

3:00 p.m. - OACDE Business Meeting

This meeting is for district employees and OCC employees

3:00 p.m. - OACD Business Meeting

This meeting is for district directors

6:00 p.m. - Legislative Reception *pre-function Area*

7:00 p.m. - Legislative Banquet & Awards

*Announcement of OACD Board
Legislator of the Year
Employee of the Year
The Elmer Maddux Award for Advocacy
Conservation Hall of Fame Awards
The Leopold Conservation Award*



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

Tuesday February 25, 2025

7:00 a.m. - Registration Opens

7:00 a.m. - OACD Past Presidents Breakfast

This is an informal event for former state association presidents

8:30 a.m. - Plenary Session

Welcome and Overview - *Greg Kloxin, Director, OCC Soil Health Team*

Keynote: *Nic Vos, Vos Farms LLC, OK/KS regenerative farmer. "Handling soil health in the Panhandles"*
Originally from South Africa, Vos has been implementing regenerative principles since 2010 in the arid high plains region of NW Oklahoma & Kansas focused on building soil carbon, capturing precious rainfall, incorporating livestock with row cropping all while prioritizing profits over yield

9:30 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions

1. Catalyzing Human Potential in Conservation: Aligning Values, Behaviors, and Outcomes

Christine Martin, The ReGen Ranch & Holistic Management International trainer, Explore the often-overlooked human side of conservation and land stewardship. Participants will delve into how values, behaviors, and mindsets influence decision-making and outcomes. Learn practical techniques to foster effective communication, navigate change, and align actions with desired outcome of creating lasting conservation success

2. Okies for Monarchs

Amanda Fitzgerald, Youth Contest Coordinator, OACD, Learn about Oklahoma's vital role in the monarch butterfly migration and its importance for pollinators like monarchs. Amanda will address challenges such as habitat loss and pesticide use, emphasizing the need for collaboration between conservationists and farmers to protect these critical habitats

3. Land Management and Wetlands Division Update

Trampas Tripp, Director, Land Management Division, & Jeff Tibbits, OCC, division updates on operations, program expansion, and future district opportunities for staffing and programs. Unpaved Roads Program, the Terry Peach North Canadian Cedar Eradication Project, new for 2025 programs

10:30 a.m. - Networking Break *Pre-function Area*

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

Tuesday February 25, 2025

10:45 a.m. - Concurrent Session

- 1. Urban Ag Panel**, *Panelist & Moderator ; TBD*
- 2. OACD District Employee Stakeholder Session**, *Closed Session*
Moderator: TBD
- 3. Assessing the Assessment**, *Jared Conner, US Regenerative Cotton Fund, Soil Health Institute, TBD*
Representative Noble Reach Institute, Moderated: OCC Soil Health Team, What's in a soil health assessment? Data interpretation and how you can use it on your operation for today and tomorrow

11:45 a.m. - Networking Break *Pre-function Area*

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday

12:00 p.m. - Lunch - Financial Considerations of Transitioning to Regenerative Agriculture

Christine Martin, The Regen Ranch & Holistic Management International trainer, Will explore the financial weak link point where money is best invested for maximum impact—and discuss the 7 decision-testing questions to evaluate financial choices effectively. This thought-provoking discussion will equip attendees with practical tools to evaluate their financial decisions and ensure their transition not only aligns with their goals but also strengthens their bottom line

1:15 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

- 1. Project WILD Training (1st Hour)** *OCC Blue Thumb Staff, Looking for new ideas to add to your outreach? Join Blue Thumb to explore hands-on activities designed to inspire curiosity and a love for the nature, as well strategies for applying high-quality environmental education in your conservation district programming. Participants will leave with a toolkit of adaptable lessons and ideas, including Project WILD's award-winning Aquatic WILD curriculum, that encourage children and the public to conserve water, wildlife, and the wonders of nature*
- 2. The Future of Farming: Young Farmer & Rancher panel**, *Panelists and Moderator TBD,*
Young conservationist and regenerative farmers share their successes, challenges, and operational goals for the future. Come learn, share, and laugh with these panelists
- 3. District Director Responsibilities**, *OCC District Services,*
What it means to be a district director, from engaging in district operation to supervising employees, understanding fiscal responsibilities, to identifying and recruiting new directors, the roles of a district director are varied



OACD'S 87th Annual State Meeting

2:15 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

1. Project WILD Training (2nd Hour) *OCC Blue Thumb Staff,*

2. Introduction to Noble Grazing Essentials, *Noble Research Institute Facilitators,* introduction to Noble's 3-day, hands-on, in-person course that teaches how to assess forage production, determine carrying capacity, and develop a grazing plan. *Participants will be entered to win a discounted tuition for future courses

3. Backyard Poultry Basics and Implications for Soil Health, *Josh Campbell, Assistant Extension Program Specialist,* A general overview of backyard/small flock poultry best practices for Oklahoma and discuss the implications for soil health and small-scale animal integration into management.