

Water Quality Update

Newsletter of the OSU Extension Water Quality Programs

Volume 6(2) April, 1997



We're wired?!

Did you know we that we are now online?
Check out our homepage at:



<http://www.agen.okstate.edu/waterquality/>

For details on:

- ◆ Current events
- ◆ Water Quality Projects
- ◆ Who to call for help
- ◆ Fact sheets
- ◆ Helpful links
- ◆ Much more!

Southern Region Water Quality Conference...A Success!

The OSU Water Quality Programs Office had the honor of hosting this year's annual Southern Region Water Quality Conference. And like proud parents, we are happy to say that the conference was a great success!

Professionals from across the Southern Region and beyond gathered in Tulsa on April 5 - 8 to learn about successful water and environmental programs and get a taste of Oklahoma.

We welcomed over two-hundred and thirty professionals (specialists, agents, directors, and Washington administrators) for the main workshop held on April 7th and 8th at the Tulsa Marriott.

Representation was wonderful, with all the Southern Region present: LA, FL, TX, AR, OK, AL, NC, SC, GA, MS, KY, TN, and Puerto Rico. We even attracted ten states from outside the region and a U.S. territory from beyond the continent, Guam! [continued on pg. 2]

New Secretary of Environment Announced

Brian Griffin, an Oklahoma City attorney, was recently named Secretary of Environment, replacing Gary Sherrer, who stepped down March 31.

Sherrer left to become chief administrative officer at KAMO Power Company, headquartered in Vinita.

Griffin, while not from a scientific background, brings to

this post knowledge of oil and gas and real estate and experience working with the U.S. EPA.

Griffin is also a former Rhodes scholar and holds both British and American law degrees.

His first assignment from Governor Keating is to chair a task force to study the corporate hog industry.◆

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Conference... from page 1

The conference agenda was diverse and extensive. Topics covered the gamut from animal waste management to youth education. There was plenty to do, with five concurrent sessions, averaging four speakers per session, over two days!

Highlights of the conference included an issues wall, table-topic discussions, and the award of ten \$500 mini grants provided by the Farm Foundation.

Congratulations are extended to the winners, which included the following Oklahoma Cooperative Extension employees. Great job!



- **Alan Van Deventer**, Oklahoma County.
- **Dixie Ferrell**, Roger Mills County
- **Joe Bullard**, LeFlore County.
- **Becky Rhea**, LeFlore County.

Preceding the formal conference were workshops and tours. About 80 people participated in the Saturday workshops: Water Quality Monitoring, Managing Controversial Issues, Vermicomposting, and On-site Wastewater Treatment.

One hundred and thirty-two people participated in the three tours on Sunday, which included a Natural Resources Tour (Tallgrass Prairie), the Illinois River TMDL Tour, and the Tulsa Household Hazardous Waste/Recycling Tour.

All tours converged upon Woolaroc, where we not only saw woods, lakes, and rocks, but also shrunken heads (quite a hit), a huge gun collection, portraits of famous Native American chiefs, and many other wonderful treasures.

To cap it all off and round out our Oklahoma adventure, we feasted on barbecue and were serenaded by the sweet song of a cowboy (courtesy of cowboy musicologist Guy Logsdon).

Thanks go to all of you who attended and helped make this a memorable and productive event. We'd also like to thank our sponsors, USDA-CSREES, Southern Regional Development Center, and the Farm Foundation.

New Grants Available for Leak Detection

The Statewide Rural Energy and Water Conservation Program has announced the availability of grants to fund leak detection efforts for water districts and other water service providers that serve small communities.

The Program, funded by oil overcharge money, previously offered only interest free loans of up to \$30,000. With the addition of money from the Bureau of Reclamation, the program is now able to provide grants of up to \$5,000 per participant.

Millions of gallons of treated water can be lost through leaks and malfunctioning meters; therefore, leak detection can translate into large savings for communities. According to Terry Sparks, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board Hydrologist who oversees the program, "Some systems may lose up to 30% of their treated water to leakage."

Seven water suppliers have participated to date, with positive results. A northeast Oklahoma water system reporting losses of 10 to 31 percent, realized \$2,600 in energy savings and \$2,300 in water loss savings following the audit. Another water system, reporting up to 50% loss, was able to save the district \$89,942 a year!

Small water system managers should contact the Oklahoma Rural Water Association of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board at (405) 530-8800 for more information.♦

- Adapted from *Oklahoma Water News*, March-April, 1997

Resource Spotlight

Title: A Geography of Hope:
(*America's Private Land*)

Author: USDA, NRCS

Length: 80 pages

Published: December, 1996

This glossy, brochure, according to the introduction, is "a call to action to renew (NRCS') commitment to America's private land and private landowners."

Chapter headings include: "Thinking about Land and People," "The State of the Land," "Working with Land and People," and "A Vision for the Next Century." The State of the Land chapter is particularly well illustrated and contains over 20 full-color maps.

To check this book out from our resource collection, please contact us at (405) 844-5653.♦

Clinton administration launches new conservation buffer initiative

On April 21, 1997 Agriculture secretary Dan Glickman announced that the USDA is committed to helping landowners install 2 million miles of conservation buffers by the year 2002. This is the goal of a new public-private partnership called the National Conservation Buffer Initiative.

The National Conservation Buffer Initiative is a multi-year effort led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in cooperation with other USDA agencies--including the Farm Service Agency, Cooperative Extension Service, and Forest Service--state conservation agencies, conservation districts, agribusinesses, and agricultural and environmental organizations.

Six national agricultural corporations have pledged nearly \$1 million over the next three years to complement USDA's efforts to promote conservation buffers. The National Corn Grower's Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, and other groups are working with the corporations – Cargill, ConAgra, Farmland Industries, Monsanto, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, and Terra Industries – to help educate, encourage, and enable producers to install buffers.

The conservation programs in the 1996 Farm Bill make conservation buffers timely. The continuous sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is an opportunity to use buffers to protect the most fragile areas of a farm. Producers do not have to have to make an all or nothing choice about bringing land out of CRP – they can crop the best and leave the rest in buffer strips. If the whole field is not accepted by CRP, they may consider establishing buffers and enrolling them into the CRP through the continuous sign-up program. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program; Wetlands Reserve Program; and Environmental Quality.

"This initiative is an effort to use grasses and trees to protect and enhance all the resources of the farm. It's an attempt to help producers not only maintain their best land in crop production but also to make good use of marginal land," said Glickman. "Conservation buffers can be key to maintaining a healthy, productive farm."♦

- USDA news release

USDA news releases and media advisories are available on the USDA homepage under "News" at: <http://www.usda.gov>

Environmental Scholarship Awarded

Congratulations are in order for Joe Bullard, OCES Water Quality Agent in LeFlore County. Joe recently received a scholarship which funds a team trip to the Environmental Stewardship Conference at the National 4-H Center.

The award was given to 10 teams of one adult and two youth each. Joe and his contingent will be in Washington from May 3-9, 1997.

☆ Way to go, Joe! ☆

Farewell

We'd like to bid a very fond farewell to Ms. Hannah Barbara Fulton, who after 4 years in the water quality office, is moving on to become Senior Office Assistant at KOSU [public radio]!

For those of you who may only know Hannah Barbara as the name listed in the box below, let me just say that she has been our organizer, cheerleader, and sounding board at the water quality office.

We're not quite sure what we'll do without you HB, but we wish you the best of luck!



If you need a copy of any articles, contact Hannah Barbara Fulton at (405) 744-5653

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