

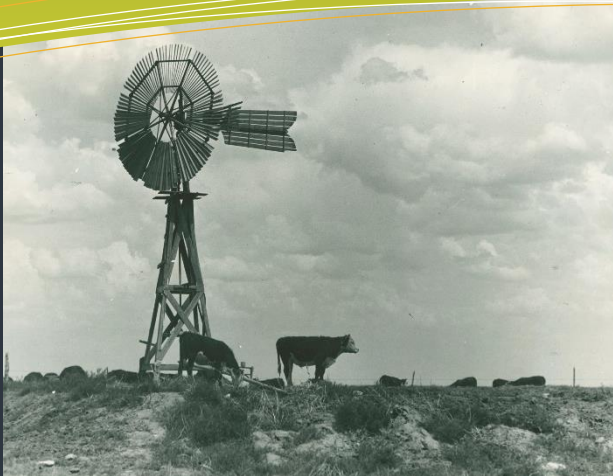


This month's Staff Corner-all good things must come to an end-Clay Pope says goodbye.

Well, the time has come to say goodbye.

For nearly 10 years I have had the privilege of working with the USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub. This last month marked the end to the last agreement between NRCS and ARS to sponsor the outreach work I have been involved in since the Hub's inception in 2014. It's been one heck of a run and I have enjoyed immensely the opportunity to work with the great folks

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In this issue

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A new fiscal year brings new projects and changes for the Southern Plains Climate Hub

September 30 marks the end of the annual budget cycle (fiscal year) for us in the Federal Government. It's a time to look ahead and develop plans that build on last fiscal year's successes. At the Southern Plains Climate Hub, we are gearing up for a very busy 2023/24 cycle. The Hub is growing and expanding its ability to serve its partners and customer base.

A cohort of three Climate Hub Fellows will be fully on board later this year, each of whom will be housed on the campus of regional university partners in Manhattan, KS (KSU), Stillwater, Oklahoma (OSU), and Kingsville, Texas (TAMUK). The fellows will be working on projects involving livestock grazing and greenhouse gas exchange, and modeling climate vulnerabilities of Southern Great Plains agriculture.

A large new program during the upcoming fiscal year will involve an exciting partnership with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas to support conservation activities associated with the Inflation Reduction Act. We are gearing up for this large effort and, are planning to recruit two Climate Mitigation experts to work on this project.

Our cooperation with sister USDA agencies will expand to the Farm Services Agency this fiscal year. Several Climate Hubs, the Southern Plains Hub included, will work together to develop a tool that will help FSA staff with emergency haying and grazing decisions on Conservation Reserve Program lands.

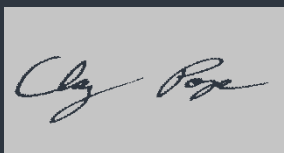
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Staff Corner Continued-

throughout the USDA family in their ongoing effort to help farmers, ranchers and rural communities deal with the challenges created by our changing climate. But like Led Zeppelin said it's time to ramble on.

Starting in mid-October I will be doing partnership outreach and policy development for the Nature Conservancy of Oklahoma. Even though I won't be around the Hub anymore, I'm excited to see the direction the remaining team (the members of which I have introduced to you in this column) takes the Hub in the future. I look forward to working with them and many of you (albeit from a different direction) to help continue the work of better preparing production agriculture for all the curve balls mother nature will throw its way as our climate changes.

Thanks for everything and I will see you down the road!



During the 2022/23 funding cycle, our Hub was able to offer a very successful rainwater harvest program to a number of tribal partners in the region thanks to a key partnership with Texas USDA NRCS. Jacob Shaffer, on detail from the Texas NRCS Weatherford Office, did wonderful work in partnership with the Tribes and colleagues at the BIA. Unfortunately, Mr. Shaffer's detail ends on September 30. We will miss Jacob greatly, and are ever so indebted to him for his tireless work and can-do attitude.

After almost 10 years with the Southern Plains Climate Hub, Clay Pope will be leaving us to join The Nature Conservancy. Clay's name has been a synonym of the Climate Hub in Oklahoma and beyond. Clay's blogs, podcast and presence at events throughout the region were instrumental in helping the Hub (single-handedly at times) advance its climate literacy mission. We wish Clay the best of successes and look forward to collaborating with him down the road in his new role with TNC!

Beginning in October 2023, you will see changes in the format and frequency of our 'Climate Connection' newsletter. We will strive to continue to keep our readers informed about the Climate Hub's activities and provide updates on the most recent climate adaptation science and tools for agriculture in the Southern Plains. Please stay tuned!

As always, we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out any time via email (andres.cibils@usda.gov or susan.eisenhour@usda.gov) or phone (405) 434-0942 (Andres Cibils) or (405) 205-0152 (Susan Eisenhour).

Rainwater Harvesting Workshop with Tribal Partners in Oklahoma

The Otoe-Missouria Tribe, located just south of Ponca City, Oklahoma was the site of a water harvesting workshop hosted by the USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub in September.

The workshop was conducted as part of the ongoing Otoe-Missouria Green Team Meeting series. Each quarter, the tribe hosts an event that covers a range of topics from recycling, soil erosion, and water testing to climate change adaptation strategies and alternative water sources.

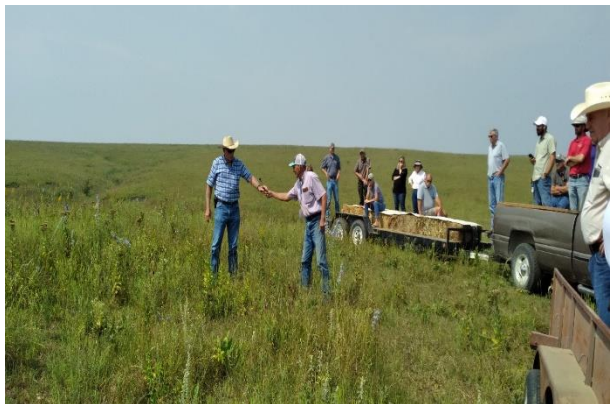
The focus of this event was water harvesting in an urban setting. Jacob Shaffer, Texas NRCS Detailee with Southern Plains Climate Hub, provided a demonstration of the use of a 55-gallon blue barrel as a simple system for homeowners. After the presentation, two of these rain barrels were raffled off.

The event was largely in response to a rainwater presentation made by Jacob Shaffer at an earlier tribal drought meeting co-hosted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Southern Plains Climate Hub in Bixby Oklahoma.

"We were very impressed with Jacob's presentation on water harvesting at the Bixby meeting and wanted this information presented to our members" said Bobbie Dove, Environmental Technician with the Otoe-Missouria Tribe.

Climate Hub Hits the Road

On Sept. 6 and 7, the Hub collaborated with Dr. Carol Baldwin and Lori Bammerlin (Kansas State University and the Great Plains Fire Science Exchange) to help sponsor this year's **Patch Burn Grazing Working Group Meeting** in Auburn, Kansas. Scientists, ranchers, land managers, and graduate students provided updates on ongoing research and management followed by a tour of the Tallgrass Bison Ranch led by Mr. Wayne Copp (picture below). The SPCH was able to provide a brief overview of its mission and work in the region.



On September 19 and 20, the Hub and its **Drought Early Warning System (DEWS)** partners held a meeting in College Station, Texas. This annual meeting provides an opportunity to network and strengthen partnerships with climate service providers in the region. Colleagues from the National Oceanic Administration (NOAA), the South-Central Climate Adaptation Center (SC CASC), the State Climatologist Offices, the USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub (SPCH), and a number of other university

partners provided updates on ongoing projects and discussed future initiatives aimed at drought and water use planning, and utilizing weather information in decision making. Susan Eisenhour and Andres Cibils represented the SPCH and provided an update on the Hub's ongoing and new programs.

On Sept. 26, the Hub co-hosted a **Virtual Fencing Field Day** at the New Mexico State University Clayton Livestock Research Center, in partnership with Oklahoma State University, New Mexico State University, and the Sustainable Southwest Beef CAP. Ranchers, researchers, industry representatives, and USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, among others were able to share expertise and learn about two virtual fencing systems available on the market. Presentations and demonstrations included software configuration, use considerations, and collar fitting on animals. Approximately 50 attendees turned out including ranchers from Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, and Colorado and had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with each other over lunch and coffee breaks.



UPCOMING EVENTS

No-till on the Plains Feikert Farms Field Day October, 10 2023 Bucklin, Kansas



**Mark Lohrding—3 Bar
Ranch Protection, Kansas**



**Lance Feikert, Whirlwind Farms-
Bucklin, Kansas**



Jorge Garibay—NAPA Bees



**Candy Thomas, NRCS Soil
Health Specialist**

No-till on the Plains will be hosting a field day in Southwest Kansas. The day includes learning opportunities, networking, and hands on demonstrations of the benefits of soil health practices. Presenters include Lance Feikert, Mark Lohrding, Jorge Garibay, and Candy Thomas, USDA/NRCS Soil Health Spe-

Thank you to our sponsors!



**RSVP by October 2,
2024 to guarantee a
meal.**

- **Lance Feikert—
Producer, Bucklin,
KS—Multi species
grazing, Honey Bees,
and Direct Marketing**
- **Mark Lohrding—
Rancher, Protection,
KS—Grazing Consid-
erations**
- **Jorge Garibay—North
American Pollinator
Alliance—How Polli-
nators Benefit Soils
Health—Honey Ex-
traction and Hive In-
troduction**
- **Candy Thomas—
Rainfall Simulator,
Aggregate Stability,
Water and Nutrient
Efficiency.**

**For more information
and to register contact:**

**Aaron Sawyers
director@notill.org
785-210-4549**

UPCOMING EVENTS



Urgency and Resilience *Cultivate a Thriving Future*

Kansas Rural Center Food and Farm Conference: Urgency and Resilience: Cultivate a Thriving Future

November 10 – November 11

Join Kansas Rural Center this November 10th and 11th in Topeka, KS, for our Annual Food and Farm Conference. This year's theme is "Urgency and Resilience: Cultivating a Thriving Future."

Hotel Topeka at City Center

1717 SW Topeka Blvd

Topeka, Kansas

For more information contact: info@kansasruralcenter.org or call (866) 579-5469

FIELD DAY OCTOBER 17, 2023

868 Road 290
Americus, KS
Registration
8:30am

Lunch will be served!

*View all WRAPS
projects listed.*

- Tri paddock feeding site with a central water system
- Solar & mobile watering systems
- Zuni Bowl - Pasture Erosion
- New tree planting along Allen Creek
- Rain fall simulator with Candy Thomas, NRCS



**Please RSVP by
October 16th.**

"Hayrack Ride" style wagon will be available to travel to each location around the property.

Bring your own chairs!

Jeff Davidson, Roger Wells Randall Karr and Adam Bauer will lead the discussions at each stop.

Contact

Derek.Haines@kaws.org
Watershed Coordinator
785-219-1855

Keila.Sherman@kaws.org
Watershed Outreach Specialist
620-750-0309

You can find John Redmond WRAPS on Facebook!

"This project/event has been funded in part through the Section 319 of the Clean Water Act."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Climate Adaptation for Land Trusts – Short Course

(Oct. 25, Nov. 1 and Nov. 15 |2-3:30 p.m. Eastern)

Virtual-participants can register here:

https://landtrustalliance.org/resources/learn/explore/climate-adaptation-for-land-trusts-short-course-SC_CALT_23

This online course is designed for land trusts actively working on stewardship projects in forests, suburban and urban forests, forested watersheds and wetland systems. It will be held over four weeks requiring 4.5 hours of virtual live classes, a self-guided field session and assignments. Instructors will provide guidance, weekly check-ins and coaching.

Course Goals (Oct. 25, Nov. 1 and Nov. 15 |2-3:30 p.m. Eastern)

Identify locally important climate change impacts and vulnerabilities.

Understand a step-by-step process for considering climate change and carbon in land stewardship and management.

Develop management actions to help your project or natural area adapt to changing conditions.

Communicate with stakeholders and rights holders about climate impacts and adaptation responses.

Self-guided field session (Nov. 8)

Participants will be asked to visit a property or natural area of their choosing and think about real-world applications of the course material.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

OKA' CON

2023

UNITING FOR WATER:

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO
INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NOVEMBER
8TH - 9TH



Mark your calendars for this year's water sustainability conference, OKA' CON! Registration and agenda will be available soon, but participants can expect more of last year's successful format with a focus on Integrated Water Resource Management. Oka' is thrilled to announce an upcoming collaboration with Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and East Central University. We will be hosting the 4th Annual International Short Course on Integrated Water Resource Management and Food Security alongside OKA' CON, a development that will significantly enhance our partnership efforts.

Sponsorship opportunities are currently available, please contact our office.

Oklahoma Assn. of Conservation Districts Area meetings

OACD Area IV meeting: Thursday, November 2, 2023

Lawton Farmers Market, 77 SW 4th Street

Lawton, OK.

OACD Area I meeting: Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Woodward Conference Center, 3401 Centennial Lane

Woodward, OK.

OACD Area II meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2023

Oklahoma Assn of Electric Cooperatives, 2325 E I-44 Service Road

Oklahoma City, OK.

OACD Area III meeting: Tuesday, November 14, 2023

OSU Institute of Technology, 1801 E. 4th Street

Okmulgee, OK.

OACD Area V meeting: Thursday, November 16, 2023

Okfuskee County Extension Center, 1201 E. Columbia St.

Okemah, OK.

All meetings run from 9am to 3pm. Please contact Sarah Blaney at sarahblaney@okconservation.org or 517-763-8609 with any area meeting questions.