



Healthy Land  
Clean Water  
For Life

## Oklahoma Chapter

### Officers

Jason Warren, President  
Ryan Jones, President Elect  
Larry Wright, Treasurer  
Daniel Moriasi, Past President  
*Council Representatives*  
Jean Steiner  
Clark Williams  
Stacy Riley  
Joe Freeland  
Shelly Oliphant  
Joshua Ketch  
John Mustain, Secretary  
Stacy Hansen  
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### Links:

The international web site.  
[www.swcs.org](http://www.swcs.org)  
The Oklahoma web site.  
[www.okswcs.org](http://www.okswcs.org)  
Become a fan on Facebook.  
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### Committee Chairpersons:

Program, Ryan Jones  
Membership, Stacy Hansen  
Awards, Daniel Moriasi  
Scholarship, Clark Williams  
Budget, Daniel Moriasi  
Audit, Sherwood McIntyre  
Nominating/Elections, Jean Steiner  
Fund Raising, Melanie Oliver  
Website, Joe Freeland  
Newsletter, Larry Wright

**Vision:** A multidisciplinary Society that advocates the protection, enhancement, and wise use of soil, water and related natural resources in Oklahoma and beyond.

**Mission:** To promote through education and example, an ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and the environment.

### Welcome New Members:

## Officer and Council Seats Election are Underway

Online balloting and vote compilation is underway and many of the chapter members received an email to participate. Some members may have been contacted by postal mail if they have not supplied a working email address. Additional information may be obtained by contacting [jean.steiner@cox.net](mailto:jean.steiner@cox.net).

## National Land and Range Judging Contest

April 30 to May 2, Oklahoma City area.



Thomas James and Melanie Oliver had a busy morning selling t-shirts and caps at the National Land and Range Judging Contest in Oklahoma City. This is the 62nd Annual Contest and runs through May 2nd. Contestants come from all over the United States for a full day of practice prior to the full day of completion and then enjoy the awards banquet where winners are announced and a video is shown of the activities.

## Great Plains Trail Bird Hike

A bird hike is scheduled to take place at Red Rock Canyon State Park on Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup>

Melinda Hickman, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Sue Hokason, Quart Mountain Nature Center will lead the bird hike through the beautiful canyon and also will speak to interested parties about the Great Plains Trail, chimney swift kiosk and the Caddo Canyon Loop. Contact Jennifer at Red Rock Canyon State Park 405-542-6344 for additional details.

## Chapter Leader Training Webinars [Click here to watch](#)

## Grazinglands Research Laboratory Field Day 2013

Friday, May 10, 2013 From 9 am to 3:30pm  
Tours, Research Information to include: Remote Sensing, Canola, Red Cedar, Grass Cultivars, Rotational Grazing, Conservation Practices and No-Till, Exhibits and Free lunch!

## Oklahoma Chapter Annual Conference June 13—14

The annual conference for the Oklahoma Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society will be held at Roman Nose State Park Lodge near Watonga, Ok on June 13-14, 2013. See attachment for more details and registration.

## National SWCS Award Winners Announced

Oklahoma Chapter of SWCS President, Jason Warren is pleased to announce and personally congratulate the winners of National SWCS Awards and representing the Oklahoma Chapter. Sumit Sharma is the recipient of the Melville H. Cohee Leader Conservation Scholarship, Jean Steiner will receive the Fellow Award, Stacy Hansen is a Honor Award Winner, and the Noble Foundation will receive the Merit Award.

"Many thanks for all that these folks have done for the Society and all the members who participate in our activities," reported President Warren. The awards will be presented during a luncheon at the National SWCS Annual Conference in Reno, Nevada, July 21-24, 2013.



**RESILIENT LANDSCAPES**  
Planning for Flood, Drought & Fire  
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### Gary O'Neill Named Oklahoma NRCS State Conservationist

Gary O'Neill has been named as the new state conservationist for Oklahoma for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, effective April 21, 2013. Jason Weller, acting NRCS chief, made the announcement on April 11. O'Neill replaces Ron Hilliard who retired in January.

"Gary O'Neill is a long time NRCS employee with a distinguished career," Weller said. "He has served this agency well in various positions in four states over the past 30 years. Most notably, in addition to being assistant state conservationist in Oklahoma, he is also serving at the national level as the agency representative for the USDA Field to Market, Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture." He added that, "O'Neill also served at the headquarters level as acting national RC&D (Resource Conservation & Development) Program manager in 2009 and 2010. He also served as acting state conservationist in Michigan in late 2011 and early 2012.

O'Neill was raised on a dairy and small grains farm in Osage County and in Ponca City. He graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in Agricultural Economics. He began his career with NRCS in 1983 in Oklahoma as a watershed planner. Seven years later, he moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he served as State Economist on the Ecological Sciences staff. He was promoted to management analyst on the Strategic Planning and Oversight and Evaluation staff in the NRCS Midwest Regional Office in Madison, Wisconsin. After eight years in that position he returned to Oklahoma and has served as RC&D Program manager, state administrative officer, and currently assistant state conservationist for Operations.

O'Neill said, "I look forward to helping Oklahoma NRCS continue to be viewed as conservation leaders and working closely with the partnerships that make this happen. NRCS has a critical mission in delivering conservation to Oklahoma farmers and ranchers. Oklahoma has a rich conservation legacy that is the result of the efforts of dedicated employees, strong partnerships, and innovative leadership." He also said, "Having been raised on a farm in Oklahoma, I have a great deal of passion for assisting agricultural producers address their conservation and natural resource issues in a way that can be economically viable. The Farm Bill programs that NRCS administers have proven to be a great vehicle for making this happen."

### Stacy Riley Named Assistant State Conservationist for Northwest Oklahoma

Stacy Riley has been named as an Assistant State Conservationist with assigned duties covering the northwest part of Oklahoma. Stacy has been serving as District Conservationist in Jackson County.

### Oklahoma Leads Nation Again in Water Quality

Oklahoma ranked number one among all states in controlling harmful nutrients in water for the second year in a row according to recently-released EPA numbers; Fourth year in a row for state to be in the top ten.

A recent comparison of EPA priority nonpoint source pollutant reduction numbers from across the nation shows that Oklahoma again ranks as the number one state when it comes to reducing harmful nutrients from our streams and rivers. This is the second year in a row that Oklahoma has ranked number one among states in reported nonpoint source nutrient reductions and the fourth year for the state to be in the top ten.

State Sec. of Agriculture Jim Reese, several legislators, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and two farm organizations held a news conference at the state Capitol on April 2, 2013, to announce the news.

"For the second year in a row, we have reduced nutrients to streams using our EPA Nonpoint Source Program more than any other state," Sec. Reese said. "Oklahoma is the leader in the United States of America in removing nitrogen and phosphorous from our waterways. "

"This continued improvement in addressing water quality is a testimony to the success of the dedicated work done by farmers, ranchers and other landowners in partnership with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, local conservation districts and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to address this critical issue," according to Kim Farber, president of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD). "This success shows what can happen when we work together, respect individuals' private property rights and when the state and federal governments give landowners the financial and technical assistance they need to make changes. Locally-led, voluntary conservation works," Farber said.