

March 2015

Welcome to the OKRA online newsletter. Please feel free to share our newsletter with anyone who might enjoy reading it. To receive electronic notification of newsletter availability and general recycling announcements, sign-up for the OKRA list server on our website: www.recycleok.org

Pledge to Plant for Earth Day 2015

It's an old Native American tradition that when you take something from the Earth, you must put something back. It is in this same spirit that the Earth Day Network, Forest Nation, the Master Shift and the White Feather Foundation are hosting a Global Planting Event on Earth Day, April 22, 2015. Their goal is to have one billion seeds/trees planted as an offering for our all amazing planet gives to us.

The organizers of this event request that everyone plant something that is organic, perennial, and suitable to growing conditions in your geographic area. If the temperature is not conducive to planting on April 22, then start growing a plant indoors or commit to planting your tree once the outdoor temperature is warm enough.

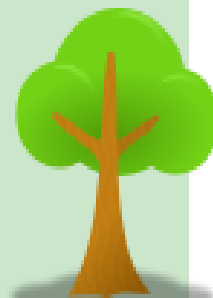
If you live in an apartment, consider planting something in a container or donating a tree to a local garden.

Be sure and properly nurture your planting, until it can sustain itself on its own. It is important for us to plant trees and keep a certain portion of the earth covered with forests, as they are essential for regulating the climate and providing habitat for a multitude of species.

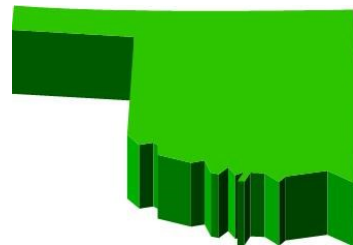
With 6 weeks left until Earth Day, the current number of trees pledged to be planted is just over 320,000. If you would like to add to this number and pledge to plant, go to <http://forestnation.com/earth-day-tree-planting/>.

Top Ten Reasons Why to Plant Trees

1. **Trees produce oxygen**
2. **Trees clean the soil**
3. **Trees control noise pollution**
4. **Trees slow storm water runoff**
5. **Trees are carbon sinks (lock away carbon dioxide as wood and not as an available greenhouse gas)**
6. **Trees clean the air**
7. **Trees shade and cool**
8. **Trees act as windbreaks**
9. **Trees fight soil pollution**
10. **Trees increase property values**



Keep an eye out for Oklahomans recycling. Catch them in the act and send us a photo and/or an article describing their recycling or composting efforts. We would love to highlight them in an upcoming issue of the OKRA News. Just send photos and articles or other information to OKRA Newsletter Editor, Trudi Logan, at trudi.logan@us.af.mil.



OKLAHOMANS WISE UP TO THE WASTE!

By Bryce C. Hulse

Oklahomans are burying themselves in trash, producing over 5 pounds of waste per person per day. We don't "reduce, reuse and recycle or the 3 Rs" enough. So we need to learn to Re-Think about what we do and buy.

One out of every ten dollars that consumers spend for most products, pays for the packaging (waste), and more than 90 percent of those materials ultimately end up on the roadside or in a landfill.

While recycling is only part of an answer to this problem, the most important goal is to increase the daily practice of the 3 Rs; that is, to prevent as much waste as possible! We need to eliminate the amount of materials that is thrown away. An increased focus on these daily habits is critically needed along with more participation in recycling, which currently has disappointing compliance: nationally only 32 percent of municipalities' solid waste is recycled and an even lower percentage here in our state is recovered. Of the remaining 68 percent, 54 percent is land filled and 14 percent is burned at combustion facilities.

Using a 3 R approach saves natural resources, creates jobs, cuts energy use and emissions. Thus, it cuts down on transportation costs and pollution, and results in fewer materials dumped in landfills and the roadside. The reuse and reduce practice also saves money for consumers, schools, businesses, and communities.

Each and every day, you can make a choice to **Use Less Stuff**, curbing the amount of waste and materials that you personally contribute to landfills. I hope you don't contribute to the litter problem we have as that costs us, MILLIONS!

How to make a difference

Reduce bag use at the checkout

counter: Bring your own canvas shopping bags, reuse bags from previous shopping trips, and decline a bag if offered for a single or small item that you can carry easily or put in your pocket or purse.

Purchase items from the bulk food department at



Photo by Alex E. Proimos, Flickr/Earth 911



the grocery store: You may even go in with family and neighbors to make this cost effective! Wash and reuse the containers that the store provides, or bring your own if they allow.

Buy the largest packages of items that you use frequently (e.g., cat litter, laundry detergent, pet foods, shampoo): If the quantity is too much for you, divide the purchase with relatives, friends or neighbors, and you will both save money.

At restaurants, take only the number of items that you need: for example, one napkin, one sugar packet, one packet of ketchup. Take your own **to go** containers for leftovers and dessert, this will eliminate those wasteful poly-foam boxes!

Reduce the need to replace light bulbs often by switching to compact fluorescent bulbs: They can last about ten times longer than incandescent bulbs and use 75% less energy which saves money!

When choosing between two similar items, select the one that has the least unnecessary packaging: One dollar out of every ten is usually packaging or trash!

Reduce the number of printed newspapers and magazines: Read some or all of them online, get them at a library, or share a subscription with a relative or friend. Take old magazines to donate at the doctor or dentist office.

If you work for a private or public institution, introduce them to free information on how they can reduce waste and save money.

Help eliminate paper consumption at home and office to save money and resources: Use both sides of copy paper and stationary, make scratch pads from paper used on one side, make two-sided copies, and send email memos and letters whenever possible. Avoid printing out emails and web pages, but if you must, use the back side of used paper.

Reduce household paper use by switching from paper to cloth napkins, and from paper towels to sponges or old but usable small cloth towels: Cloth napkins and towels can be washed; sponges can be cleaned in the microwave or dishwasher.

Rent, borrow, or share infrequently used items: (e.g., party supplies, ladders, lawn and power tools,

WISE UP TO WASTE (Continued)

folding chairs) instead of buying them.

Ranch or farm landowners - consider a cooperative purchase of equipment: MIG welders, augers, log splitters, power washers and other equipment could be shared with a neighbor.

Buy used instead of new: Buying from secondhand stores offers several benefits: it reduces the use of virgin resources, saves the energy that would have been used to create a new product, saves money, and frequently sup-

Be creative and look for new ways to save!

port a cause, as secondhand facilities are often run by charities.

Reduce the amount of junk mail you receive at home and at the office: Contact *thedonot-mail.org* or *National Do Not Mail List* and other free services to have your name removed from mailing lists. You may have to do this several times as your name is in 3 credit agencies and who knows how many lists?

Call or write Phonebook Companies to have your name removed from their distribution lists.

New crew “mows” Hefner Canal

By: Debbie Ragan

There's a new crew in the Water Quality Division. They work for food 24/7 with no overtime pay, sick days or vacation leave. In September 2014, Oklahoma City's Water Quality staff began a pilot program with Langston University's Goat Research Extension to control vegetation in areas that are difficult to maintain. The program began at the Hefner Canal, where mowing is difficult and sometimes dangerous and destructive when using mechanical equipment. The human employees check on the goats daily, count them to make sure all are present, report problems, provide water and feed the guard dog.



cleared with chainsaws and various brush cutters. Several employees incurred injuries from slipping or twisting ankles and poison ivy growth.

Goat herds have several advantages over traditional mowing:

- Reduce employee injuries
- Eliminate fuel usage and emissions from heavy equipment
- Control growth over the entire slope of the canal
- Eliminate problem plants – poison ivy, brush, vines, small trees, even the Eastern Red Cedar – without chemicals
- Continuously consume and eventually kill the problem plants, allowing grass to grow and protect the slopes
- Prevent damage and erosion to the slopes. Goats' hooves are small and won't tear up the slope

Numerous other cities and organizations use goat herds for vegetation control, including Stillwater, OK, Portland, OR, Mellomar Golf Park in southern Maryland, and the National Parks Service.

The Hefner Canal Goats have become local celebrities. Check them out on Facebook: at Hefner Canal Goats.



Langston University provided 29 goats and a guard dog. Oklahoma City's Animal Welfare Division added 18 stray goats and a donkey, which are herding animals, to the Hefner Canal crew. Before the goat herd arrived, the Reservoirs and Canals human crews mowed the Hefner Canal slopes with extended boom mowers. Because of the depth along the shore, those mowers won't reach a significant portion of the slope. Instead, Johnson grass, trees and brush was



10th Annual Lake Overholser and Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge Clean-Up!

April 11th, 2015 is the 10th Annual Lake Overholser and Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge Clean-Up.

Last year our volunteers RECYCLED about 75 pounds of aluminum, 380 pounds of scrap metal, 24 tires, and over 2.95 TONS of glass/plastic/tin in addition to the 1160 pounds of trash we collected! Because this is such a big clean-up, lots of help is needed. Right now help is needed in getting raffle items or donations. It involves going to various

businesses, explain what the clean-up is, when it is, and asking them if they can help support this event by donating something for the raffle. (Clean-up organizers have a script to assist.) The goal is to try to have as many raffle items as there are volunteers. The volunteer who puts in the most hours toward the clean-up (both beforehand in soliciting raffle prizes and on the clean-up day) will win a Seagate 500GB Portable Drive!

The following volunteers are needed on clean-up day:

Team Leader. Volunteers are divided into teams. Team leaders show their team where their clean-up area is (clean-up organizers go over that ahead of time with the team leaders), ensure their team has adequate supplies (gloves, bags, water) and serve as the contact person in case of emergency (injury, insect sting, etc.). They also make sure volunteers put all trash, recyclables, and hazardous materials in the appropriate bags. Then the team leader makes sure the bags are gathered in one place for pick-up. For supplies, the team leader is in contact with a rover.

Rover. Four to five pick up truck (preferably heavy duty) drivers are needed to pick up trash/recyclables that have

been collected and deliver supplies such as bags, gloves, and cold beverages. Rovers are typically assigned to two or three teams. In addition to dropping off supplies to the teams, they load bags of trash/recyclables in their truck and transport them to roll-offs. They also carry useful items, such as a shovel and rope, in case they are needed.

ATV Drivers. About four ATV vehicles with trailers are needed to get into the areas where other vehicles can't and help remove heavy items found in there.

Kayak Team Leaders. These leaders need to be familiar with kayaks and kayak safety

in addition to the general clean-up safety info. About three "go-to" folks are needed that people can contact if they want to clean-up via kayak. Kayakers are needed in Stinchcomb, in Lake Overholser, along the North Canadian River on the east side of the jetty in Lake Overholser, and in the area south of the Overholser Dam.



Kayakers help with 2014 clean up



Some of the volunteers with trash collected during 2014 clean-up



Volunteers remove bars of Ivory soap that were found dumped near Lake Overholser during last year's clean up

Overholser Pavilion Staff. These volunteers arrive early to help set up the pavilion, sign in volunteers, and direct late-arriving volunteers to areas of need. They notify clean-up organizers of any media arrivals, sort/weigh recyclables, help prepare lunches, and pick up the donated lunch items. This is a good position for those who have trouble walking a lot or standing since it is mostly a sitting position.

Photographers: A couple of photographers are needed who take pictures of the various teams as they are working as well as group shots of the teams. These shots should also show interesting items that the teams find.

Post Clean-up Volunteers. The perfect job for those who want to help out but don't like to get up

Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge Clean-Up (continued)



2014 volunteers remove trash under turnpike

early. Post clean-up volunteers are needed to help sort recyclables, clean up the Pavilion, and load up supplies. They would need to arrive at 1:00 pm at the Overholser Pavilion.

On April 11th, volunteers will meet at 8:30 am at the Overholser Pavilion which is located around NW 14th and East Overholser Drive in Oklahoma City.

To register for the clean-up or to see more photos from last years event, please go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Lake-OverholserStinchcomb-Wildlife-Refuge/105680642809050>. To volunteer for a particular position (including providing a pick-up truck or ATV) please contact Clean-up Coordinator, Karen Miles, at FriendsOfLakeOverholser@cox.net or (405) 354-6232.

Free Community Event!

ecofest

Keeping Communities Green and Vibrant

Saturday, March 28

TCC Northeast Campus

(Apache & Harvard)

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Camel Rides
Cooking Presentations
Live Music
Free Trees
Children's Activities
Much More!

tulsacc.edu/ecofest

Presented by:



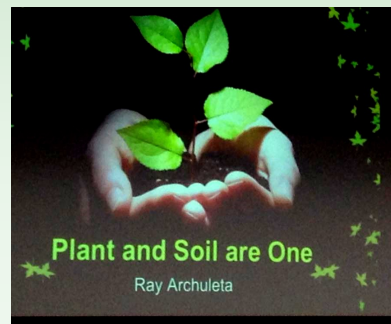
Organic OK Conference

By Lynn Malley

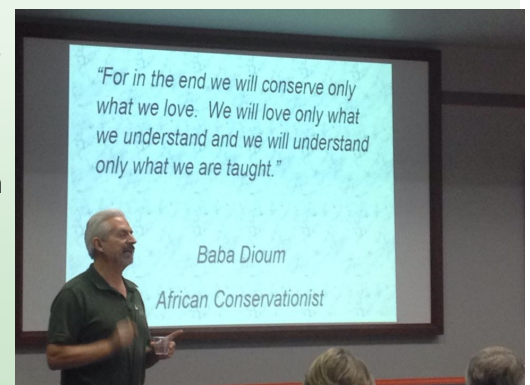
Organic Oklahoma Conference 2015 was a real hit! The threat of snow did not keep people away from the second Organic OK Conference held at OSU OKC on Friday, February 27th.

Over 90 people showed up to hear Ray Archuleta, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Scientist

from North Carolina, speak about the value of organic matter in the soil and ways to increase that organic content. Ray's demonstrations and the interactive nature of his presentation made the morning fly by.



Other sessions included Pest Management for Organic Producers and Programs Available through NRCS, among others. Although the second day of the conference had to be cancelled due to snow and ice, participants left talking about what an informative day it had been and how they were looking forward to future conferences.



Plenary speaker, Ray Archuleta

2015 Recycling Related Conferences

**OK SWANA 2015 Annual Conference
Excellence in Solid Waste Management
March 23-25, 2015, Catoosa, OK**

**National Sustainable Materials Management Summit
May 12-13, 2015, University of Maryland, MD**

**Colorado Association Summit for Recycling
June 7-9, 2015, Vail Marriott Mountain Resort & Spa, CO**

**Oklahoma Composting Conference
Late Summer, 2015, Date & Location T.B.D.**

**Oklahoma Municipal League Conference
September 22-24, 2015, Tulsa Convention Center, OK**

**Texas Compost Camp
September 22-24, 2015, Buda, TX**

**Resource Recycling Conference
September 28-30, 2015, Indianapolis, IN**

**Arkansas Recycling Coalition Conference & Trade Show
September 30-October 2, 2015, Little Rock, AR**

**Paper & Plastics Recycling Conference
October 14-16, 2015, Chicago, IL**

**Texas Recycling & Sustainability Summit
(No Summit in 2015)**

**Assn. for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Educ.
October 26-28, 2015, Minneapolis, MN**

**OK SWANA Manager of Landfill Operations Certification Training
November 4-7, 2015, Oklahoma City, OK**

2015 OKRA MEMBERS!

Platinum Corporate Member

Ardagh Glass

Gold Corporate Member

Republic Services

Silver Corporate Member

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Bronze Corporate Member

Waste Connections of Oklahoma, Inc.

Corporate Members

American Textile Recycling Services

Demand Products, Inc.

DocuGUARD Confidential Shredding & Recycling

Non-Profit/Government Partners

Ardmore Beautification Council, Inc.

Arkansas Recycling Coalition

City of Muskogee

City of OKC Office of Sustainability

City of Tulsa

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful

Oklahoma City Zoo & Botanical Garden

Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance

Otoe-Missouria Environmental Dept.

Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

Show, Inc.

Tulsa Master Recycler Association

Regular Members

Matt Albright

Diana Askins

Ellen Bussert

Wesley Dedmon

Nick Derossett

Matt Faulkner

Curtis Fitzpatrick

Keri Fothergill

Peter Grant

Ian Groshong

Ilda Hershey

Mike Hixon

Bryce Hulsey

Charlie Hutson

Sara Ivey

Daniel Jeffries

Trudi Logan

Lynn Malley

Jon Melson

Kathy Moore

Robert Pickens

Fenton Rood

Susie Shields

Garmon Smith

Darren Stefanek

Doug Weirick

Student Members

Tristan Campbell

Stephanie Huaman

Tyler Watkins

**There is still time to
renew your OKRA
membership in 2015!**

***Not a current member of OKRA?
Consider joining today! To learn
about membership levels and
member benefits, such as dis-
counts to OKRA events, download
our membership brochure from
www.recycleok.org.***

***To join or renew your member-
ship in 2015:***

- ♦ ***Send completed membership
brochure and check by mail to
OKRA, PO Box 521154, Tulsa,
OK 74152-1154.***
- ♦ ***Go to www.recycleok.org/join-us.php and access the online
membership form toward the
bottom of the page. You can
pay online via PayPal, by mail
(send your check to the PO
Box above), or by credit card
(follow the PayPal link and
select "Pay by Credit Card"
instead of PayPal).***



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