

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retired Employees

Minutes of Meeting

April 22, 2022

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retired Employees met at the Golden Corral Buffet at 520 South MacArthur Blvd. in Oklahoma City. Thirty-three people were in attendance. Many attendees arrived early for visiting before the meeting was called to order.

President Harry Fritzler called the meeting to order. President Fritzler welcomed everyone back to the retiree group after a two year absence. There were many new faces in attendance. Chris Shepherd provided the blessing for the meal and everyone enjoyed the buffet meal.

Following the meal, President Harry Fritzler again called the meeting to order. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and their spouse or guest and provide a brief summary of their career or other information they would like to share.

Randy Freeland passed around forms for retirees to provide their retirement activities (i.e. volunteer work, travel, part-time work, activities, etc.). The short form is for retirees previously in attendance and the long form to obtain more basic information on retirees who have not been in attendance. The forms could be left on their table or given to Randy at the end of the meeting. This information is used for the Oklahoma Retired SCS/NRCS Employees Association newsletter along with the minutes of the meeting. Many retirees have expressed their appreciation for the information presented on the website www.joepad.com. When they are not able to attend the meetings, the website provides pictures, list of attendees, etc. Joe Freeland, retired Construction Engineer, has been very gracious to keep the website updated after each meeting. Thank you Joe!

Randy Freeland also read comments he had received in response to the email announcing the April 22, 2022, meeting: Steve Mornhinweg, Ron Hilliard, Carolyn Webb, Andy Tucker, Gary O'Neill, and Fred Fortney.

President Fritzler read the list of retirees since October 2020. Those included: Dennis Fowler, Soil Conservation Technician, Chandler, 10/22/2021, 35 years service; Denise Turner, Grazing Land Specialist, Cherokee, 11/19/2021; Dan Smith, Resource Engineer, Perry TSO, 12/31/2021, 38 years service; and Jim Ellis, Soil Conservation Technician, Stillwater FO, 1/28/2022.

Even though no meetings were held in 2020 or 2021, Randy Freeland composed and sent out newsletters in April 2020, October 2020, April 2021 and October 2021. These newsletters included a list of retirees and a list of those we lost during the previous six months. Secretary/Treasurer Sandra Hough read the list of those who have passed since October 2021: Roland Willis, 89, State Conservationist, 11/15/2021, longest serving State Conservationist from December 21, 1975 until his retirement on August

28, 1987; Rick Schlegal, 55, Irrigation Engineer, Woodward TSO, 12/2/2021, retired August 2009; Bill McVickers, 81, Soil Conservation Technician, Guthrie & Kingfisher FO's, 12/8/2021; Tony Schreiner, 65, Soil Conservation Technician, Frederick FO, 12/9/2021, retired 3/30/2018 with 17 year's service; Lowell McMasters, 86, Resource Engineer, Pauls Valley & Duncan TSO, 12/16/2021, retired in 1991 with 43 year's service; Earnest (Ernie) Snook, 88, State Range Conservationist in Stillwater State Office, 1/16/2022, retired in 1987 with 31 year's service; Julia Bookout, 92, Personnel Management Specialist in Stillwater State Office, 1/18/2022, retired in mid '90's; and Marcella Wagner, 11/8/2021, widow of Billy Wagner, Soil Scientist, Stillwater State Office, who passed in 2010. A moment of silence was observed.

Sandra did not read the minutes of the October 2019 meeting due to the lapsed time and the minutes are included on the website. The treasurers' report showed a balance at the last meeting of \$524.26. Expenses for this meeting were \$75.00 leaving an ending balance of \$499.26. There were 85 notices mailed and three returned. Sandra also provided information on the bank account for the retiree group. The branch of IBC Bank where the account had been, closed in December 2021. After consulting the officers and Randy Freeland, a decision was made to just operate on a cash basis. A vote was conducted by the group and Sandra Hough will be the keeper of these funds for the foreseeable future.

Due to the two year absence of meetings, 2022 will be a start over for dues. The \$10 annual dues were collected from those in attendance. The dues are used to cover expenses of the meetings including cost of printing meeting notices, postage and name tags. The annual membership dues of \$50 in the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society is also paid from the dues collected. Retirees should email Randy Freeland randy.freeland@suddenlink.net to request an email meeting notice in lieu of a mailed meeting notice and to report a change in mailing address or email address.

Ben Pollard and Stan Rice serve on the nine-person board of the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society (OCHS). Both presented comments on the activities and importance of this group in preserving Oklahoma's history in conservation. Tom Lucas initiated the idea of preserving conservation history. This group has been operating as a non-profit organization for 5 years. Those in attendance were provided with a copy of the 2021 Highlights of OCHS. The purpose of this group is "to collect, preserve, and share Oklahoma's rich conservation history". As of 2021, the OSU Library has posted 35 of the oral histories on their website under the Oklahoma Conservation Heritage Oral History Collection. The oral histories can be accessed at: <https://library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/digital/>. There are an additional 12 oral histories currently in production for completion in 2022. Several conservationists who have provided oral histories are now deceased emphasizing the need to obtain as many as possible before it is too late. In partnership with the Oklahoma Historical Society, a conservation history photo collection has been established on the Gateway to Oklahoma History website that is managed by the Oklahoma Historical Society. The collection is made up of black and white conservation photos primarily from the 1930s through the 1960s. Photos are being provided by Conservation Districts and NRCS.

The photos are digitized and labeled and posted to the website. The original photos are permanently archived at the Oklahoma History Center. To date over 5,000 photos are in the collection. The photos may be accessed at:

<http://gateway.okhistory.org/explore/collections/OKCHS>. There are another 10,000 photos being processed with the goal of having 20,000 photos in the collection by 2023. In an effort to better promote Oklahoma's conservation history and serve the Society's membership, a website was established this year. The website can be accessed at: <https://www.oklahomaconservationhistory.org>.

Ben Pollard made available 2022 Membership forms for those interested in becoming members or renewing their memberships. Memberships for 2022 with the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society are being accepted in the following categories: General (\$25), Family (\$40), Organization (\$50), Sustaining (\$100), Corporate: Bronze-\$500 Silver-\$750 Gold-\$1000. Checks should be made payable to: OACD, P.O. Box 2775, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-2775. The SCS/NRCS Retiree group became members in October 2018. The group voted to renew their 2022 membership.

Officers for the Oklahoma SCS-NRCS Retired Employees serve a period of two years. Harry Fritzler, President; Steve Chessmore, Vice-President, and Sandra Hough, Secretary-Treasurer, were selected in April 2019. However, because of the pandemic, October 2019 was the only meeting held in which these officers served. The officers agreed to continue to serve, however, Steve Chessmore will serve as President, Harry Fritzler will serve as Vice-President and Sandra Hough will continue to serve as Secretary-Treasurer, until April 2023 when officers will be elected.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 28, 2022, at the Golden Corral on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. The Golden Corral opens at 10:30 AM so there is extra time for visiting before the meeting starts at 11:30 AM.

There was no other business to bring before the group and the meeting was adjourned.