

## Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees Newsletter

### April 2022

The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on April 22, 2022. Thirty-three people were in attendance. They were: **Don Bartolina, Laurie Bogle, Steve Chessmore, Ann Colyer, Larry Coppock, David and Dang Edmonds, Randy and Bonnie Freeland, Harry Fritzler, Chuck Grimes, Sandra and Terry Hough, David Hungerford, Larry and Brenda Jarrell, Bill Johnson, David McKay, George Moreland** and guest **Betty Gilbert, Kevin Norton, Phil Perryman, John Pewthers** and guest **Eyvonne Hart, Ben Pollard, Stan Rice, Dan Runnels, Chris Shepherd, Jim and Terry Smith, Ed and Lillie Stinchcomb, and Darol Wilson.**

President **Harry Fritzler** called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone back after a two-year absence due to the pandemic. **Chris Shepherd** provided a blessing, and everyone enjoyed the buffet meal.



Harry Fritzler

With rotator cuff surgery the day prior to the meeting, our tough as nails leader opted to "hurt" at the meeting the same as he could at home. **Harry** asked all in attendance to introduce themselves and their guests. As we went around the room several "short" stories were told to the delight of all. Editor's Note: As a group we could write a book but would probably have to categorize it as humorous, technical, and somewhat "fiction" (due to some of our memories). But I would believe it would be a Best Seller. Definitely written by a group who enjoyed their work and those they worked with.

We were thrilled to have several first time attendees and are hopeful that trend continues.



Ann Colyer



Larry Coppock



Darol Wilson



David McKay

**Randy Freeland** read comments he had received in response to the email announcing the April 22, 2022, meeting: **Steve Mornhinweg** said he was going to attend but his next door neighbor's funeral was the day of our meeting. **Fred Fortney** was unable to attend due to Gayle being admitted to the hospital for a blood infection. **Ron Hilliard** said he would attend but has other obligation. Thanks for keeping him on the list. **Carolyn Webb** said (note: this comes directly

from her email: I'm sorry **Bob** and I won't be able to attend. Sure will miss seeing everyone. I'm into my 9th week of recovering long haul Covid but I'm better. So here's your "Story". Posed nude for an art class today. They didn't ask me, think they were doing ceramics! **Andy Tucker** said he wouldn't be able to attend due to helping host the 2022 Lt. Governor's Invitational Turkey Hunt in Okemah. **Earl Weisner** indicated he was helping **Minnie McMasters** with some health issues and unable to attend. And **Gary O'Neill** said he wasn't able to attend due to doing a NHQ detail for another month or so. He noted that **Jamey Wood** is the Acting State Conservationist in Oklahoma.

Forms were passed around for retirees to provide their retirement activities (i.e. volunteer work, travel, part-time work, activities, etc.) This information is used for the National and Oklahoma Retired SCS/NRCS Employees Association newsletters. Here are a few received at this meeting:



Larry and Brenda Jarrell

**Larry Jarrell** volunteers for Church work, travels in their RV to several states, enjoying kids and grandkids. He and **Brenda** will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on July 21, 2022. **Jim Smith** continues to volunteer with the Sportsman's Country Club (15 years now). He has also served on the Hunt Club board of directors. He and **Terry** enjoy traveling. He also belongs to the Oklahoma City Gun Club and participates in rifle and pistol shooting matches. **Stan Rice** continues to provide consulting work for land application of municipal sludge. He has 9 grandkids with 2 in High School, 3 in College, and 1 in Law School. Fredia is dealing with some pretty tough health issues. Please continue prayers for her.

**David Edmonds** retired 13 years ago but joined us for the first time this year. He worked in Kingfisher, Holdenville, and retired as a Conservation Technician at the Technical Service Office (TSO) in McAlester. He said he had moved a couple of times since retiring and traveled to Viet Nam several times over the past years. **David McKay** retired in 2017 but also joined us for the first time. He worked in the Marlow and Davis Watershed Offices and as an Engineering Trainee, Ag Engineer, and Area Engineer at the Duncan Area Office. From 2001 to 2017 he served as the Resource Engineer at the Woodward TSO. He now spends his "spare" time farming in Kiowa County.

**Laurie Bogle**, first time attendee, retired in March 2021 as a Range Management Specialist in Cheyenne. Her career was all in Range Conservationist work in Alva, Pawhuska, Taloga, Beaver, then Cheyenne. She has a 20 year old daughter and spends her time gardening and traveling to National Parks!

Our President for the past two years, **Harry Fritzler**, passed on the following for those not able to attend our most recent meeting: I'm still enjoying my retirement. My wife still works. We travel some, although travel has been somewhat restricted because of the pandemic. I spend time on our acreage (small farm/ranch) continually trying to improve the place and tending to the cattle. I've stayed involved with the Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association and work with landowners on prescribed fire. I still try to set as many fires as I can get by with. Ha Ha! Anyway, I stay busy and out of trouble most of the time. I hope and pray that each of you are enjoying retirement to its fullest. It is a privilege to serve as your president. **Harry**



Kevin Norton, Ed Stinchcomb, and Ben Pollard

And last but not least, **Kevin Norton**. Where do you start? This guy has done it all. I asked him: Where you worked for SCS/NRCS and when: Range Conservationist in the following locations- Lawton Field Office 1981-82, Buffalo Field Office 1982-1984, Clinton Area Office 1984-1987, Woodward Area Office 1987-1991. Area Resource Conservationist, Woodward Area Office, 1991-1993. Resource Conservationist in Oklahoma State Office, 1993-1996. State Resource Conservationist (+1 yr.) and Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Oklahoma State Office, 1996 to 2007. State Conservationist Louisiana, 2007-2018. Acting Associate Chief, Associate Chief, Acting Chief and acting Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, 2018-2022.

When did you retire? May 3, 2021.

And what are you doing in retirement? I have spent the time since retirement catching up on work around the house. We have traveled to see our children and grandchildren in Oklahoma and Tennessee and **Cheri's** parents in Buffalo, OK. As of this writing, we have 9 grandchildren from 13 to 5 months. I am teaching my oldest grandson to shoot. He has completed hunter safety and we plan to begin hunting turkey, quail and maybe deer beginning this fall. I have two Brittany pups born in late December that I am hoping to train correctly for quail hunting. I also have a 20 ft Xpress fishing boat and plan to spend time with **Cheri** and the family fishing in Louisiana and Oklahoma. **Cheri** will conclude her teaching career in May. Things I would have not done pre-retirement was to spend 5 weeks babysitting our youngest (3-month-old) grandson while his parents returned to work and trained for the Memorial Marathon Relay which I ran a 5K leg with 2 sons, daughter-in-law and her sister on April 24th. Finally, I started a small consulting business in January doing farm policy and program consulting part-time with clients in Washington, DC and the lower Mississippi Valley.

As you can see I got a few very interesting "inputs" from our Retiree Membership. Thank you very much. Others please feel free to send me something similar and I promise to keep it until

the October 2022 Newsletter. Do it now before you forget! Send it to:  
randy.freeland@suddenlink.net

Many retirees have expressed their appreciation for the information presented on the website [www.joepad.com](http://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.

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 Schlegel**, 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.

There were 85 notices mailed about the meeting and only 3 returned. Several retirees have opted to receive only email notices. Retirees should email Randy Freeland [randy.freeland@suddenlink.net](mailto: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. Randy currently has 161 members on his SCS/NRCS Retirees email group.

**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.



Ed and Lillie Stinchcomb

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.