

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retired Employees

Minutes of Meeting

October 28, 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 Steve Chessmore called the meeting to order. President Chessmore welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were several new faces in attendance. Fred Fortney provided the blessing for the meal and everyone enjoyed the buffet meal.

Following the meal, President Chessmore again called the meeting to order. Ed Stinchcomb asked to conduct a drawing for 5 new SCS hats he recently found when moving to a different house. All retirees present were numbered and Ed drew the numbers. Winners of the hats were: Darol Wilson; Terrell Howard; Brent Reavis; George Moreland and Larry Caldwell.

Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Hough read the list of those retiring since April 2022: Rick Lane, Planning Engineer, State Office, Stillwater, 6/3/2022 42 years service; Gary O'Neill, State Conservationist, State Office, Stillwater, 9/1/2022, 39+ years service, 9+ years in Oklahoma; Robert Toole, Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program Director, former OCC & NRCS, 8/31/2022, 47 years service; Carl Woods, Soil Scientist, McAlester & Pauls Valley, 9/30/2022; Steve Barner, WRP Specialist, Stillwater SO, headquartered in McAlester, 9/23/2022; Betty Bone, Love County Conservation District, formerly SCS/District Secretary, 6/2022; Don Sternitzke, Water Management Specialist, 5/25/2022.

She also read the list of known retirees who have passed since April 2022: Pat Hodges, CET, Chickasha WS, 5/17/2022, 90 years old, retired mid 1980's; Bill Harney, SC, Perry, 6/21/2022, 83 years old, worked in Atoka, Cherokee, Enid, Alva, Perry, Medford, Newkirk & Tahlequah, retired in 2004 with 42 years service; Bob Sorrels, Design Engineer, Stillwater SO, died in July 2022, retired May 2001; Alvie Trissell, DC, Cherokee, 8/25/2022, 87 years old, 36 years service; Gayland Sandy, Watersheds, Perry, 8/25/2022, 85 years old, 30 years service; Bettie Todd, State Administrative Officer, Stillwater SO, 9/10/2022, 81 years old, retired in 1994 with 33 years service, worked for 6 federal agencies; Roy Cook, SCT, Buffalo, 9/20/22, 73 years old, retired 11/30/2019 with 12 years service.

She also read the minutes of the April 2022 meeting and provided the treasurer's report. Beginning balance was \$749.26, less the \$50 dues paid to the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society and the \$40 expenses for this meeting. The balance is \$659.26. There were 82 notices mailed and only one returned for incorrect address.

Randy Freeland had received information from several retirees who were not able to attend this meeting: Don Bartolina – His sister had recently passed. Stan & Fredia Rice – They were on a trip to Utah visiting National Parks. Winnie Jaques – Recently celebrated her 95th birthday. Otho Lamar – Recently spent two weeks in the hospital. Phil Perryman – Was taking his daughter for foot surgery. Carolyn Webb – Had kids visiting. Randy 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!

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. Those attending for the first time include: Terrell Howard who retired in 2019 from Arnett; Brent Reavis who retired from Holdenville in 2016; Dennis Fowler who retired from Chandler in 2021 and Kirk Schreiner who retired from Lawton in 2017.

Everyone was reminded the \$10 dues are annual dues whether paid in the spring or fall. 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 for 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 recently made a presentation to new NRCS employees. There were 70+ employees with 3 years or less service of the 240 employees in Oklahoma. He provided a 2-hour orientation on the history. Larry Caldwell provided information on the watershed program in the state.

Ben Pollard serves on the nine-person board of the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society (OCHS). There are three retired NRCS employees who are members of the nine-person board: Joe Freeland, Stan Rice, and Larry Caldwell. The oral histories which were gathered can be accessed at: <https://library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/digital/>. 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 1,200 photos have been digitized. 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. The website can be accessed at: <https://www.oklahomaconservationhistory.org>.

Ben Pollard made available 2023 Membership forms for those interested in becoming members or renewing their memberships. Memberships for 2023 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: OCHS, 3312 Cypress Mill Avenue, Stillwater, OK 74074. The SCS/NRCS Retiree group became members in October 2018 and renewed their membership at the April 2022 meeting.

An election of officers for the Oklahoma SCS-NRCS Retired Employees will be held in April 2023. Officers serve a period of two years and will assume their duties in October 2023. Kirk Schreiner has agreed to serve as President and Ed Stinchcomb has agreed to serve as Vice-President. Sandra Hough will continue to serve as Secretary-Treasurer unless someone would like to assume those duties. She has served in that capacity since 2008.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 28, 2023, 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.