

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees Newsletter

October 2023

The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on October 27, 2023. Twenty-six people were in attendance. They were: **Mike and Mary Barrick, Laurie Bogle, Don Bartolina, Larry Coppock, Wayne Fjeseth, Fred Fortney, Bonnie and Randy Freeland and guest Wilene Jones, Harry Fritzler, Sandra and Terry Hough, Chad Kacir, Nick Lambeth, Tim Miller and son David, Kevin Norton, John Pewthers and guest Eyvonne Hart, Brent Reavis, Dan Runnels, J. Kirk Schreiner, Jim Smith, Ed Stinchcomb, and Jamey Wood.**

President **Kirk Schreiner** called the meeting to order. President Schreiner welcomed everyone to the meeting. **John Pewthers** provided the blessing for the meal and everyone enjoyed the buffet meal.

Following the meal, President Schreiner again called the meeting to order. First time attendees were: **Chad Kacir** - Retired September 28, 2023, (only 27 days ago). He had served in Oklahoma as an Assistant State Conservationist (FO) for 8 years (2011-2019). Before that he served in Texas as a Soil Conservationist from 2002-2007, then as a District Conservationist in Hawaii from 2007-2011. He retired as the State Conservationist of Louisiana which he served since 2019. **Jamey Wood** – Retired May 31, 2023. He worked in Oklahoma in various positions across the state (1988-2019) before accepting a position as a member of the Policy and Program Analysis Division under the Management and Strategy Deputy Area in Washington, D.C. from which he retired. Those in attendance introduced themselves and their spouse/guest.



Bill Johnson, Ed Stinchcomb, and Chad Kacir



Sandra Hough, Dan Runnels, Jamey Wood, Jim Smith, and Nick Lambeth

Secretary-Treasurer **Sandra Hough** read the list of those retiring since April 2023: **Chris Stoner**, State Conservation Engineer, Stillwater SO, 5/30/2023, 36 years service, only the sixth engineer to serve as State Conservation Engineer (1987-2023); **Jamey Wood**, former ASTC Management & Strategy, 5/31/2023, 34 years service, went to Texas in 2019; **Steve Alsbaugh**, State Soil Scientist, Stillwater SO, 7/28/2023, 32+ years service; **Chad Kacir**, former ASTC (FO) 8 years in Oklahoma (2011-2019), 9/28/2023, 21 years service, State Conservationist of Louisiana at retirement.

Sandra also read the list of known retirees who have passed since April 2023: **Paul Hamilton**, 77, retired AC, McAlester, retired in 1995 with 25 years service, passed on 5/3/2023; **Victor Slowik**, 56, Resource & Design Engineer in Oklahoma, Supervisory Civil Engineer @ Soil Mechanics Lab in Fort Worth, TX since 2019, 32 years service, passed in service 5/5/2023; **Shawn Fleming**, 51, Resource Conservationist, Shawnee, passed in service 5/13/2023, almost 30 years service; **Steve Mornhinweg**, 73, retired DC, Ada, 30+ years service, passed 7/14/2023; **Glen Williams**, 92, retired Soil Scientist, Stillwater, passed 8/9/2023; **Norm Smola**, 85, retired State Forester, 33 years service, passed 8/11/2023; **Jim Stover**, 75, retired GIS Specialist, State Office, passed 9/4/2023; **Dellas Anderson**, 91, retired from Chickasha Watershed Planning Staff, 38 years service, passed 9/15/2023; **Loretta Burton**, 87, wife of **Dural Burton**, retired SCT at Chickasha, passed 9/14/2023; **Ed Abernathy**, 92, retired Soil Scientist, Poteau, retired in 1985 with 31 years service, passed away 9/19/2023; **Ronnie Warren**, 69, retired SCT, Altus, retired in 2016 with 40+ years service, 9/25/2023; **Bobby Birdwell**, 90, retired State Soil Scientist, Stillwater, retired in 1988 with 34 years service, 10/19/2023; **Nancy Ellis Wycoff**, 82, retired Area Clerk @ Claremore and former Secretary at Nowata FO, 20 years service, passed 7/13/2022.

Sandra presented the minutes of the April 2023 meeting and provided the treasurer's report. There were 72 notices mailed and one returned for incorrect address.

Randy Freeland asked the new retirees in attendance to complete an information sheet and other 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!

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. 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.

Harry Fritzler, board member, provided the group an update of the activities of the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society (OCHS) in its sixth year of operation. Fifty conservation oral histories have been completed and are available on the OSU Library's website. NRCS is providing funding for four additional oral histories. Work on these oral histories is underway. The four individuals are: **Rick Jeans, Greg Scott, Paula Templeton & Ed Mouss**. Work is nearing completion with the Oklahoma Historical Society on a conservation photo collection available to the public on the OHS Gateway to Oklahoma History website. There will be 12 to 15 thousand photos in the collection when completed. A grant has been secured from the Oklahoma Historical Society to create a traveling photo exhibit of Oklahoma's conservation history. There will be ten panels and will primarily use the conservation photos from the collection to tell the story. The exhibit will be completed the first of the year. It will be available to conservation districts to use for events or to set up in local museums. Oral histories which were gathered can be accessed at: <https://library.okstate.edu/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. The photos may be accessed at: <http://gateway.okhistory.org/explore/collections/OKCHS>. The website can be accessed at: <https://www.oklahomaconservationhistory.org>.



President Schreiner speaking to the group

President Schreiner challenged each retiree to contact one or more retirees before the next meeting and encourage them to attend our semi-annual meetings in April &/or October. There may be retirees who would like to attend but are not able to bring themselves. Offering to provide them transportation might further encourage their attendance.

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:

To put it mildly, **Wayne Fjeseth** is into “Libraries”. As a volunteer he has helped open 3 new libraries in Oklahoma City and 2 in Norman for the Pioneer Library System, a total of 70,000 books. He also assists them with native plant plantings and butterfly gardens. He fishes a lot in Minnesota as well as Oklahoma. **Jamey Wood** claims to be his wife’s pool boy. But he has also taken up basketball officiating. He said he likes to get hot, sweaty, and yelled at by parents. He continues to support the OSU Cowboys and plays a little golf and tennis since retirement. **Sandra and Terry Hough** celebrated 55 years of marriage in August. They 2 daughters and son-in-laws, 3 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. She volunteers at her church pantry once a week. **Tim Miller** continues to ranch and work in his church. **Larry Coppock** works 3 days a week as an ACES Employee and follows their adult children and grandchildren. **(Editor’s Note:** For those of us that have been retired for “quite” some time, ACES is as way to work part time for NRCS that doesn’t affect your annuity, **I think**). Lots of travel (including Hawaii) keep **Brent Reavis** and his wife busy along with spending time with their 7 grandchildren.



Tim Miller and Brent Reavis

And a couple sent information about their lives although they weren’t able to attend our meeting. **Ron Hilliard** wrote: Edith and I traveled to London on August 5 for a few days tour of the city. We then boarded the Island Princess for a 16 day cruise of Ireland, Iceland and Greenland returning on August 25. Weather was perfect for the cruise and we got to navigate the Arctic

Circle. The beauty of Iceland is something to see. We were really surprised that 95% of the water is drinkable from the lakes and rivers, with an almost unlimited supply. The harnessing of the geo thermal was very interesting too. The Haukadalur Geothermal Field is the largest Geothermal Plant that generates most the power and hot water needed by all residents of Iceland. We were also able to navigate the Prince Christian Sound in Greenland, to view magnificent Icebergs, Glaciers and beautiful waterfalls. Fantastic trip. We are preparing for our next trip/ cruise January 2-22, 2024, to Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia with an extended stay in Singapore.

Mark Mosely wrote: Can't believe the time that has passed by since we enjoyed Oklahoma and all the good folks there. I must confess that we have not totally retired, we just volunteer! I am on the local Soil conservation board and our church board and do like that as it keeps me in the loop of doing what I like to do. Except for those pesky watershed structures, we have to maintain! At least we can be selective about what we get involved with. Thanks for the kind words about Will. We are proud of him and his family. We do have a grandson that is 4 1/2 and we enjoy him when we can see him. Will has done well with his work and has coped with the big changes the Noble Research has implemented. **Chris** was in the Master Gardeners for a while and we still work with them from time to time giving programs. They are a good group to associate with. It does not take long to get a weather report down here....."extremely hot, dry, no end in sight"! We have had several years of this and getting a little tired of it to tell you the truth. It is nice to travel back to Oklahoma and see what green grass looks like! We are doing okay, some of our parts are out of warranty from time to time but we live in a great time medically speaking with all the new knowledge and medical technology. My Dr. tells me a lot of this is "age appropriate", I think she is trying to be diplomatic! Thanks again for writing, I communicate with **Harry Fritzler** from time to time and a couple of years back he and **Beverly** blessed us with a visit. Tell everyone we are doing fine and have always appreciated Oklahoma. It was one of the best experiences of our life.



Wilene Jones, Randy and Bonnie Freeland

As a special treat for us, **Wilene Jones** attended her first meeting with Randy and Bonnie Freeland. When the crowd was asked for a show of hands of how many either worked with or knew of **Mavis Jones**, at least 75% of those attending raised their hand. He was a great employee who left behind a beautiful wife.

Please feel free to send something similar to those above that can be used in the April 2024 Newsletter. Do it now before you forget! Send it to: randy.freeland@suddenlink.net

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 26, 2024, 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.