

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees Newsletter

April 2025

The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on April 24, 2025. Twenty-three people were in attendance (19 retirees and 4 guests/spouses). They were: **Don Bartolina, Laurie Bogle, Larry Caldwell, Larry Coppock, Wayne Fjeseth, Fred Fortney, Bonnie and Randy Freeland, Sandra and Terry Hough, Nick Lambeth, Mark Maples, Janell and Paul May, Kevin Norton, Phil Perryman, Greg Ritzman, Dan Runnels, Kirk Schreiner, Terry and Jim Smith, Ed Stinchcomb, and Jamey Wood.**

President **Ed Stinchcomb** called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. **Kevin Norton** provided the blessing for the meal.

Sandra Hough reported that she mailed 63 notices concerning today's meeting and four were returned. Randy indicated he now has 174 on his email group notifying members of upcoming meetings, etc.



Don Bartolina, Terry Hough, and Sandra Hough

Mark Maples was introduced as a first-time attendee. He retired as the District Conservationist in Okemah in 2019. He started his career in Okemah as a soil conservationist and ended his career in Okemah 37+ years later. His dad, **Robert Maples**, also had a 38-year career with SCS/NRCS retiring in 1988 as District Conservationist at Chandler. Mark volunteers on the Bearden School Board, Rural Water District Board, and a fire department for 27 years. **Paul May** and wife **Janell** were also in attendance. Paul had been to a meeting previously about 10 years ago with **Dale Bell**. They live in Durant where he retired as District Conservationist with 30 years service. He started his career in Cheyenne. Others in attendance introduced themselves and spouse or guest and talked about their experiences working with the service. Many stories were shared to the delight of those in attendance. **Nick Lambeth, Don Bartolina, Fred Fortney, and Sandra Hough**, were mentioned more than once, all positive.



Nick Lambeth and Terry Smith



Paul and Janell May

Secretary-Treasurer **Sandra Hough** read the list of those retiring since October 2024: **Saska Koch**, Area Administrative Coordinator, Clinton, retired 12/27/2024 with 20 yrs service; **Shelley Oliphant**, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Offices, West Zone, retired 12/28/2024 with 37 yrs service; **Delfino (Dino) Rodriquez**, Resource Conservationist, Boise City, retired 11/15/2024 with 14 yrs service; **Larry Hood**, Soil Conservationist, Purcell & El Reno Field Offices, retired April 2025 with 20+ yrs service; **Steve Glasgow**, State Resource Conservationist, Stillwater, retired April 2025 with 37 yrs service and **Connie Fitzpatrick**, Executive Assistant to the State Conservationist, Stillwater, retired April 2025.

Sandra also read the list of known retirees who have passed since October 2024: **Darwin Hedges**, 89, Range Conservationist in southern third of Oklahoma & served as State Range Conservationist in Arkansas, retired in 1986 with 31 yrs service, passed 7/13/2024; **Preston Green**, 86, Soil Conservation Technician, Wilburton, 35 yrs service, passed 9/30/2024; **Jerry Pullen**, 90, Civil Engineering Technician in Watersheds, Davis, passed 11/14/2024; **Jimmy Hill**, 85, Deputy State Conservationist, Stillwater, 30+ yrs service, passed 12/6/2024; **Anthony Lawrence**, 64, Checotah, Soil Conservationist, retired in 2011 with 23 yrs service, passed 1/19/2025; **William Alvin Trissell**, 90, retired DC, Vinita, retired 3/2002, passed 1/21/2025; **Melvin Heath**, longtime Grady County CD Board Member, passed in February 2025; **Carolyn Cail**, wife of retiree **Charlie Cail**, passed 2/3/2025. A moment of silence was observed in their memory.

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.). This information is used for the Oklahoma Retired SCS/NRCS Employees Association Newsletter. 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, minutes, newsletters, etc. Thanks to **Joe Freeland** for keeping it current.

Larry Caldwell invited everyone to attend “A Celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Soil Conservation Service” on Monday, April 28, 2025, in El Reno at the Canadian County Expo Center from 1:00 am to 3:00 pm. RSVPs are very much appreciated. This special gathering will honor current employees of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as well as retirees from the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and NRCS. This event will celebrate the agency’s remarkable accomplishments over the past nine decades and highlight the continuing positive impact NRCS has on Oklahoma’s landscape and communities. This is the last of three events. Two events have already taken place: Sunday, April 14th at the Harn Homestead in

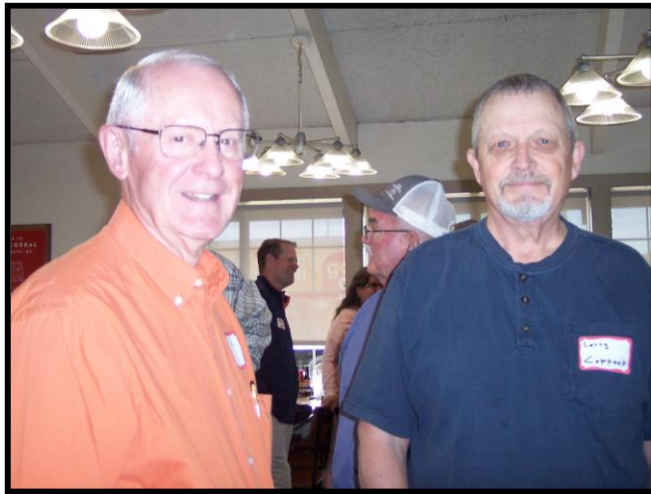
Oklahoma City celebrating “The 90th Anniversary of Black Sunday and Creation of the Soil Conservation Service” and Tuesday, April 22nd in Guymon “Remembering Black Sunday: 90 Years of Conservation in the Panhandle”. These were very well attended. Larry serves as Secretary-Treasurer of the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society. The nine-member board of directors headed by **Ben Pollard**, President, along with the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and many others inside and outside of this society planned three events in a two week period in April to celebrate Black Sunday (April 14, 1935) and the establishment of the Soil Conservation Service (April 27, 1935).



Kevin Norton, Wayne Fjeseth, Ed Stinchcomb, and Larry Caldwell

Randy Freeland shared with the group replies he received to the email announcing this meeting. One he received was from **Ben Pollard**, President of the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society (OCHS). He regretted missing our meeting but wanted to meet with his high school classmates on this date. Please remember the OCHS website. 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>.

News concerning some of our retirees: **Roland Willis** passed a few years ago but we have become aware that his property including home, mobile homes, equipment sheds, etc. were destroyed during the recent fires in Stillwater. Roland's wife **June** resides in Primrose Retirement Center in Stillwater but both daughters were living on the property in mobile homes, which were destroyed. **Steve Alspaugh** and wife **Joy** also lost their home in the Stillwater fires. Note: **Barbara** and **Les Conner** assisted the Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief with clean up in the Stillwater Area. They have done disaster relief work in several states over the last several years.



Randy Freeland and Larry Coppock



Phil Perryman and Dan Runnels

Odos & Diane Henson have moved to the Golden Oaks Retirement Center in Stillwater. Sandra Hough had been asked about **Baker Eeds** with whom most of those present had worked. Baker is a neighbor to Sandra. Baker will be 89 in August and he and his wife have slowed down and do not get out much. Old news (forgotten by the Editor last time) **Barbara** and **Les Conner** and **Bonnie** and **Randy Freeland** took a land/cruise tour of the Yukon and Alaska last summer.

Spouses of both **Earl Weisner** and **Duane Crider** have shared each are experiencing some health issues but love hearing from former co-workers and friends. Duane's address is: 4015 164th Street SW, Lynnwood, WA 98037 and Earl's is: 5885 S. 2nd St. Duncan, OK 73533.



Dan Runnels, Mark Maples, and Nick Lambeth

Here is a little more information about retirees that attended the meeting: **Dan Runnels** and **Sharon** just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They still manage their Taste of Heaven Farm but no longer have the registered Dexter Cattle but get to visit them down the road. (Thanks, Dan, for letting **Nicky J. Lambeth** give you directions to the meeting place each time). **Greg Ritzman** still serves as an ACES - CTR employee and Earth Team Volunteer at Vinita. He cuts firewood as a hobby and participates in activities with his local church. Works part time with Beacon Environmental Corp. Like several other retirees, **J. Kirk Schreiner** is a board

member on the Tillman County Conservation District Board. He ranches northeast of Frederick and raises cattle, wheat, and alfalfa. Also works part time as a real estate agent for Arrowhead Land Company.



Jim Smith, Kirk Schreiner, and Terry Smith

Lillie and Ed Stinchcomb are both retired and live in their hometown (Hollis, OK). They have their family farms and are active in their church, and serve on various boards and committees. Ed is on the Harmon County Conservation District Board. They have 11 grandkids from 3 kids and their spouses, so they stay very busy. Take this as a retirement profession, **Jamey Wood** referees High School basketball and volleyball. In his spare time he does whatever **Sabrina** tells him to do. **Wayne E. Fjeseth** has a special interest in libraries. He has helped establish new libraries in Cleveland County and surrounding areas. He has established gardens at 3 library sites and volunteers at Pioneer Library.



Jamey Wood, Laurie Bogle, and Greg Ritzman

Please feel free to send something similar to those above that can be used in the October 2025 Newsletter. Do it now before you forget! Send it to: randy.freeland@suddenlink.net

President Stinchcomb announced it is again time to elect officers for the next two years. Nominations were solicited from the group. Sandra Hough agreed to serve another two years, if no one wants to assume her position. No nominations were received. **Ed Stinchcomb** and **Kirk Schreiner** were asked if they would serve another two years. Both were in agreement. They were re-elected by acclamation.

The next meeting is scheduled for **THURSDAY, October 23, 2025**, at the Golden Corral on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. Be sure to put the date on your calendar. The Golden Corral opens at 10:30 AM so there is extra time for visiting before the meeting starts at 11:30 AM.



Phil Perryman and Fred Fortney