

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees Newsletter

October 2025

The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on October 23, 2025. Twenty-five people were in attendance (21 retirees and 4 guests/spouses). They were: **Don Bartolina, Steve Chessmore, Wayne Fjeseth, Fred Fortney, Dennis Fowler, Joey Freeland, Bonnie and Randy Freeland, Larry Frey, Harry Fritzler, Sandra and Terry Hough, Jeanne Jasper, Nick Lambeth, Lanny Miller, George Moreland and Betty Gilbert, Kevin Norton, Phil Perryman, Dan Runnels, Jim Smith, Gary Soderstrom, Ed Stinchcomb, Angela Williams, and Jamey Wood.** (Pictures on the website).

Vice-President, **Ed Stinchcomb**, called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the meeting. **Fred Fortney** provided the blessing for the meal and everyone enjoyed the buffet meal.

Following the meal, Vice-President **Stinchcomb** again called the meeting to order. First time retirees attending the meeting were asked to introduce themselves: **Angela Williams, Larry Frey, Gary Soderstrom, and Joey Freeland.** Each provided a brief introduction of themselves, many of which had been retired a number of years. Others in attendance introduced themselves and spouse or guest and told the group how long they had been retired and how many years of service they had upon retirement.

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.) with at least one sentence. This information is used for the Oklahoma Retired SCS/NRCS Employees Association newsletter along with the minutes of and attendees at the meeting. Our website www.joepad.com is used by those not able to attend the meetings. The website provides pictures, list of attendees, etc. **Joey Freeland**, retired Construction Engineer, keeps the website updated after each meeting. We were able to thank Joey in person today.

Sixty notices are still mailed to those who wish to receive a notice through the mail. 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. Those who may not be receiving a mailed notice and wish to, should email Sandra Hough tshough@sbcglobal.net or send a note to 1308 Littell Ave., Clinton, OK 73601.

Secretary-Treasurer **Sandra Hough** read the list of known retirees who have passed since April 2025: **Ed Kephart**, 76, Assistant State Conservationist (among other duties), Norman, 27 yrs. Federal Service, retired in 2006, worked for NRCS in Oklahoma 1979-1989 and 1995-2004, passed 5/16/25; **George Moore**, 73, Oklahoma Conservation Commission Watershed Technician, 33 yrs service, Clinton, “the video pipe inspection expert”, passed 5/27/25; **Berry “Ted” Kuntz**, 84, Economist on Water Resources Staff, 40+ yrs service, retired in 2010, passed 6/1/25; **Gayle Goforth**, 91, Construction Inspector Perry WO, 38 yrs service, retired in 1993, passed 7/4/25; **Carol Crouch**, 74, State Tribal Liaison for past 18 years, 40 yrs service, passed 7/10/25; **Elizabeth “Liz Greer” Konigmacher**, 92, worked in State Office Stillwater, passed 7/26/25; **Jimmy (Jim) Brewer**, 86, Civil Engineering Technician on Duncan AO & Watershed Office Staff, 37 yrs service, passed 8/19/25; **Duane Crider**, 76, DC @ El Reno for 30 yrs, retired 2010, 38 yrs service, passed 9/9/25; **Bobby Gene Bourlier**, 93, Soil Scientist, Norman, retired in 1994 with 39 yrs service, worked in New Mexico, Pawhuska & Norman, passed 9/11/25; **June Willis**, 94, widow of Roland Willis, retired State Conservationist (1972-1987), passed 10/2/25; and **Juanita Eeds**, 83, wife of Baker Eeds, retired Resource Engineer, Clinton

Area Office, passed 10/13/25. A moment of silence was observed in their memory. There were no known retirements since April 2025.

Jeanne Jasper, Oklahoma State Conservationist, was asked to introduce herself and provide information about her. Jeanne has 28 years of service with the last 2 years in Oklahoma. Montana is her home state. She was raised in rural Montana and has found a home in Carney, OK on a few acres. She is planning a trip to Alaska with her dad in late spring. She provided an insight into the Government shutdown. There are a handful of employees working primarily in watersheds as there are a number of active projects. Student interns were not hired. Active employee numbers are down from 280 to 206. Many employees applied for the deferred retirement program offered or left for other employment opportunities. The staff is still passionate about their work objective as well as customers being patient with the staff available. The state was restructured by teams so there is an average of three offices per team instead of four offices. Twelve of the 26 team leaders are acting. Lots of staff has less than five years service. She encouraged employees to attend the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Soil Conservation Service this past April. She thought it was beneficial for them to see how passionate retirees are and importance of what they bring to the State of Oklahoma in the activities they do day to day. Still waiting to see what happens with the Government shutdown. Budget doesn't appear to increase.

Several retirees voiced suggestions to Jeanne Jasper about how to get employees exposed to retirees who are willing to share their work experiences by inviting the retirees to meetings throughout the year. Zone meetings are typically held every two years; end of year meeting in Stillwater; OACD meetings with District Conservationists in attendance; and the Annual OACD Meeting to be held in March at OKANA.

Some of the replies to the editor about their retirement activities are as follows:

Harry Fritzler said for the last two years and coming up again this next year, we have spent time in Moab, UT with an RV Club that are also Jeep Wrangler owners doing off-roading on various trails around Moab. It just so happens to fall the same week as our retirees gathering in OKC. That's why I've missed those gatherings. Also, in May/June of 2026 we've signed up with the same RV Club to traverse Route 66 from end to end. Next year is the 100th anniversary of the "Mother Road". Should be fun. We also try to make it to Colorado at least once a year, sometimes twice a year to play in the mountains with the Jeep and enjoy the cool weather. During the summer we try to make it down to Lake Eufaula three or four times.

When we are home, we spend as much time as possible going to grandkids sports events. They are involved in baseball, football, soccer, and basketball. Keeps us hopping. The ranch keeps us extremely busy now that I've gotten into the sheep and goat business along with the cattle. It has definitely been a learning curve adventure.

Jim Smith shared his experiences: Last summer we went on a big road trip. We drove to Arizona. Visited Painted Desert/Petrified Forest National Parks on the way to Page, AZ. At Page, we toured the slot canyons and Horseshoe Bend just below Glen Canyon Dam. From Page, we drove to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. We then went north to Zion and Brice Canyon National Parks. Then up to Moab, Utah via a scenic drive and visited Arches National Park. This fall we are driving to Mount Rushmore, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Parks. Have traveled to Alaska 3 times since retirement. Once on a cruise, the other two on fishing trips. Living the dream as they say.

Carolyn and Bob Webb sent this: Thanks for the invite but Bob & I won't be there. Stepped out of closet and my knee popped so loudly. Dr did Xray and sending me to orthopedic Dr in

Tulsa in am. Home with knee wrap, wheelchair, and pain pills. We ran the 5K again in May (picture below). Since turning 86 tomorrow we both just walked fast and made it in under an hour. Please tell everyone hi and sorry we will miss you all. It was a nice birthday present you planned for me tomorrow.



Carolyn and Bob Webb

We recently learned that former Oklahoma NRCS Employee, **Becky Ross**, has retired from the State Conservationist position in New Hampshire. Following is a note from her: The address I am using for people to mail in their ARCSE dues is Stillwater. We are in the process of relocating to Texas from New Hampshire so my cousin in Stillwater is helping out with the PO Box until we get settled in TX. Currently we are working on month 4 of living full time in our RV and have been traveling across the US and I am writing this email from Melbourne, FL. Even though I won't be officially part of the OK group, I would love to be on the list and if I can make it up to a meeting, I certainly would love to catch up with you and others that I worked with. The best email for me is dirtlady71@gmail.com. Becky Ross, ARCSE Treasurer

Others were: **Wayne Fjeseth** said he is going to Minnesota to fish soon, and still visiting grandkids and running errands. **Don Bartolina** had 41 years of service with SCS/NRCS and 4 years with OACD. Has served 10 years on the Oklahoma County Conservation District Board. He has 10 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren (3 in 2025). **Jamey Wood** coordinated the USDA/NRCS Golf Tournament this fall. NRCS participants were: **A. J. Kennedy, Arvil Bass, Brian Dillard, Darol Wilson, David Hungerford, Gilbert Guerrero, John Mustain, Scott Pace, Steve Alspach, Steve Elsener, Steve Glasgow, Terrell Howard, and Troy Collier.** (picture below)



Phil Perryman has recently moved to Ninnekah to enjoy grandkids activities. **Lester Brockmann** can't come to our meetings anymore but enjoys reading the newsletter and looking at pictures on the website. He said he had a pickup accident a couple of years ago that required neck and back surgery and now his sons don't think he should be driving to the city anymore.

Please feel free to send something similar to those above that can be used in the April 2026 Newsletter. Do it now before you forget! Send it to: randy.freeland@suddenlink.net

Phil Perryman reported to the group that he had talked to **Earl Weisner's** wife to see if Earl was up to coming to the meeting. Earl previously suffered a stroke and has been doing rehab. She advised that he was not up to it at this time but would begin some additional rehab soon. Earl's address is 5885 S. 2nd St. Duncan, OK 73533, if you would like to send him a note or card.

The group was also reminded via email that **Jim Williams**, retired DC from Ardmore, was dealing with ALS. We were encouraged to send him texts or cards but he isn't able to speak on the phone. His cell phone number is (580) 465-8258.

Several attended "**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. The group wants to have **Sam Stalcup** come to a future meeting to talk about this and his experiences as Historian in the National NRCS Office.

Randy reminded the group again that if they are Civil Service retirees and have not checked with Social Security about drawing a retirement based on their spouse, they should do so as soon as possible. Several have financially benefitted from a call or visit with Social Security.

Many of us knew and worked closely with, **Bill Littlefield**, a former Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in Oklahoma. He is retired and has lived in Stillwater for the last several years but has relocated to Florida to be closer to his daughter. If you would like to reach out to Bill you can mail him at 5521 San Luis Dr. North, Fort Myers, FL 33903.

The group was reminded of **Duane Crider's** Memorial Service this coming Saturday in El Reno.

The next meeting is scheduled for **THURSDAY, April 23, 2026**, 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.