

Mission: to unite as citizens and actively engage in the preservation of the Spring Creek Watershed

Please contact SCC to be removed from or added to this mailing list

Spring Creek Coalition
2434 East 56 Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

Spring Creek Watershed Landowners Fall 2012 Newsletter



Est. 1994

THE MOST PRISTINE
LARGE OZARK STREAM
IN OKLAHOMA
MANAGED AND
PROTECTED BY
PRIVATE
LANDOWNERS

Phone: (918) 637-1449

Email info@springcreekok.org

GIVE BACK TO YOUR CREEK—FALL CLEAN-UP

AND WALK TO VIEW THE NEW BRIDGE!

Saturday, November 3rd
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Twin Bridges Area

Weiner roast for the kids
Rain or shine
Gloves and trash bags provided
Tip: a pair of tongs and small trash can from home can be handy
Contact Jennifer Owen at 918-637-1449 for information

After lunch, we will walk the short distance downstream to see the NEW Twin Bridges bridge, due to open in December.

Directions:

From Tulsa: Take Hwy. 412 east. Get on the Cherokee Turnpike. Exit at Locust Grove (toll \$ 25). Go South (right) on Hwy. 82, and travel 3.0 miles to Ear Bob Road, the first road on your right after crossing Spring Creek.

From Tahlequah: Take Hwy. 82 north to Ear Bob Road, the last road on your left before crossing Spring Creek.

Both: Turn west on Ear Bob Road. Go 1.7 miles to DO61.6 road (at the Ballou Baptist sign). Turn right; stay on the black-top road for 0.5 miles until you reach the bridge (this is Twin Bridges). The clean-up is at the bridge area.

Note: *Twin Bridges is no longer accessible from Cavalier Road.*

Bridge Replacement Nearing Completion at Twin Bridges

As of this writing (mid-October), work is progressing. Workers are pouring the top decking and drilling piers on the Cavalier (north) side of the bridge. They still need to connect the bridge with the existing roads.

The Cherokee Nation is funding and overseeing construction of this bridge downstream from the popular swimming hole and current low-water bridge at Twin Bridges in Mayes County. This is the site of our Fall clean-up, after which we'll walk the short distance downstream to see the new bridge.

Construction began June 15th and is scheduled to be complete by November, 2012. The new bridge and roadway will join Cavalier and Earbob roads at a grade above the existing flood plain.



The new bridge as of Sunday, October 14

SCC Effort to Reduce Litter

In our last newsletter we told you about our efforts to PREVENT litter, not just pick it up. Were we successful? Yes!

We sponsored a trash can at the low-water crossing at Cave Springs, and it was well-received. Spring Creek Coalition says a big "thanks" to creek-users at this location who used the barrel to dispose of diapers, Styro-foam cups, aluminum cans and more.

Bridge Replacement Update

We will continue to sponsor a trash can at Cave Springs in coming years. We commend Board Director, Jennifer Owen, for taking responsibility for this area. "If we can just set an example and make people aware of how little it takes to keep the creek clean," says Jennifer, "they really respond and want to do the right thing."

At another popular access point, Twin Bridges, garbage should be a thing of the past. We'll do a cleanup in November. With the new bridge opening in December, there will no longer be public access.



SCC sponsored litter barrel at Cave Springs

Cleaning the Creek Is So Important

Not only is the litter along the creek unsightly, it is also dangerous to both animals and people. Discarded metal, cans, and bottles pose a significant threat to those who enjoy swimming in the creek. Chemicals can leach out from the trash, changing the quality and balance of the creek. Food containers can trap and potentially kill hungry scavengers. Not to mention that old tires make terrific nurseries for mosquitoes. It's amazing the variety of trash we collect every

SCC could sponsor trash barrels in 2013 at other sites. Please contact us if there is a need and landowner approval.

Fall Outing

year.

Please join us on November 3rd to make the creek cleaner and safer for everyone. Many hands make for light work!

Three Springs Farm Fall Outing

"Why is it," asked Wes Combs "that I plant onions the size of marbles and when I harvest them they're only the size of golf balls, whereas yours are huge?" And all the rest of us nodded in agreement.

"Well," answered Mike, "It's because you are starting with sets. You need to start with seedlings that are planted in early spring."

Our September outing to Mike and Emily's organic farm was fantastic. We had a diverse group, ages 9 months to 70, from Tahlequah, Tulsa, Cedar Crest, and Spring Creek. We learned about the value of winter cover crops, why strawberries benefit from cold weather, the difficulties in obtaining specialized equipment for a small farm, and how planting native fruiting plants helps draw beneficial insects.

"Many people think organic farming limits a farmer," noted Mike. "But we feel organic farming is more about the broad range of resources at our disposal, about what we can do rather than what we can't."

It sounded like incredibly hard work. Not only physical labor, but keeping track of what they do



Checking out the fields at the Three Springs Farm

Drought Impacts the Area

each year to find out what worked and what didn't. What spacing is best for irrigation? Are white or black covers best on raised beds? Can you survive without a deer fence? In spite of this, when asked if she still found organic farming enjoyable, Emily gave an immediate "Yes".

Thank you, Mike and Emily, for sharing your home, your farm and your knowledge with our SCC group.

Drought Has Significant Impact By Chris Robb

Anyone who has seen Spring Creek in the last few months has noticed that it is extremely low. Long-time residents have commented that it is the lowest they have ever seen.

According to the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, Oklahoma is on course for the warmest year in recorded history. The average temperature through September has been 66.3 degrees, 4 degrees warmer than the previous warmest year, 1954, with 62.8 degrees.

The heat and drought have impacted cattlemen in the area and across the state. Corn and other grain prices have increased. Hay costs more and often must be shipped in from other areas. My neighbor started feeding hay to his cattle in July, and in spite of this, they have lost weight. According to the stockyard reports, the price of steers in September is about 5% less than in April.

Although farming is not a big factor in Cherokee county, anyone who has tried to grow vegetables, even with supplemental watering, has struggled this summer.

As of September, 42% of the state was in exceptional drought (the worst category). Ninety five percent of the state was in the worst two categories -

SCC Annual Meeting

extreme and exceptional.

Interesting Cherokee county statistics (Tahlequah):

Average precipitation: 47.56 inches
Precipitation for 2011: 42.36 inches
This year through Sept: 24.82 inches
Precipitation for the last 90 days: 6.94 inches

Days with precipitation: 85
Wettest year 73.48 inches (1973)
Driest year 25.12 inches (1954)
Greatest daily rain 7.35 inches (8-14-2002)

Avg annual temp: 60 degrees F
Highest Temp: 118 degrees (7-18-1936)
Lowest Temp: -23 degrees (1-18-1930)

Days of 90 degrees and higher 59 (avg)
Days of 20 degrees and below 21 (avg)

Chris Robb is an SCC Board Member and landowner in the Lucky Springs area.

SCC ANNUAL MEETING

Save the Date!

Saturday, January 12

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- SCC will hold its annual meeting at the **Best Western Hotel** south of Locust Grove.
- Watch for a mailing with details in late December.