

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

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**Spring Creek Coalition
2434 East 56 Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105**

Spring Creek Watershed Landowners Spring 2015 Newsletter



Est. 1994

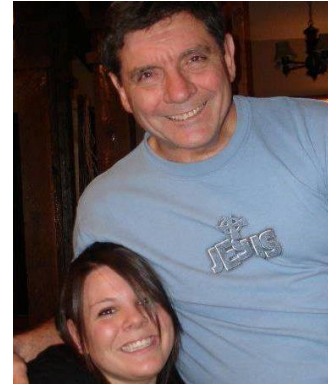
THE MOST PRISTINE
LARGE OZARK STREAM
IN OKLAHOMA
MANAGED AND
PROTECTED BY
PRIVATE
LANDOWNERS

Phone: (918) 906-6762

Email info@springcreekok.org

IN MEMORIAM: CHRIS ROBB

Chris Robb, supporter of SCC since its inception, passed away February 15. Chris had just been elected to his second term as SCC Board Member. He was diagnosed in February with cancer and passed away unexpectedly from complications. Those of us on the board appreciated Chris'



Chris and his youngest daughter, Becky

humor and ever-ready smile. He loved the creek and was building a home there for his retirement. The last thing Chris did for SCC was set up our April Salamander Outing. He is greatly missed.

SPRING TREE PLANTING
SATURDAY, MARCH 28
RAIN OR SHINE
10 AM TO 12 PM
LUNCH PROVIDED

At property of Loren & Vicki Frederic

Bring: gloves, long pants, sturdy shoes.

Directions: At Peggs on highway 82, turn north on Old Peggs Cemetery Rd (N 440) and head toward the low water bridge at Cave Springs.. At approximately 1 mile the paved road turns to dirt and starts descending. Turn into the first driveway to the right about 3/4 of the way down the hill. If you reach the creek, you've gone too far. Look for the Spring Creek Coalition banner.

Will you help in this conservation effort? We need you. See you on the 28th.



Tree planting in 2011—Chris Robb and Reed Holt

BOULDERS, BRANCHES, BRUSH AND WATER – Stream Dynamics and Restoration

Jeri Fleming, Environmental Programs Manager, Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) was our featured speaker at the SCC Annual Meeting in January. Ms. Fleming began by discussing the importance of land near streams and rivers. Among other things, riparian areas keep streams in their banks and provide cool summer habitats to support life. It is better to keep these areas as they are rather than seek to change them with bulldozers, brush hogs and chain saws. However, once a riparian area is degraded or destroyed, the OCC can work to help restore it. Restoration methods include (1) bank sloping, (2) in-stream structures, (3) burying trees in the stream bank, and (4) planting vegetation. Regarding the last, the choice of grass is important. Native grasses have deep, dense fibrous roots that hold soil in place. Non-natives like Bermuda do not.

Ms. Fleming said that restoration helps to improve habitats, including removal of invasive species, and helps to increase fish and wildlife populations. The benefits to a community include safer and more aesthetically

Annual Meeting Recap

pleasing recreation areas, protection of pastures and structures, and improved water quality.

Ms. Fleming shared photos of various sites along the Illinois River that have been restored using natural techniques. She said that the EPA, the Corps of Engineers and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality all are moving towards restoring streams in a natural way. Finally, she noted that stream restoration can be very expensive. It is much more economical to preserve an area than to try to correct damage later.

Forty adults and seven children attended our annual meeting. We raised \$545 through our silent auction, our main fundraiser for the year. Thank you all for your contributions and support.

Conservation Districts Source of Help to Watershed Landowners

Lucky citizens who own property within the Spring Creek watershed have a readily available source of help in their local conservation district. Across Oklahoma, conservation districts, and their partner the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), exist to assist landowners with conservation planning, technical assistance, and in some cases even funds.

Conservation districts formed over 70 years ago and are legal subdivisions of state government. Districts have the primary goal of assisting citizens to practice wise use and wise management of our land, water, wildlife, and other resources. There is probably no agency anywhere with a more noble calling.

Stream protection help is available from the district and NRCS for:

Conservation Districts

- Grazing plans to protect against soil erosion and benefit livestock
- Riparian areas through fencing and offering livestock an alternative water supply and
- Property enhancement planning for wildlife

Through both federal and state programs, conservation district offices frequently have funding available for landowners who want to make improvements to their property. There are a number of practices that help the land, water, and wildlife, and a number of programs that provide a substantial portion of the cost.

The best way to learn what is available for your property and situation is to visit the conservation district office. Because staffing is minimal, it is smart to call first. A good opening line is to say "I own some property and I would like to drop in and see how you folks might be able to help me out. Can I make an appointment?"

You can learn more about conservation districts at: http://www.ok.gov/conservation/Conservation_Districts/index.html

Here's contact information for the conservation districts of Spring Creek which originates in Delaware County and flows through Cherokee and Mayes Counties:

Bud and Alicia Osborne help monitor Spring Creek through the Conservation Commission Blue Thumb program



Salamander Outing

Cherokee County Conservation District, 918 West Choctaw, Suite 2, Tahlequah, OK, 918-456-1924

Delaware County Conservation District, 2749 West State HWY 20, Jay, OK 918-253-8550

Mayes County Conservation District, 4238 NE 1st, Pryor, OK, 918-825-3673

Salamander Outing Saturday, April 25, 10AM Peggs Community Center, Hwy 82

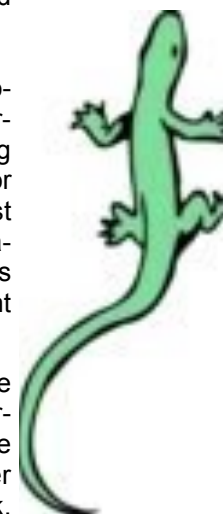
The Ozarks are home to a rich diversity of amphibians, some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Ron Bonett, an Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Tulsa, has been studying these magnificent animals for more than 15 years. His most interesting subject is the Oklahoma Salamander, a species that can take on very different body forms.

In some streams larvae of the Oklahoma Salamander undergo metamorphosis and live their adult life on land. In other streams, like Spring Creek, they forgo metamorphosis and reach adulthood without ever leaving the water.

Ron will talk about the research that he and his students perform on the Oklahoma Salamander to understand what drives these differences in development, and their consequences for the conservation of this unique species, as well as the biodiversity of Ozark amphibians.

Bring Your Kids, Your Boots, a Shovel: After



Call for 2015 Dues

Ron's presentation, we will take a field trip to the creek to find Oklahoma Salamanders. Ron will have a couple of shovels to dig in the rocks just inside the stream edges. Bring your own, along with boots, for a hands-on experience. "We should uncover salamanders, darters, madtoms, mayflies – lots of interesting critters," notes Ron.

Bring your lunch to picnic along the creek after the salamander hunt.

Ron grew up in Pennsylvania and has been interested in amphibians ever since he found his first red-backed salamander in a Philadelphia woodlot at the age of 10. His research combines two of his greatest passions: amphibians and spending time in upland streams.

CALL FOR 2015 DUES AND DONATIONS!

Your contributions help us publish this newsletter, plant trees, organize trash clean-ups, hold coalition meetings, and fund our website. Mail recipients – check your mailing label to see when you last renewed, listed directly after your name (example: Joe Smith 2013).

Please contribute today. Categories are: \$20, yearly, \$100, lifetime; or donations of any amount. Make checks payable to Spring Creek Coalition, and send to:

2434 E 56th Pl
Tulsa, OK 74105

Thank you for contributing!

SCC is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.