

# Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

# HOMECOMING

One Land; One Legacy



March 1-3, 2026



*Where tradition guides us, and the land brings us home*

OKANA Resort  
Oklahoma City, OK



REGISTRATION



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

Greetings Conservation Directors, Employees, Partners, and Friends,

As we reflect on a year marked by transitions, from plantings to harvests, from record rainfall to drought to record cattle markets, we at OACD find ourselves looking ahead with excitement and gratitude. Each season reminds us of the commitment, resilience, and stewardship embodied by Oklahoma's conservation community. Your dedication has shaped not only the success of this year, but the legacy of more than eight decades of conservation across our state.

2026 is OACD's 88th year in operation, we are honored to continue building on the ground gained by generations before us. The progress we celebrate today, whether in regenerative agriculture, technology, education, or district-led innovation only exists because of your steadfast commitment to the land and to one another.

The Annual State Meeting is our opportunity to come together as a conservation family: to reconnect with old friends, welcome new ones, exchange knowledge, and strengthen the partnerships that carry our mission forward. This year, we are proud to gather at the OKANA Resort & Waterpark in Oklahoma City, March 1–3, 2026.

Our 2026 theme, Homecoming: One Land, One Legacy. Where tradition guides us, and the land brings us home celebrates the journey back to our roots, back to the grassroots solutions, traditions, and knowledge that have long guided conservation in Oklahoma. Throughout the conference, we will recognize Oklahoma excellence through youth, employee, partner, and legislative awards, but the OACD board of directors, staff, and I are committed to hosting a state meeting that celebrates each of you - your work, partnership, leadership, and legacy.

We hope you'll make plans to join us in Oklahoma City to engage in meaningful training and conversations shaped by your feedback and needs. This homecoming will be a meaningful gathering of those who continue to chart the future of conservation with one land, one legacy in mind.

Thank you,  
Ed Casey, OACD President

LOCATION: OKANA Resort & Indoor Waterpark | 639 First Americans Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73129 |  
ph: 572-228-4001

**\*New\* Register Online: [okconservation.org/statemeeting26](https://okconservation.org/statemeeting26)**

Send completed form and payment to:  
OACD PO Box 2775 Oklahoma City, OK 73101

Questions: Taylor Marshall at [taylormarshall@okconservation.org](mailto:taylormarshall@okconservation.org) or ph: 918-729-4229



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

## **DATES**

Sunday March 1st, Monday 2nd, and Tuesday 3rd

## **LOCATION**

OKANA Resort & Indoor Waterpark | 639 First Americans Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73129 |  
ph: 572-228-4001

## **HOTEL INFORMATION**

The hotel attached to the conference center is the OKANA Resort & Indoor Waterpark. The room rate is \$116/night for Junior Suite (2 Queen beds) and includes two waterpark passes for registered hotel guests. Any additional occupant will be at an additional fee of \$30.00 plus tax per occupant per guestroom night and will include the additional waterpark pass. Uncovered parking is free. The cut-off date for the group rate is January 30th, 2026. If you make reservations after this date, they may charge you a higher rate.

To make a reservation at the OKANA use the link: or call 572-228-4001 . Our group name is "Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts" The group code is: 586.

## **GROUP ROOM BOOKINGS**

If you are booking rooms for multiple people you can book online through the link. In the event you would like to utilize a Purchase Order, please contact Timia Richardson by email with the information detailing the entire list of rooms, names of guests, and dates of their stay at [timia.richardson@pyramidglobal.com](mailto:timia.richardson@pyramidglobal.com).

## **MEETING REGISTRATION**

Everyone must pay a registration fee. Please register every attendee online then complete the attached form and mail payment to OACD.

No refunds will be made after Feb. 9, 2026.

## **YOUTH CONTEST**

The speech contest is Sunday March 1st at 1:30 p.m. Contestants must check in by 1:15 p.m. The youth awards program will begin at 4:00 p.m. Districts are responsible for notifying their youth contestants and picking up their awards.

## **DISTRICT EMPLOYEES BREAKFAST**

The breakfast will be held on Monday March 2nd at 7:00 a.m.

## **LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION & BANQUET**

OACD will mail invitations to all state legislators for the legislative reception and banquet on Monday March 2nd. If you are a tribal conservation district, please invite your council members or send their addresses to OACD for us to mail an invitation.

It is also very important that districts personally invite your legislators to attend. Please let Trey Lam & Jean Lam know that you have invited your legislators and their response by Feb. 26th. If your district is financially able, please consider underwriting the cost of your legislator to attend.

The cost is \$75/per legislator. If you are unsure of who your legislator is, please visit [okconservation.org](http://okconservation.org) and click on the resources tab.

## **The Auction**

OACDE, OACD, and the OACD Auxiliary are hosting a live and silent auction. The silent auction will be on Sunday March 1st and Monday March 2nd. The live auction will be during the legislative banquet on Monday March 2nd.



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**NEW**  
**NEW**  
**NEW**

## **Sunday evening | Trade Show Kickoff Reception!**

We're kicking off the 88th Annual OACD State Meeting with something brand new! Join us for the Trade Show Kickoff Reception, an informal evening designed to bring the conservation family together before the official agenda begins. Reconnect with longtime conservation partners, meet new vendors and industry friends, and enjoy relaxed fellowship in the trade show hall without a packed schedule pulling you in every direction. This is your chance to start conversations early, explore new ideas, and set the tone for a productive week.

Come as you are, bring a colleague, and help us launch the meeting the Oklahoma way: rooted in relationships.

## **Monday Afternoon | Area Caucus Meetings!**

This year, we're trading one afternoon of traditional breakout sessions for something new and long overdue. During the Monday afternoon program, we will break into Area Caucus Meetings for facilitated, region-specific conversations focused on identifying shared goals, challenges, and opportunities, while beginning to define a clear regional identity. Just as grassroots solutions helped mitigate the Dust Bowl - today's conservation challenges require local voices, honest dialogue, and collaboration from the ground up. This is your opportunity to get down in the weeds with fellow district leaders from your area, be heard, and help shape priorities that will guide conservation work for the next nine decades.

## **MONDAY LEGISLATIVE EVENING | Golden Hour Reception & Amber Waves of Excellence**

More than a dinner, it's an experience. For the first time we are proud to introduce a themed evening that reflects the spirit, heritage, and excellence of Oklahoma conservation.

- *The Golden Hour* (6:00–7:00 p.m.) offers a relaxed opportunity to fellowship with state legislators, elected officials, agency leadership, industry partners, and fellow attendees ahead of the evening's program. *Sponsored by Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever*
- *Amber Waves of Excellence: A Celebration of Oklahoma Conservation Leadership* (7:00 p.m.), banquet and ceremony honoring outstanding leadership and commitment to Oklahoma's land and legacy.



*Dress: Guests are encouraged to dress in harvest-inspired hues—gold, wheat, bronze, copper, and warm earth tones and/or embrace western elegance, corporate cowboy, or business-smart attire.*

**Fence Row Consultations & Flash Sessions** | Your one-stop shop for no-bull, practical conversations with agency partners and industry experts, No appointment required. Swing through the Trade Show Hall and meet face-to-face with representatives from the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (Soil Health Team, District Services, Legal Counsel Division, Land Management), NRCS, FSA, and more. Ask questions, talk through challenges, and get straight answers, just like a good conversation across the fence.

Flash Sessions will offer brief 15–30 minute deep dives into focused topics, from managing a single invasive species to exploring emerging technologies. Keep an eye out for session topics and presenters, and plan to stop by when something sparks your interest.



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**Sunday March 1, 2026**

**1:00 p.m. - Registration Opens for Attendees** | *Welcome Pre-function*

**1:00 p.m. - OACDE Executive Board Meeting** | *Oklahoma River Boardroom*

**1:00 p.m. - OACDE & OACD State Speech Contest Sign In Opens** | *Dogwood & Loblolly*

**1:30 p.m. - OACDE & OACD State Speech Contest Begins** | *Division I Cypress & Division II Redbud*

**2:00 p.m. - OK Conservation Historical Society Annual Meeting** | *Sunrise Ballroom II*

**2:00 p.m. - OACD Resolutions Committee**, *Chair Ed Casey* | *Red River Boardroom*

**3:00 p.m. - OACD Nominations Meeting**, *Chair Scotty Herriman* | *Red River Boardroom*

**4:00 p.m. - Youth Awards & Auxiliary Scholarship Program**, *Dr Nero, Presiding* | *Sunrise Ballroom II*  
Winners of the poster, essay, and speech youth contests will be announced.  
The Auxiliary will present their scholarship award to one high school senior.

**4:00 p.m. - OK Conservation Historical Society Board Meeting** | *Ben Pollard, Presiding* |  
*Oklahoma River Boardroom*

**5:30- 7:00 p.m. - Trade Show Kickoff Reception** | *Sunset Ballrooms I, II, & III*  
*Sponsored by: Brush Bullet & Advanced Avigation*

Let's kick things off with a little fellowship and a lot of good conversation. Come catch up and talk shop before meetings, sessions, and the packed schedule tug you in every direction. Bring your boots for a shine, wet your whistle, and help us launch the week Oklahoma-style: neighborly and relationship driven.

**7:00 p.m. - OACDE Games for Guns** | *Sunrise Ballrooms I, II, & III*  
Purchase tickets and play a variety of games to win guns and gun related items. All proceeds benefit the Employees Association.



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**Monday March 2nd, 2026**

**7:00 a.m. - Registration Opens** | *Welcome Pre-function*

**7:00 a.m. - OACDE Breakfast and Program**, Jennifer Bailey, *OACDE President, Presiding* | *Dogwood & Loblolly*

**9:00 a.m. - Opening Session**, Ed Casey *OACD President, Presiding* | *Sunrise Ballrooms I, II, & III*

- **Keynote: Jimmy Emmons**, Assistant Chief, NRCS-USDA | *"Long Live the Soil"* Emmons brings Oklahoma agricultural roots and national USDA-NRCS leadership to this keynote on the future of regenerative agriculture. From his experience as an early adopter of regenerative farming and ranching, he'll share what regeneration looks like going forward, what he's seeing across the country, and how USDA's recent investment in regenerative ag can translate into real opportunities on the ground in Oklahoma.

**10:00 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

**1. What Federal Change Means for Producers Who Still Have to Plan, Plant, and Pay Bills |**

Panel: Jimmy Emmons, *NRCS-USDA Assistant Chief* | Gary Blair, *NACD President* |  
Randall Rush, *EPA Region 6 Senior Ag & Policy Advisor*, & Francie Tolle, *RMA Deputy Administrator of Compliance* | *Sunrise Ballroom II*

Federal agricultural policy is once again in motion. From the One Big Beautiful Bill and the future of the Farm Bill, to tariffs, pilot programs, and USDA restructuring, producers are left asking what this all means. This session cuts through the headlines to examine what is real, what is still usable, and where opportunities exist right now. Panelists will discuss how conservation districts and partners can help farmers and ranchers make informed decisions, remain adaptable, and stay grounded in practical tools.

**2. Watersheds: Making Sense of the Dollars and Cents |** *Tammy Sawatzky, Director, Conservation*

*Programs, OCC* | *Cypress* | Tammy will break down the current landscape of Oklahoma's watershed program and what it takes to keep these dams functioning safely and effectively in a time of rising costs and limited resources. From practical inspection realities to prioritizing repairs and maintenance, attendees will walk away with a better understanding of how districts can protect infrastructure, lands, and communities and how we can better hone our message to "give a dam."

**3. TENTATIVE: Verified Value: Turning Claims Into Cash. Certification & Value Added Products**

*Cara Gerken, Senior Program Analyst / Auditor, Where Food Comes From* | *Dogwood & Loblolly*  
Labels like Grass-Fed, Non-GMO, Organic, Verified Sustainable, Animal Care, and Source Verified can open doors to new markets and premium opportunities but only if producers understand what they mean, what they require, and how to navigate the process without unnecessary cost or frustration. Learn how producers can use them as tools to build value-added products and differentiate what they raise and grow.

**10:45 a.m. - Break**



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**Monday March 2nd, 2026**

(continued)

## **11:00 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

### **1. Needs Assessment Tools to Strengthen Programming & Engagement**

*Josh Campbell PhD, Assistant Program Specialist, OSU Cooperative Extension Service | Cypress*

Explore alternative ways conservation district staff and board members can gather, analyze, and use stakeholder input to improve communication, programming, and partnerships, helping districts stay relevant and responsive to community need.

### **2. Empowering Landowners to Negotiate for Agrivoltaics through Training and Protections**

**in Law** | *Dr. Shannon Ferrell, Professor of Agricultural Economics & Attorney at Oklahoma State University | Dogwood & Loblolly* | From soybeans to sunbeams and winter wheat to wind turbines, renewable energy is showing up on working lands across Oklahoma. Landowners deserve the tools to negotiate from a position of strength. In this session, Dr. Shannon Ferrell (a Western Oklahoma farm kid and ag attorney) will break down the real-world economics of incorporating solar or other renewable infrastructure into an operation: how much land footprint it really takes, what it means for farm income per acre, and how it economically impacts your community. He'll also walk through best practices for navigating a lease from start to finish so you can protect your property, your operation, and your ability to keep farming and ranching long-term.

**3. Real or perceived barriers: Virtual Fencing Panel** | *OCC Soil Health Team | Redbud*  
Come learn the good, the bad, and the ugly about "vencing" from people who have been there

### **11:45 a.m. - Networking Break**

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday.

### **12:00 p.m. - Partnership Awards Luncheon** | *Lyle Blakley, OACD Vice President, Presiding*

| *Sunrise Ballroom I, II, & III*

-NRCS Partnership Awards; Director & Employee Service Awards

- **Keynote: Jeff Starling**, Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment,  
*"From Wind to Wires: Renewable Growth, Data Demands & Local Impacts"*

### **1:30 p.m. - Networking Break**

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday.

### **1:45 p.m. - Area Caucus Meetings \*NEW \* NEW \* NEW\***

Area Caucus Meetings for facilitated, region-specific conversations focused on identifying shared goals, challenges, and opportunities, while beginning to define a clear regional identity. Just as grassroots solutions helped mitigate the Dust Bowl today's conservation challenges require local voices, honest dialogue, and collaboration from the ground up. This is your opportunity to get down in the weeds with fellow district leaders from your area, be heard, and help shape priorities that will guide conservation work for the next nine decades.



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**Monday March 2nd, 2026**

(continued)

**2:45 p.m. - Networking Break**

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday.

**3:00 p.m. - NRCS Business Meeting | Cypress**

This meeting is for NRCS employees.

**3:00 p.m. - OACDE Business Meeting | Sunrise Ballroom III**

This meeting is for district employees and OCC employees.

**3:00 p.m. - OACD Business Meeting | Dogwood & Loblolly**

This meeting is for district directors.

**6:00 p.m. - Legislative Reception | Welcome Pre-function & Sunset Ballrooms I, II, & III**

**7:00 p.m. - Legislative Banquet & Awards | Sunrise Ballrooms I, II, & III**

*Announcement of OACD Board*

*Legislator of the Year*

*Employee of the Year*

*The Elmer Maddux Award for Advocacy*

*Conservation Hall of Fame Awards*

*The Leopold Conservation Award*



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**Tuesday March 3rd, 2026**

**7:00 a.m. - Registration Opens** | *Welcome Pre-function*

**7:00 a.m. - OACD Past Presidents Breakfast** | *Oklahoma River Boardroom*

**8:30 a.m. - Welcome and Overview** | Jean Lam, OACD & Greg Kloxin, *Director, OCC Soil Health Team*  
| *Sunrise Ballroom I, II, & III*

▪ **Keynote: District Relevancy: What Does it Mean to You?**

Kimberly Bartley, *Environmental Scientist Advisor, Kentucky Division of Conservation*

**9:15 a.m. - Networking Break** *Coffee Sponsored by*

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday.

**9:30 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

- 1. NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program** | *NRCS state staff* | *Sunrise Ballroom II* | USDA's new \$700 million regenerative pilot is one of the biggest conservation investments we've seen in years; Oklahoma is built for moments like this. Come hear directly from NRCS state staff on what's official, what's still developing, and how producers and districts can prepare to capture these dollars through EQIP and CSP. The investment is big but the real story is bigger: it takes trusted local partners to deliver it, and Oklahoma's NRCS-District relationship is the gold standard.
- 2. Supplement Smarter: Build a Better Grazing System** | *LNC Livestock Nutrition Center* | *Cypress*  
Ever looked at cows standing in belly-high grass and wondered why they still aren't holding condition? Having plenty of hay or stockpiled grass doesn't automatically mean you're feeding efficiently or profitably. In fact, low-quality forage can quietly "starve" performance and profits just as quickly as feeding high-dollar bales. If you aren't testing, you're guessing; and you can't manage what you don't measure. Hear from a Livestock Nutrition Center nutritionist as they break down how forage testing and selecting the right supplements, feed products, and protein to compliment your forages can be strategic tools on the way to regenerative grazing.
- 3. The Future of Farming: Young Farmer & Rancher panel** | *OCC Soil Health team* | *Redbud*  
Young district conservationist and regenerative farmers share their successes, challenges, and operational goals for the future. Come learn, share, and laugh with these panelists. Take home tangible talking points to recruit the next generation of local leaders to your board.

**10:30 a.m. - Networking Break**

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday.



# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

**Tuesday March 3rd, 2026**

(continued)

## **10:45 a.m. - Concurrent Session**

### **1. Audit Ready: A District Staff Survival Guide** | *Michael Green, CPA & Team* | *Redbud*

If the word "audit" makes your stomach drop, this session is for you. This session will break down audits in plain language and share practical tips to help district staff stay organized, avoid common mistakes, and make audit season smoother from start to finish. Come for the shortcuts and real-life advice: leave with more confidence (and fewer headaches).

### **2. Drought Decision Tools: Practical Herd Metrics for Smarter Management** | *Hugh Aljoe, Noble Research Institute* | *Dogwood & Loblolly*

Drought doesn't start when the grass is gone, it starts when decisions are delayed. In this practical session, Hugh Aljoe will share real-world herd management tools and key metrics producers can use to guide timely decisions before, during, and after drought. Learn how to evaluate forage availability, stocking rate, animal performance, and financial risk so you can act earlier, protect your land base, and recover faster when conditions improve.

### **3. AI Tool Utilization** | *Audrey E. H. King, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications, Digital Media State Extension Specialist, OSU Extension* | *Cypress* | AI doesn't have to be intimidating and it's not here to replace the work conservation districts do every day. In this session, Dr. Audrey King will help you cut through the noise and navigate the growing number of AI tools and services available. Attendees will learn how to identify the right platforms for their specific needs and how to use AI to enhance communication, improve efficiency, and better serve cooperators, directors, and their communities. Think of AI as a practical tool —not a crutch, and not a replacement.

## **11:45 a.m. - Networking Break**

Visit vendors and fill up your bingo card for a chance to win a prize at lunch Tuesday.

## **12:00 p.m. - Lunch | HOT ONES! Burning Questions with Fire Ecology Experts**

Inspired by the critically acclaimed Hot Ones YouTube series, a panel of fire ecology experts from across the state will tackle your most burning prescribed fire questions... all while eating wings that get hotter by the minute.

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Send completed form and payment to:

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# OACD'S 88th Annual State Meeting

Tuesday March 3rd, 2026  
(continued)

## 1:15 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

### 1. OACD District Employee Peer to Peer Learning Session |

### 2. **Weather outlook** | *Gary McManus, State Climatologist* | *Sunrise Ballroom II*

Oklahoma's climate and weather patterns directly impact grazing decisions, seed choice, water availability, and infrastructure planning. In this session, the State Climatologist will provide a practical outlook for spring, summer, and the year ahead, helping conservation district directors and staff better anticipate risks, plan for variability, and support cooperators with informed, climate-smart decision-making. Specifically by taking a look at the Equatorial Pacific waters to see if we are finally rid of La Nina, and examining the hopes for the possible El Nino next fall and winter that's being talked about so much.

## 2:15 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

### 1. **From Crisis to Continuum: Repositioning Drought Policy in Oklahoma: Will Emergency Drought Relief Return?** | *Trey Lam, Executive Director, OCC* | *Dogwood & Loblolly* | Get a clear picture of what's being discussed at the State Capitol, the potential of another emergency drought program, how Oklahoma can move from reactionary relief toward long-term drought mitigation, and what it could mean for district workload and producer questions on the ground.

### 2. TBD