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“Current” News
From the
North Canadian River 319 Project

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- Open

It’s looking like another challenging summer for cattlemen. Below are excerpts from an article published in the **Noble Foundation’s “Ag News and Views”**.

Sustainable Pasture Management -Chad Ellis

Grazing lands are very complex. Each pasture may be composed of different soils and plant communities. Species in these communities change over time due to weather, season and management. Success is more than providing forage with appropriate levels of nutrition to grazing animals. Livestock producers must monitor and document pasture changes to ensure that management is not causing damage to soil and plant communities and to evaluate whether or not past management decisions are producing desired results. Success is recognizing these changes and adjusting to meet these changes. This process begins with monitoring and keeping good records. So what should you monitor and what records should you keep?

- **Rainfall Data**—Precipitation records should be kept to determine if changes in pastures are caused by weather patterns or management (i.e. stocking rate). These records will aid in deciding when to reduce or move livestock, such as in a drought.
- **Grazing Records**— Grazing records track grazing period and recovery days, grazing cycles and seasons of use. They also include number of days grazed and number of head or animal units, average weight per head or animal unit and recovery period.
- **Grazing Use**—Record forage heights *before and after* a grazing event. Know your grasses. Each grass has a recommended grazed height in order to maintain plant health. One method to help producers make this estimate can be done by installing a small enclosure using cattle panels, to exclude grazing in that area.
- **Photo documentation**—Another good tool to capture vegetation and trends is with photographs. Take pictures at permanent key grazing sites for comparison over time to determine trends.

NCRP staff are currently planning a Grid Sampling / Soil Fertility Workshop for later this summer. Date to be announced. Watch for news articles and flyers!

Canadian River’s Prescribed Burn Association has been officially formed and officers elected. If you are interested in using prescribed burning to control cedars, or improve the quality of your native and improved pastures, then contact

Canadian River’s Prescribed Fire Association

Katie Scheihing at
the Central North Canadian
River Conservation District in Geary.
(405) 884-2383.
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The purpose of the North Canadian River 319 Project is to reduce pathogens and sediments from entering the river from private lands. Testing at locations along the North Canadian River have repeatedly exceeded Oklahoma water quality standards for fecal coliform as well as turbidity. The four conservation districts in the watershed proposed the project as a pro-active, voluntary effort, installing best management practices that will help achieve pathogen and sediment reductions *through voluntary efforts*.

Important Facts You Should Know About Watersheds!

Did you know.....

That you live in a watershed? Our actions, habits and decisions impact our watersheds. Every inch of the land is part of a watershed. A watershed can be defined as “All of the water under or draining off a particular area goes into the same place”, generally that is a river. In our case, it’s the North Canadian River.

That less than 1% of all the water on Earth is fresh water? The average U.S. citizen uses 70 gallons of water everyday. And this does not include the water it takes to manufacture automobiles, clothing and food. We need and depend on our fresh water sources every day!

That your drinking water depends on the flow of water through a watershed to a body of water, such as a river, or groundwater recharge areas? Healthy watersheds and clean water are vital to our everyday existence. All of our actions and habits are reflected in the health of the river that drains our watershed. Ultimately, we end up drinking, or paying to clean up, our habits.

That our North Canadian River Watershed is the source of much of our drinking water? In addition to supplying the City of Oklahoma City with a surface drinking water source, the North Canadian River is the recharge source for communities such as Watonga, Geary, Calumet, and El Reno as well as many home water wells in the watershed.

That the North Canadian River 319 Project is funded by the EPA and State of Oklahoma in an effort to “clean-up” the river? Because the North Canadian River is a drinking water source for communities along its reach, the river is monitored by a variety of agencies. These include the USGS, Oklahoma Water Resources Board and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. Monitoring findings show that the North Canadian River is impaired due to nutrients running off land surfaces in the watershed from over fertilization of cropland field, yards, improperly functioning septic systems, permitted discharges from outdated municipal sewage systems, pet and livestock waste, and sedimentation due to soil erosion. Illegal dumping of trash and unwanted paint and other items are also a problem.

There is something you can do to help protect our most valuable resource? For agricultural lands, producers might consider grid sampling for nutrient management, riparian area exclusion rotational grazing for livestock and updating home sewer systems. Urban dwellers can pick up and properly dispose of pet waste, soil sample to see if they need to fertilize their yards and properly dispose of unwanted paint and other chemicals instead of pouring them down curbside storm drains. And we can all take unwanted items to licensed landfills instead of illegally dumping them.

WATER—IT’S OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE. LET’S ALL WORK TO PROTECT IT!

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