



United States Department of Agriculture



Successful Tribal Collaborations Across the Country: Oklahoma Spotlight

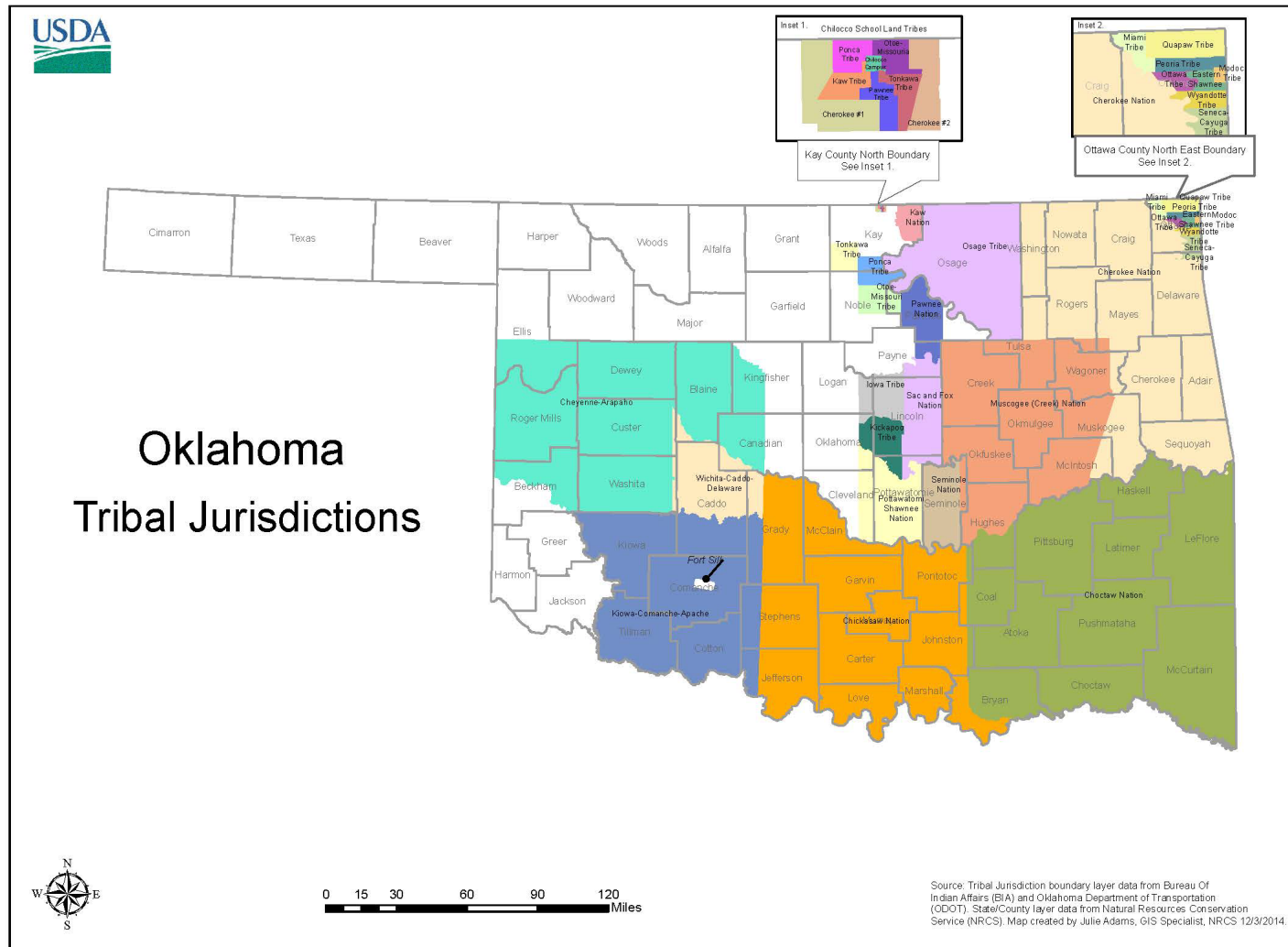
Gary O'Neill, State Conservationist



Introduction to Oklahoma Tribes

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Oklahoma administers conservation programs and technical assistance to 39 Federally recognized Tribal Nations.
- The total acres of the 39 Tribes encompasses is 47 of percent of Oklahoma.
- Home to 1.8 million American Indians

<https://www.okhistory.org/>



Natural Resources Conservation Service

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The 39 Federally Recognized Oklahoma Tribes

Absentee Shawnee Tribe

Alabama-Quassarte Tribal
Town

Apache Tribe of Oklahoma

Caddo Nation

Cherokee Nation

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Chickasaw Nation

Choctaw Nation

Citizen Potawatomi Nation

Comanche Nation

Delaware Nation

Delaware Tribe of Indians

Eastern Shawnee Tribe of
Oklahoma

Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe of
Indians

Fort Sill Apache Tribe

Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Kaw Nation

Kialegee Tribal Town

Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma

Kiowa Tribe

Miami Tribe of Oklahoma

Modoc Nation

Muscogee Nation

Osage Nation

Otoe-Missouria Tribe

Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma

Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma

Peoria Tribe of Indians of
Oklahoma

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma

Quapaw Nation

Sac and Fox Nation

Seminole Nation

Seneca-Cayuga Nation

Shawnee Tribe

Thlopthlocco Tribal Town

Tonkawa Tribe

United Keetoowah Band of
Cherokee Indians in
Oklahoma

Wichita and Affiliated Tribes

Wyandotte Nation



Successful Agreements & Partnerships with Tribes

Partnership agreement with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) since 2004.

- Held over 5000 workshops, webinars and training to promote access and delivery of NRCS programs and technical assistance.
- Partner to hold 9 *Working Effective with American Indian* training for 14 Different NRCS states.
- 11 Nation to Nation Consultation Conferences with all 39 Tribes.
- Partner with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission districts and Tribes to sponsor for 430 conservation days for youth.
- Sponsored Tribal conservation days. During COVID, sponsored 19 conservation days and 11 seed giveaway.
- Provided ZOOM to NRCS to hold 64 webinars.



Success Story

In a NRCS partnership agreement with Bureau of Indians Affairs for Tribal Soil Climate Analysis Network units on Tribal Trust Land. Oklahoma received three units. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, the Cherokee Nation and the Choctaw Nation

- TSCAN was initiated in 2017 to provide improved soil climate data to tribes in underserved locations around the U.S.
- Goals of the project are to provide localized soil and climate data to selected tribes for agricultural and forestry management decisions, strengthen tribal outreach to support production management as well as STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) education.
- NRCS partnered with the Choctaw Nation to hold the first TSCAN Workshops for Tribal youth to promote STEM.



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Successful Agreements & Partnerships with Tribes

NRSC enter into soil health agreements with four Tribes, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe, Cherokee Nation, Choctaw Nation and Quapaw Nation.

The groundbreaking agreements were a start to harness and share the latest in conservation technologies to improve soil health and make their land more resilient.

The Tribes established a demonstration farm on Tribal lands to showcase the effectiveness of soil health practices such as no-till and cover crops to increase land productivity.

The Tribes held 67 workshops and 8 demonstration tours.



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Farm Bill Assistance for Tribes

FY21 EQIP StrikeForce Activities – Contracts

- 10 contracts
- \$280,000 Funding

FY22 EQIP Tribal StrikeForce Applications

- 24 Applications

Conservation Stewardship Program

- Two Tribes have recently completed their CSP contract
- One Tribe has applied for 2022 CSP



Tribal Conservation Activities

- Conservation Days – drive through events
- Seed Giveaway – Youth and Elders drive through events
- Participated in 43 NRCS ZOOM webinars in 2021 – Focus: USDA Programs Updates during COVID
- Promoting STEM to Tribal youth, 14 webinars and 5 outdoor events



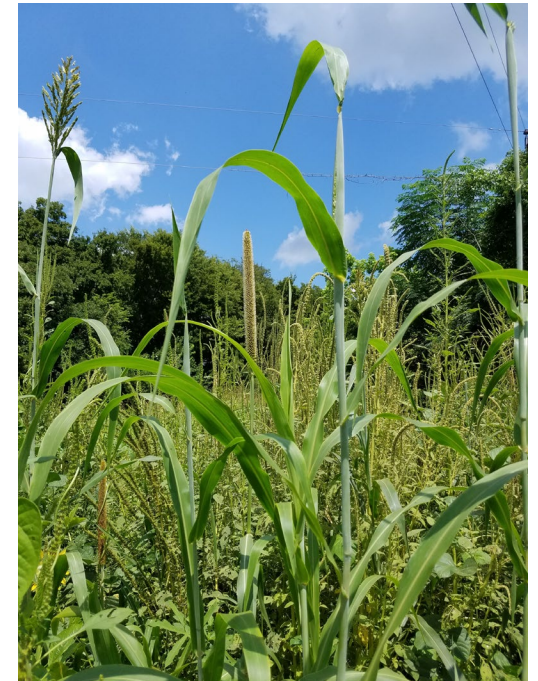
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USDA NRCS and Tribal Collaboration Efforts

- Oklahoma Tribes Actively Engaged at all State Technical Meetings
- Numerous Listening Sessions
- Annual Consultation
- USDA Leadership meet with Tribal Leadership
- Assist with Tribal Conservation Districts
- Partner to do outreach events



NRCS Regional Tribal Advisory Committee

- Three Oklahoma Tribal members on the committee



Lessons Learned



- We have had four small Tribes who received funding for a seasonal high tunnels. When the seasonal high tunnel kit arrived, they had no equipment to unload the kit off an 18 – wheeler. This caused some financial hardship.
- Check and update your Tribal Leader list every 30 days. Do a spreadsheet to track all the Tribal elections
- Verify you know when Tribal elections occur
- Make certain you know the correct title of the Tribal leader
 - Governor, Chief, Chairman, Mekko, Chairwoman
- Importance of a Tribal Liaison Position



Lessons Learned



- Always do invites in a letter, then follow up with an email
 - Know who the Tribal leader's administrative assistant is
 - Always make sure they are cc in emails to the Tribal leader's
- ALWAYS follow-up with the Tribal leaders after a meeting, especially if you committed to send additional information or a contact
- Ensure Tribes are notified when deadlines occur for Farm Bill Programs – Advance payments.
- Communication and building relationships and partnerships are critical



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