



Coordinating Wildlife Biologist **USDA**

Quarterly Partners' Report



Tanner Swank— Northwest Oklahoma

January-March 2023

Position Update

This quarter once again provided multiple opportunities for training and outreach.

With cedar removal and grassland restoration still a high point of focus, GPGI and EQIP are once again in the spotlight. We have several solid projects coming up, and hopefully we get rain and can catch up on getting more burns completed.

Lighting Fires

QF, NRCS, ODWC and USFWS, have come together now in NW OK to combine efforts and target specific areas with the “core area” mentality. They each have their own fund pools and are able to fund projects just like NRCS can. Therefore, more projects are being funded and completed, and at a faster rate!



We have managed to accomplish a couple good burns so far, hoping to get a few more done this spring!

Conservation Planning

- 44 Landowner Contacts
- 42 Site Visits
- 3 Projects with Acres

Other Programs	Acres Assessed	Acres Impacted
CTA USDA/Nonprogram/State Cost Share		
EQIP Brush Management, Conservation Cover, Forest Stand Improvement, Wetland Restoration, Prescribed Fire	8,000	1,515
OLAP		
CRP General, Grasslands		
GPGI Brush Management, Prescribed Grazing/ burning, IPM	20,000	
Total	28,000	1,515



Local SWCDs

Thank you so much for your support! Without this partnership, I wouldn't be able to provide assistance to private landowners and positively impact conservation in Oklahoma!



Outreach & Education

- Most of this quarter was spent out in the field or receiving/providing training. However we were able to host two burn association meetings, one in freedom, and the other in Mooreland. There I again pitched GPGI and cedar removal and SAFE firebreaks.
- There were multiple events that got postponed to later dates, and there are also many events in the works and in the infant stages of planning. Most likely spring and summer are going to be busy with events, field days, and demonstrations.

The outreach moving forward is going to be GPGI focused and getting contractors on board with what we are planning and why we are planning it so they can execute these plans.

Outreach & Education	Count
Newsletter Articles/State Facebook Articles Written	
Conservation/Outreach Event	2
Workshops	
Total	2



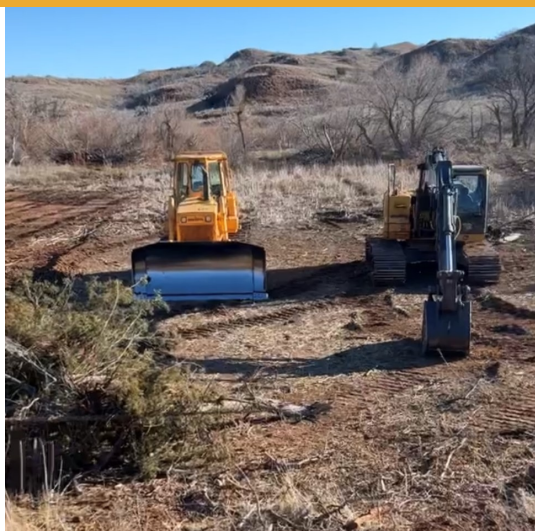
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Training contractors on why we are doing what we are, is going to be huge in getting these projects completed the way it needs.

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
CRP SAFE Training	Received training for the new CRP SAFE in the OK panhandle, highlighting framework, potential, and how the program is going to be implemented.
GPGI Training(s)	Both received, and provided trainings for GPGI.
Outreach Training	Attended a two day conference on conservation outreach for partners.
LPC Training	Received training on the LPC ESA listing, and what it will mean for NW OK and program implementation moving forward.

Looking Forward

- I will be continuing to implement GPGI in NW OK, as well as assist other regions where GPGI is being applied for the first time. The interest in NW is still growing, and Rx fire interest is at a high, even with the drought.
- I will be working with partners to host outreach meetings across the NW region, regarding programs and cedar removal. USFWS and ODWC will be assisting with these meetings as well.
- I will begin assisting in contract writing, and burn plan writing for program and CTA projects.
- I will be continuing to do the rain dance in hopes of getting some much need prescribed burns accomplished.
- I will be continue to both receive and provide trainings to partners and staff as needed/ requested.

**If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.*



Field Staff

Quarterly Partners' Report



Zach Brewer - Northeast Oklahoma Counties

January - March 2023

During the last quarter I have been assisting field office staff with EQIP Applications. I had 3 Wildlife specific EQIP applications make it to the preapproval stage that I will be assisting with during the upcoming FY23 funding year. The applications range from native grass planting to forest stand Improvement . Two of the 7 EQIP Application are had interest in the new Bobwhite, Grassland, and Savannas Initiatives.



Conservation Planning

- 4 Landowner Contacts
- 11 Habitat Proposals & Conservation Plan
- 1 NRCS Planner Training
- 13 Eligibility/ Ranking Assessment / Site Visit

Thank you so much for your support!

Other Programs	Acres Impacted
CSP--Prescribed Burn Plan (338)	7
CSP-Firebreak (394)	3
EQIP -Wildlife Habitat Planting (420)	42.32
EQIP- FSI (666)	134.15
CTA-Herbaceous Weed Control (315)	.03
CTA- ODWC Prescribed Burn (338)	4,743
EQIP- Prescribed Burn Plan	1,027.77
EQIP- Brush Management (314)	139.98
EQIP- Grazing Management (528)	265.74
EQIP- Upland Wildlife Management (645)	360.25
Total Acres	6,723.24



Field Staff

Quarterly Partners' Report



Outreach & Education

January—March 2023

- On January 16th I attended **Indian Territory QF Chapter & Tall Grass Heritage QF chapter** youth mentor hunt.
- On February 26th **Big Bluestem QF Chapter** Banquet in Bartlesville, Oklahoma
- On March 25th, I attended the **Indian Territory QF Chapter Banquet** .
- Looking Forward to **Vinita Farm Show** on April 11th
- **Nowata County 4th grade Natural Resources days** for Nowata Conservation District April 19th -21st



This photo was taken at the Indian Territory and Tall Grass Heritage QF Youth mentor hunt day at the Tulsa Bird Dog club trial grounds.

Outreach & Education	Count
Presentations Delivered	0
Outreach Events	5
Total	5



Field Staff

Quarterly Partners' Report



Zach Brewer - Northeast Oklahoma Counties

January—March 2023

Biologist's Point of View - Outreach Evening



This photo was taken while helping ODWC conduct prescribed burn Spavinew GMA on March 28th & 29th and over the two days of burning I was able to assist ODWC with 4500 acre burn on a large portion of the GMA .

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
OPJV-QF Business and Planning Meeting	Learning how to better promote outreach events and to connect with the general public and agriculture producers. Learning new monitor techniques and programs.
NRCS East Zone CSP Training	Learning how to better promote CSP and to connect with agriculture producers. Also how to better promote the CSP program and the ways programs can help improve property and operation of their farm or ranch.

**If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.*

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Northeast Oklahoma Counties



Coordinating Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Leslie Elmore- Statewide

January - March 2023

Position Update

This quarter I completed the requirements to attain job approval authority of Forest Stand Improvement. This JAA allows me to effectively assist field offices in the implementation of conservation programs in the 26 counties within the Crosstimbers region of Oklahoma—my primary work area.

Progress

Greater applicability for program funds increased opportunities for progress on a number of fronts, including partners, projects, and producers. Training and collaborative site visits helped me foster relationships with partners in eight field offices throughout central Oklahoma. Conducting timber inventories, running WHEGs, and providing management plans, associated job sheets, and shapefiles for 10 projects lightened the load for my NRCS partners.

I am most encouraged by the producers' desire and willingness to tackle multi-year, multi-faceted habitat work. The plans were complex, but scheduled in a way to suit their schedule and help them achieve their natural resource objectives.



Hack-and-squirt and prescribed fire were used in 2020 to improve the health of this oak forest and increase grazable acres. Several trees still standing are dead and canopy closure is much reduced.

Programs	Acres Impacted
EQIP-Bobwhite Initiative + CTA	
314 - Brush Management	306 + 9.8
315 - Herbaceous Weed Control	22 + 16
338 - Prescribed Fire	220 + 540
645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgt	1,347.2 + 789
666 - Forest Stand Improvement	280 + 176
Total	3,706

Conservation Planning

- ◆ 48 landowner contacts
- ◆ 11 site visits
- ◆ 6 conservation plans
- ◆ 4 management proposals
- ◆ 10 burn plans



Local SWCDs

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Coordinating Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Leslie Elmore - Statewide

January - March 2023

Outreach & Education

- Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic, the premier event of the year for Pheasants Forever, brought in a record number of attendees and afforded staff the opportunity to provide assistance to people of all ages and variety of interests.
- I reviewed and provided feed back on updates to the CP 647 - Early Successional Habitat Development - Implementation Requirements (i.e., job sheet)
- I co-presented a training with the NRCS State Biologist to NRCS partner biologists in the Shawnee, Perry, and Guthrie offices. During this training we covered assessment guides, inventory tools, protocols, and producer eligibility of the Bobwhite, Grasslands, & Savanna Initiative under EQIP.
- I provided edits and NRCS-based content for an OSU Cooperative Extension fact sheet offering guidance on many forest stand improvement tools and techniques.



The Pollinator Pathways booth prior to the arrival of more than 33,000 attendees.



Tools of the FSI trade

Outreach & Education	Count
Events/Workshops	3
Participants	107
Presentations	1
Total	2



Coordinating Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Leslie Elmore - Statewide

January - March 2023



This scene demonstrates the many concerns that arise when forest management is neglected: severely diseased trees, no herbaceous understory, no cover for wildlife, and cedar encroachment.

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
NRCS-required Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Unconscious Bias" Training 2. "Section 508" Training 3. "Vehicle Management Tool" Training 4. "Workplace Violence" Training
Oklahoma NRCS Staff Training	<i>Field Safety and Handling Uncomfortable Situations</i>
webinars	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Wildlife Considerations When Restoring Oak-Pine Woodlands</i> 2. <i>Restoring Upland Oak Forests</i> 3. <i>Managing Forests for Wildlife and Forest Health</i> 4. <i>Establishing and Managing Open Pine-Hardwood Stands</i> 5. <i>Silvopasture: What It Is and What It Is Not</i> 6. <i>Managing Hardwood Forests for Deer & Turkeys with Forest Stand Improvement</i>
Firebreak Installation	I shadowed John Mustain on a BGSi property as he discussed firebreak types and installation on steep slopes.

Looking Forward to ...

- Taking some time off before field season kicks into high gear again.

If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested, please contact me at the information below.

Leslie Elmore
Coordinating Wildlife Biologist II
Central OK + Crosstimbers Region

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