



Coordinating Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Leslie Elmore- Statewide

October - December 2021

Marginal Habitat

In partnership with ODWC's Oklahoma Land Access Program (OLAP), I worked with OLAP's coordinator to identify OLAP-enrolled properties in north-central Oklahoma that could benefit from additional conservation practice measures to further enhance wildlife habitat and future hunting opportunities.

One producer, whose property showed some promise, was willing to sign on to the PF/QF-OLAP Habitat Incentive Program. With financial incentives, this producer will leave 50-ft buffers on his alfalfa field for all of 2022. This unharvested alfalfa will provide excellent brood-rearing cover for pheasant, attracting insects necessary for chick growth, as well as nectar sources for pollinators and monarch butterflies.

This particular field was selected because of its close proximity to nesting cover and winter cover for pheasant. These field margins connect the cover types, providing safer travel corridors.

The hope is that ultimately the producer will see that small changes in his production routine can be enormously beneficial for wildlife.



Alfalfa field margins will offer food and cover to pheasant, quail, and pollinating insects.

Other Programs	Acres Impacted
CTA	
327 - Conservation Cover	2
338 - Prescribed Burning	320
511 - Forage Harvest Management	6.5
528 - Prescribed Grazing	640
EQIP	
338 - Prescribed Burning	150
Total	1,118.5

Conservation Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 13 landowner contacts ◆ 3 site visits ◆ 1 burn plan ◆ 1 habitat proposal ◆ 1 seed mix ◆ 1 QF-OLAP contract



Local SWCDs

Thank you so much for your support!

Without this partnership we would not be able to provide assistance to private landowners and positively impact conservation in Oklahoma!

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Outreach & Education

- I was invited to present to an “Introduction to Natural Resources” class of undergraduates about my career path and working as a partner biologist with NRCS and PF/QF.
- I am helping to plan the Oklahoma Chapter of The Wildlife Society virtual meeting.
- I joined the Texas QF Team call to discuss my experiences with Monarch EQIP in Oklahoma.
- I joined ODWC staff and Noble County field office staff to discuss OLAP opportunities for new habitat projects.
- My #MonarchMonday Facebook posts described how managing habitat for monarch butterflies benefits quail.
- I designed Pheasant and Pollinator WHEGs for NRCS. These WHEGs will be used by staff around the state to assist landowners in identifying the best approach to provide or improve wildlife habitat.
- I am coauthoring an Oklahoma State University Extension fact sheet on converting areas of introduced grasses to native range to co-manage for livestock and wildlife, especially grassland birds. The fact sheet explains the benefits and process of converting from introduced grasses to native range. It incorporates some NRCS guidance, while simplifying the process. Additionally, it will provide herbicide recommendations for many invasive plants—a great boon to landowners, NRCS personnel, and partner biologists.



Fire knocks back old growth and removes ground litter, making movement through the area easier for wildlife. Following an August burn, this Maximilian Sunflower is coming back strong! It will attract bugs that quail chicks need for growth in the spring and produce protein-rich seeds that quail and other birds will eat next fall. Plus, it is a favorite nectar source of monarch butterflies. #MonarchMonday.

Outreach & Education	Count
Events/Workshops	2
Participants	100
Presentations Delivered	1
Social Media Articles	2
Total	5

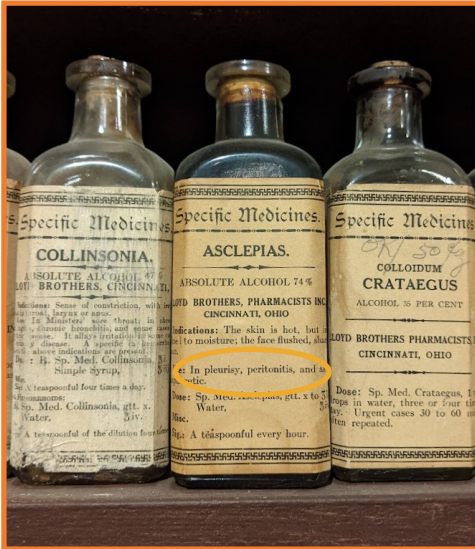


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Favorite Photos from this Quarter:

←
So that's why monarchs don't get pleurisy...

Just in time for Halloween, the butcher bird leaves evidence of his visit with his impaled prey.



Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
Great Plains Grassland Initiative meeting	NRCS hosted a GPGI meeting to inform agency personnel about a new program and discuss what was needed to make it a success.
PF/QF State Strategic Plan	I have been working with the team to create maps of current programs and future efforts within our Oklahoma State Strategic Plan for PF/QF.
LPC State Implementation Team	This was a great chance to hear about the successes and opportunities for Less Prairie-Chicken habitat protection and improvement.
Various online webinars	I watched several webinars hosted by OK Invasive Plant Council, Southern Forest Initiative, ForestHer, and Monarch Joint Venture.
MJV Partnership Engagement Series	MJV hosted a Partnership Engagement Series in lieu of the annual in-person meeting that could not be held this year. It was nice to reconnect virtually with MJV partners around the country.
USDA State Technical Committee meeting	During this virtual meeting I learned about Oklahoma's top resource concerns and NRCS programs for 2022. Afterwards I shared highlights with the Oklahoma QF team members.

Looking Forward

- Finalizing the Oklahoma Strategic Plan and getting together with my teammates.
- Finalizing a Pheasant and Pollinator WHEG, and starting on a white-tailed deer WHEG for NRCS.
- Assessments and Monarch WHEGs, which will be starting in the upcoming quarter.
- On a related note, learning to identify plant species in the rosette stage.
- Possibly attending Pheasant Fest in Nebraska.
- OK-TWS virtual meeting in early February.

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

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