

## Forestry Judging

By Dr. Kevin Allen

Forty-eight 4-H members from 5 counties participated in the 2008 State 4-H Forestry Judging Contest at Robbers Cave State Park in Wilburton. The senior team from Jay (Lindsey Hobbs, Mike Blevins, Jake Morgan, Emily Lamp, Jeff Orr - coach) placed first at this event and will represent Oklahoma at the National 4-H Forestry Invitational at Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp near Weston, West Virginia.

The Oklahoma 4-H Forestry Judging Program is designed to encourage and promote awareness and knowledge of forestry. As future leaders, 4-H members learn the complexities and tradeoffs involved in managing a forest for multiple use objectives. The competitions are 1/2day events and consist of the following five events:

- Tree Identification
- Insect and Disease Identification
- Compass and Pacing course
- Forest Evaluation
- Forestry Quiz

For further information you can access the Oklahoma 4-H Forestry Judging web site at <http://nrem.okstate.edu/Extension/judging.html> and the National 4-H Forestry Invitational at <http://www.aces.edu/n4hfi/>

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## Learning Land Management: The New Classroom

By Brady Allred<sup>1</sup>, Ryan Limb<sup>1</sup>, Scott Robertson<sup>1</sup>, and Dr. Samuel D. Fuhlendorf<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally, knowledge and practices of management for livestock or wildlife production were passed from generation to generation, employer to employee, or teacher to student. Through these simple means, appropriate management tools were spread throughout the range community. However, these traditional techniques of instruction are being interrupted and circumvented by new land owners/managers who have little

or no prior knowledge or experience in land management. Land acquisitions by wealthy individuals, investment groups, or corporations are becoming more common. These lands are often acquired with good intentions, but without appropriate experience or training. Many of these purchases are made by absentee owners who take a hands-off approach to management, often with less than desirable results.

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*Range Managers discussing principles of land management with OSU faculty.*

*Land Management continued from Page 2*

Those individuals instructed (through family, employment, or education) in range or wildlife management are familiar with a wide variety of management techniques and strategies. Most strategies have various degrees of effectiveness, but are generally more positive than negative. However, the misconception that no management is a viable option is dangerous. In the era of invasive species, woody species encroachment, and wildfire liability, no management can have long term, expensive, and perhaps irreversible consequences.

New, absentee land owners are not intentionally mismanaging their land; they simply don't have the knowledge base and experience. Individuals at Texas A&M University recognized this problem and initiated the Academy for Ranch Management in attempt to educate new land owners on proper and effective land management designed to meet their objectives. Workshops conducted by the Academy for Ranch Management consist of discussions, field tours, exercises and presentations by professors, extension specialists,

and professionals in an informal setting, allowing for questioning, discussion, and further explanation as needs arise. Topics vary from basic ecological processes to site specific applications. Aside from lecturing, presenters have the opportunity to interact individually with participants creating a unique one-on-one learning environment.

The afternoon and evenings of the workshop are used for field tours and discussion of management at a particular site. Participants see the effects of specific management practices to illustrate and reinforce concepts and principles taught in presentations. Participants are able to see first hand the effects of specific management practices and discuss the realities of applying such practices to their property and objectives and discuss with experts and among themselves the advantages and disadvantages of such strategies with respect to their specific areas or objectives. The workshop culminates with the development of real world management plans with specific objectives. The Academy is successful at teaching new, old, traditional, and nontraditional landowners the

basics of land management as well as new concepts and practices. New, nontraditional landowners are exposed to effective management strategies that they most likely would not have learned elsewhere.

Many have recognized a detachment between the science/study of rangelands and their management. Learning land management strategies often require more than simple illustration. Multiple day workshops allow for proper explanation, one on one interaction with instructors, and thorough tours of specific managed areas. The education of new landowners and teaching of appropriate management techniques will provide for continued proper management and conservation of rangelands.

If you would be interested in attending a land management course taught here in Oklahoma we would like to hear from you. You can contact Dwayne Elmore at [dwayne.elmore@okstate.edu](mailto:dwayne.elmore@okstate.edu)

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## Natural Resource News

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## Butterfly Gardening

By Dr. Fred Guthery

There is nothing quite like a butterfly garden to intensify the satisfaction you receive from sitting on your deck or patio, sipping coffee or tea, and letting stress dissipate like bad breath in Boone Pickens Stadium.

Flowers attract butterflies. These nectar feeders use a wide variety of plants so the selection of plant species is not too critical. Rather, you want a presentation that blooms early in spring and lasts until frost. The perennial sages (*Salvia* spp.) are good plants from this perspective. Another tough, long-blooming perennial is catmint. Some seasoning herbs attract butterflies so you can do

multi-task gardening. Besides the sages and mint mentioned above, oregano, basil, and lavender flowers attract butterflies. Additionally, lavender is an evergreen that adds color in winter. Apple mint, good in hot tea, is a strong attractor but the plant aggressively seizes garden territory. You have to plan for this aggression if you plant apple mint.

Another way to multi-task is with flowers that attract birds and butterflies. One of my favorites from this standpoint is penta, a showy annual that ruby-throated hummingbirds like. Lantana also attracts hummingbirds and seeing

one of the most beautiful sights nature offers, plant purple coneflower. Then wait and hope for an American goldfinch to land on a blossom and extract seeds from this sunflower.

A pair of close-focus binoculars helps you observe, appreciate, and identify butterflies. The best field guide for our region is *Butterflies of Oklahoma, Kansas, and North Texas* by John M. Dole, John M. Nelson, and Walter B. Gerard (University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

*Dr. Fred Guthery is a Professor and the Bollenbach Chair at Oklahoma State University.*



*A question mark butterfly extracts nectar from a purple coneflower.*

## 4-H WHEP Program

By Dr. Dwayne Elmore

The 4-H tradition is strong in Oklahoma and continues to impact thousands of youth annually. These youth are taught life skills each year through the various curriculum and contests in each of our counties. One such contest is WHEP which stands for the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program. This contest is a 4-H natural resource program that teaches wildlife and fisheries habitat management.

This program has been widely recognized for excellence, and in fact won the Wildlife Society Conservation Education Award in 1996. Many youth participants have gone on to become natural resource professionals. However, the vast majority choose other career paths but take with them valuable information on natural resource stewardship along with skills such as leadership, confidence, teamwork, and communication.

In Oklahoma we have several dedicated coaches that train their teams in preparation for the state contest which is usually held in late spring. In this contest, the 4-Hers compete in 3 contest parts: a general wildlife quiz, a habitat evaluation for a property, and a management plan.



*The winning 4-H team from 2007 traveled to Utah to compete in the National WHEP Contest.*

The great thing about WHEP is that it is hands-on. The youth are giving recommendations for a real piece of land that often has many land uses including agriculture. Thus, the experience they receive will help them in all aspects of land management.

The winning team is eligible to compete at the National Invitational in July. This contest rotates around the country and will be held in Oklahoma for the first time this year. Contributions from our donor; OGE, allows us to provide financial assistance to the winning team to help with travel costs to the National Contest each year. To be eligible youth must be between the ages of 8-13 (junior) or 14-18 (senior) and be a registered 4-H member.

You can contact your local OSU Cooperative Extension office for more information. Youth can participate as either individuals or teams (3-4 members) but only senior teams are eligible for the National Contest. Specific information about the contest and an online WHEP manual can be found at [www.whep.org](http://www.whep.org).

We are always ready to assist new coaches in learning about WHEP and we even offer a training session each year. Anyone can be a WHEP coach and no prior experience with wildlife is needed. Coaches are sure to find that youth are eager to participate in this wildlife program and have tremendous fun competing with other youth from around the state or country. If you would like more information on WHEP or would like to start a team, please contact Dwayne Elmore at [dwayne.elmore@okstate.edu](mailto:dwayne.elmore@okstate.edu) or 405-744-9636.



**Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program**

*Dr. Dwayne Elmore is the Extension Wildlife Specialist at Oklahoma State University.*

# Understanding Creeks

By Dr. Marley Beem

If you are blessed with a creek, you have something of value that can greatly add to your enjoyment of a property. In general, rocky bottom creeks provide the best habitat for fish but any creek with well vegetated banks provides a tremendous benefit – they are a durable, self repairing means of handling high flows that would otherwise erode adjacent land.

Along with the benefits of creek ownership there are also some dangers and pitfalls for the uninformed. Whether your creek is a large one that flows year round or a small one that is dry more often than not, it is vulnerable to some common mismanagement.

Woe to the landowner who decides to “clean up” a creek by clearing off the brush, trees and other deep rooted perennials from the banks. The deep roots of those plants are what hold the creek bank together against the cutting power of the water.

Woe to the landowner who doesn't recognize a floodplain and builds their home or other structures in one. When water overflows a healthy creek channel and spills into a floodplain it replenishes soil moisture and lessens downstream flooding.

Woe to the landowner whose creek's watershed is eroding for the sediment will silt in the creek bottom, suffocating the crawdads, insects, and fish eggs.

Woe to the landowner whose creek's watershed becomes urbanized. Added runoff from streets and rooftops will increase the flow the creek channel must handle, usually resulting in deepening and widening of the channel.

Woe to the landowner who lets cattle trample the creek banks. The soils are soft and easily damaged by too many hooves.

Creeks have an amazing ability to holdup under high flows but can be opened up to severe damage when the landowner doesn't appreciate how they work or

when there are negative influences in the watershed beyond the landowner's control. By the time most creek owners notice a serious problem, it is usually too late for an affordable solution.

Take time to enjoy and understand your creek and do what you can to avoid damage to it. For more information on managing creeks read [E-952, “Riparian Area Management Handbook”](#)

*Dr. Marley Beem is an Assistant Extension Specialist at Oklahoma State University.*



*An example of a healthy stream. Photo courtesy of marcsrupert.com*

## Students

### Range Club Wins Big at International Meeting

The OSU Student Chapter of the Society for Range Management (SRM) attended the Annual SRM Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky on January 27-30. The students successfully competed in the Undergraduate Rangeland Management Exam competing against 23 other universities. Jonathon Kelly tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> High Individual with amongst 143 students. The Range Club also placed 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the display board competition with an entry titled *Oklahoma's Grasslands and Rangelands*.



Members attending the meeting were: Kneeling (L to R) Chris Hobbs and Rusty Norrie. Standing (L to R) Kevin Parsons, Cambra Soukup, Kevin Spears, Colin Walden, P.J. Martin, Kyle Cothren and Dr. Karen Hickman. Not pictured: Jonathan Kelly.

### PREPARING FOR A CAREER IN SCIENCE AT OSU

First you are born and thereafter you age, like a book in the breeze turning page after page. About Chapter 5—Undergraduate School—is the time of your life as a general rule, you encounter new friends, new ideas, and new thoughts. And then after awhile you'll discover you've got, perspective and knowledge, a much better mind. And you'll say to yourself, "What a marvelous find! But the pages keep turning, which leads to a fix, because soon you will have to begin Chapter 6. Perhaps you will have a career in science. If so you will have to emplace some reliance on powerful precepts, both simple and true, that might make a new Albert Einstein of you. You must be as honest as Abraham L. If you're doubting as Thomas you'll surely do well. And do not forget that it's good to rebel. So stand up and shout: "Let them all go to hell!" But wherever you go and whatever you do, you'll be thankful you came when you leave OSU.

*Courtesy of Dr. Fred Guthery*

## Giving to NREM

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