

*Mission: to unite as citizens and actively engage in the preservation of the Spring Creek Watershed*

*Please contact SCC to be removed from or added to this mailing list*

**Spring Creek Coalition**  
**P.O. Box 217**  
**Peggs, Oklahoma 74452**

## Spring Creek Watershed Landowners

### Winter 2010 Newsletter



THE MOST PRISTINE  
LARGE OZARK STREAM  
IN OKLAHOMA  
MANAGED AND  
PROTECTED BY  
PRIVATE  
LANDOWNERS

**Phone: (918) 637-1449**

**Email [info@springcreekok.org](mailto:info@springcreekok.org)**

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED— SAVE CAVE SPRINGS!

**Saturday, March 20th 11-3 pm**

- SCC needs your help to plant 300 bare root trees at the flood damaged area of Cave Springs
- Weiner roast for the kids
- Rain or shine
- Contact Jennifer Owen at 918-637-1449 for information

**Location:** Cave Springs bridge at Peggs.

**Directions:** Go 7.5 miles south of the Cherokee Turnpike at Locust Grove on State Hwy. 82. Turn east on E640 Road, and go 3/10 of a mile to the “T” at Peggs Cemetery. Turn left going north, and it is 1 mile to the bridge.

## Riparian Zones—Planting Trees Can Help Save Our Creek

The word “riparian” is derived from the Latin *ripa*, meaning riverbank, and is the interface between land and stream. A riparian buffer is a vegetative strip along a stream, usually forested, which helps protect a stream from impact of adjacent land uses. It plays a significant role in increasing water quality by filtering sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other ecological hazards from surface run-off before it enters the stream. Riparian buffers also stabilize the stream bank, which prevents excessive erosion that causes the stream to become wide and shallow. They also serve as habitat and wildlife corridors in primarily agricultural areas.

A riparian buffer is usually split into three different zones, each having its unique purpose for filtering runoff and interacting with the adjacent aquatic system. Buffer design is a key element in the effectiveness of the buffer. It is generally recommended that native species be chosen to plant in these three zones, with the general width of the buffer being 50 feet on each side of the stream.

**Zone 1.** This zone should function mainly to shade the water source and act as a bank stabilizer. The zone should include large native tree species that grow fast and can act quickly to perform these tasks. This is usually the smallest of the three zones and absorbs the fewest contaminants as most of the contaminants have been eliminated by Zone 2 and Zone 3.

**Zone 2.** Made up of native shrubs, this zone provides habitat for wildlife, including nesting areas for bird species. This zone also acts to slow and absorb contaminants that Zone 3 has missed. The zone is an important transition between grassland and forest.

**Zone 3.** This zone is important as the first line of defense against contaminants. It consists mostly of native grasses and serves to slow water runoff and begin to absorb contaminants before they reach the other zones.



Volunteers plant trees to control erosion

Creating riparian buffers in northeast

Oklahoma is simple: fence out livestock and refrain from cutting natural vegetation for instant results. There are several programs available, such as EQUIP and WHIP, which can assist with costs of fencing and habitat rehabilitation. Contact SCC for information.

### Poultry Trial Set to Conclude in Early February

Presiding U.S. District Judge Gregory Frizzell set closing arguments for Feb. 11 in the state's lawsuit involving the poultry industry's alleged role in polluting the Illinois River watershed. He gave the parties until Feb. 5 to submit proposed written findings to the court.



The Illinois River near Elephant Rock The lawsuit against the poultry industry, which began September 24 in Tulsa, claims that poultry companies are legally responsible for the handling and disposal of poultry waste that the state says has damaged portions of the Illinois River watershed.

The poultry companies deny any wrongdoing and claim the manure is property of their contract growers who use it as a cheap fertilizer. As the trial stretched into its thirteenth week in mid-December, the prosecution ended its case.

Attorneys representing the poultry industry rested their case January 13. The first expert for the defense testified that the dominant source of phosphorous that spurs the production of algae in the Illinois River comes from wastewater treatment plants rather than poultry litter.

In December, Frizzell dismissed one of

Oklahoma's key claims in its pollution lawsuit. He ruled that bird manure is not "solid waste" under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976.

Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson said the loss of the federal claim is "serious" and that he plans to appeal the ruling to the 10<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Additionally, Frizzell earlier rejected a request by the Cherokee Nation that it be included as a plaintiff in the case, saying their motion was not filed in a timely manner. The Cherokee Nation continues to contest this decision.

For details on the witnesses' presentations and the current status of the trial, go online to [www.tulsaworld.com](http://www.tulsaworld.com) and search on poultry litter lawsuit or related key words.

### Scientists Serve as Advisory Body – NSU Students Perform Research

A group of professors and scientists met in July 2009 and agreed to serve as an advisory body to the Spring Creek Coalition to support our science needs for the preservation of Spring Creek. Dr. David McNeely, retired biology professor and recognized authority on Spring Creek fishes, led the meeting, which also was hosted by Jennifer Owen, landowner.



NSU students use an electro-shocker and seines to monitor fish

"The most rewarding

outcome of the meeting for me was the enthusiasm of the people there," said Jennifer. "Even at 5 pm they were still pumped and didn't want to leave."

Some of the first tangible results of the formation of this advisory group have been creek research trips led by one of the scientists, Dr. Amy Smith of Northeastern State University (NSU).



Each fish is identified and measured

Nine students from Dr. Smith's Fisheries Research Methods Class performed research near the Timberlake portion of Spring Creek in September. The students used a backpack electroshocker and seines to assess the fish community at the creek.

"This hands-on field outing provided an opportunity for students to learn how to safely use fisheries sampling tools such as backpack electroshock equipment and seines," said Dr. Smith. "They also learned how to identify fish communities in different habitats such as pools, riffles, and runs.

In November Dr. Smith's limnology (defined as "the study of inland waters") class did a rapid habitat assessment of the creek. Outings such as these help Spring Creek by providing a baseline assessment of its health.

Members of the Scientists Advisory Body are:  
• David McNeely, chair, professor (retired), UT Brownsville & Langston University

- Kip Heth, professor, MSSU
- David Martinez, biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Connie Murray, professor, TCC
- Mia Revels, professor, NSU
- Amy Smith, professor, NSU
- Bruce Smith, teacher, McLoud High School
- John Walker, professor (retired), TCC

### Time to Order Trees Again!

Know where you can buy trees for less than \$1.00 apiece?

The Oklahoma Forestry Services is currently accepting orders for bare root and containerized seedlings for conservation purposes including windbreaks, wildlife habitat, and erosion control. They offer over 30 species and will help you identify the best choices based on your specific plans and region. Most trees are one or two years old ranging from 6 to 16 inches in height and sold in bundles of 50.

Contact ODAFF at 800-517-3673 or their website at [www.forestry.ok.gov](http://www.forestry.ok.gov) for more information, or simply follow the link on the SCC website. Better hurry – orders are accepted through March and supplies are limited. SCC has planted over 1,800 trees in the watershed through this program!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

Visit us out on the web at <http://springcreekok.org>.