



Dover, Oklahoma Solar Water Well Demonstration Project

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
Final CIG Project Report
**“Enhancing Agriculture Production for Native American &
Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers**
October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2015
USDA-NRCSR Grant 10.912

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Program Overview

The project offers an innovative approach for enhancing agricultural production and sustainability of Native American and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, and Ranchers (NA&SDFR) in Oklahoma. The project has a dual purpose: to enhance NA&SDFR access to USDA programs; and to improve NA&SDFR's agricultural production capacity and drought resilience and so improve their sustainability on the farm. This purpose will be attained through the following objectives: enhance the networks and collaborations with NA&SDFR in Oklahoma; identify NA&SDFR needs; identify NA&SDFR's obstacles to participation in USDA programs; develop culturally sensitive outreach and training programs to enhance NA&SDFR awareness of-and participation in USDA programs; and to enhance NA&SDFR adoption of solar water pumps and other green technology as a means of improving their drought resilience. This outreach effort not only offers a fresh approach to the provision of technical assistance, but it is culturally sensitive and geared toward substantially reducing the USDA class action claims.

The project has the following specific objectives:

- Enhance community networks and collaboration with NA&SDFR in Oklahoma
- Identify the needs of NA&SDFR
- Identify the obstacles to NA&SDFR access to USDA programs and support services
- Conduct workshops to enhance NA&SDFR's ability to access USDA programs and support services
- Demonstrate the solar water system to NA&SDFR
- Assist NA&SDFR EQIP-eligible producers to apply for assistance with installation of the solar water system (pump)
- Assist NA&SDFR in their applications for other USDA programs
- Build a culturally appropriate protocol for NA&SDFR communication with USDA and access to USDA programs and support services.

Program of Work

OASDFR Program Priority Areas	Activities Addressing these priority areas	Who is Responsible
Collection and analysis of information on the number of actual and prospective socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers	Community meetings with farmers in the communities Focus groups with farmers short surveys conducted at each meeting to gather data on needs and obstacles	OBHRP, LU, OSU
Outreach to identify the root causes of failure and solutions to achieve equitable participation with USDA agricultural programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 8 FG discussions with farmers about: obstacles experienced accessing USDA programs, information & services and solutions from the farmers' perspective 2. FG Data analysis to discern: i) main obstacles and causes ii) solutions suggested by farmers 	Consultant & All partners

	3. Discussion of results with the partners to brainstorm further about possible solutions	
Development and deployment of improved approaches to outreach and technical assistance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of a preliminary protocol for accessing USDA programs based on obstacles and possible solutions identified 2. Outreach in collaboration with all partners to inform farmers about available programs and services 3. FG discussions with farmers about the preliminary protocol for accessing services so as to gather farmers' feedback on the viability of the protocol in overcoming identified obstacles. 4. Discussion among the partners to adjust protocol per the farmers' suggestions 5. Finalization of the protocol 6. Application of the protocol with one-on-one training of 50 farmers on accessing USDA programs and utilizing them to improve farm productivity and access to markets 	All partners, farmers in the focus geographic area, & the Consultant
Establishment of metrics by which to measure success of approaches	Creation of and evaluation of the protocol that is used by farmers to access USDA programs	All partners
Collection and analysis of information on the success of the chosen approaches	Project Evaluation	All partners
	Documentation of all project activities and written final report	OBHRP

Detailed Project Activities and the Time Frame

Activity	Who	When
<p>1- Connecting Partners- a meeting of all collaborative partners to build collaboration and cooperation, and networks among partners to share our responsibilities according to each partners skills and abilities</p> <p>ii) Draw agreements on data sharing, protection of farmer confidentiality and other necessary arrangements for running the project</p> <p>iii) Communication for outreach activities</p>	All Partners & Consultant	October 2013
<p>2-Planning Meetings with all partners to set up a schedule for outreach meetings and focus groups, identification of the 50 farmers to be trained, workshops, conferences and all project activities</p>	All Partners & Consultant	October 2013

3-Workshops & Community meetings i)tell them about the project ii)raise awareness of USDA programs recruit focus group participants iii)identify at least 50 farmers for one-on-one training	All Partners	October-December 2013
4-Intensive interviews & Focus Group meetings (FG) 8 FG with farmers to answer the questions: i) What obstacles/problems do you experience in communicating with USDA or accessing their programs? ii) What do you see as the best solution to these obstacles/problems that you experience in communicating with USDA or accessing their program? iii)Analysis of FG and intensive interviews data to identify problems and solutions from farmers' perspective	Consultant	October-December 2013
5-Identify farmers interested in different programs:- evaluation sheets will have a question about their interests and a statement that asks farmers to call if they are interested in any of the programs-they will obtain-sign-up sheet for farmers who are interested in the different programs- we can have farmers that represent different USDA programs (barns, NRCS –conservation – construction of diversion terraces, loans, benefits and maintenance of watershed, RD- and different production modes/farm activities	All partners	October-December 2013
6-Annual small farm conference— publicize the project and give USDA an opportunity to present their programs to the farmers-theme USDA programs		November 2013
7-Program-Access Protocol Development: i)Meet with partners to develop a USDA programs-access protocol for farmers based on the farmer-identified obstacles and solutions for communication with USDA and accessing USDA programs-set up a tentative protocol	All partners	January 2014
8-Program-Access Protocol Development:- Farmer input i)present tentative protocol to farmers to get feedback in 8 FG-like meetings ii)adjust protocol per farmer suggestions	Consultant	February 2014
9- Program-Access Protocol Development:- completing including feedback from farmers to adjust and finalize the protocol	All partners	February 2014
10-Conference in focusing on the problems identified through the focus groups- present the developed protocol to all farmers and make it easier to make contact with farmers- invite more of them to apply the protocol with our assistance. Present the protocol on a power point. Invite more participation from the farmers to use the developed protocol- publicizing the protocol and asking for participation- small leaflet of the protocol to give to the farmers- breakout sessions for discussion on the protocol for those accessing FSA, NRCS, and RD programs so that at the end of the conference the farmers know the protocol	All partners	March 2014
11- Program-Access Protocol application and testing i)Use protocol to one-on-one to assist farmers to communicate and	All partners	March-September

access USDA programs and services ii)Keep a record of all the farmers using the protocol plus their successes and obstacles experienced-February-September		2014
12-Monthly Evaluating protocol and make necessary adjustments based on success and obstacles experienced.	All partners	March-September 2014
13-Evaluation conference with farmers and partners that participated in the programs-one-on-one training, protocol for accessing services-let the farmers evaluate the project and what was good about the approach, what was not good, how we could improve it in the future.	All partners	End of August 2014
14-Final Evaluation of all programs activities and final adjustment of the developed protocol i) Measure successes of the protocol- did farmers gain access to programs? ii)measure successes of project- small survey of what farmers have done since their involvement with the programs iii)Numbers of farmers served iv)Access to programs in different agencies v)Publish protocol in a leaflet that is easily distributed to farmers for future reference and use	All partners	September 2014

Expected Results

Increase awareness of USDA programs by the NA&SDFR in Oklahoma
Improved communication between USDA and NA&SDFR in Oklahoma
Increased access to USDA programs by the NA&SDFR in Oklahoma
Increase record-keeping and farm planning by NA&SDFR in Oklahoma
Less marginalization and perceptions of discrimination by USDA among NA&SDFR in Oklahoma
An effective NA&SDFR-oriented communication and access protocol that will improve access to USDA programs in a less intimidating manner for NA&SDFR in Oklahoma

Program Activities Highlights

The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRPI) staff consisted of David Stephens, Outreach Specialist, Shar Carter, Outreach Specialist, Alfred McKerson, Sandra Wade-Penn, Outreach Specialist/Coordinator, and Willard Tillman, Program Director. They met to work on schedules, the CIG Plan of Work, and organize the 15th Annual Small Farmers Conference in November 2013.



OBRRPI Staff Meeting, Langston University/Oklahoma City

During the two year CIG Project, the staff met with the following:

- Local and State NRCS Officials
- USDA FSA and RD Officials
- McCurtain County Goat Growers Association
- Langston University Agriculture Department
- Oklahoma State University
- Northeastern Oklahoma State University
- Oklahoma Farmers & Ranchers Association (OFRA)
- East Dover Farmers & Ranchers Association
- Cherokee Nation
- Muscogee Creek Nation
- Choctaw Nation
- Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
- Seminole Nation
- Creek Nation
- Kiowa tribal members
- Oklahoma Tribal Ag Council
- Project A, Muskogee, Oklahoma
- Mayors of Boley and Rentiesville, Oklahoma
- And Others

January 9, 2014 – OBRRPI Staff Meeting, Langston University/Oklahoma City - The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRPI) staff: David Stephens, Outreach Specialist, Shar Carter, Outreach Specialist, Alfred McKerson, Outreach Specialist, Sandra Wade-Penn, Outreach Specialist/Coordinator, and Willard Tillman, Program Director, met to work on schedules, the CIG Plan of Work, and organize the Rural Development Conference.

The staff developed preliminary plans for second quarter CIG activities. Focus groups were identified in Slick, Tatums, Dover, Ardmore, and Boley, Oklahoma. Woody Colbert, Rural Coalition Coordinator, explained the USDA FSA loan application process.

Willard Tillman explained procedures for farmers to work with the NRCS. He would invite USDA NRCS officials to the next staff meeting. A solar water system was planned for the Spencer area to use as a demonstration site by March. It would provide water for row crops.

February 20, 2014 – OBRRPI Staff Meeting, Langston University/Oklahoma City - The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRPI) staff: David Stephens, Outreach Specialist, Shar Carter, Outreach Specialist, Alfred McKerson, Outreach Specialist, Sandra Wade-Penn, Outreach Specialist/Coordinator, and Willard Tillman, Program Director, met for training from the USDA NRCS and FSA officials, the CIG activities, and continued to organize the Rural Development Conference.

USDA NRCS officials, Chad Kacir and Matt Ward from the Oklahoma State NRCS Office, explained procedures for farmers to work with the NRCS. They explained that the EQIP sign-up is continual, however, funds may not be available at the time. They maintain a waiting list funded on a first come, first served basis with a priority point system.



Chris Sala, USDA FSA Guthrie, Oklahoma, explained how to apply for FSA loans and how to become eligible to apply for NRCS cost-share programs, such as EQIP and CSP. Handouts were given to the staff and the staff was informed about an upcoming NRCS Field Day that was to be announced.

November 22-23, 2013 – The OBRPI 15th Annual “Survival Strategies for Limited Resource, Native American and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers” Conference was held in Wewoka, Oklahoma. Despite inclement weather, 221 socially disadvantaged farmers were in attendance. (See Agenda in the Appendix). A USDA Natural Resources Conservation attended the conference with a booth and passed out Conservation Applications to farmers. A local farmers listening session was held where farmers told their stories regarding service provided by the USDA agencies. A panel discussion followed where the NRCS, FSA, and Rural Development Agency told about their services available and how the farmers’

problems could possibly be resolved. Farmers completed a survey (See Appendix) to assess their needs and concerns and conference evaluation form.

Farmers' concerns were: USDA NRCS EQIP program, Schedule F in the Income Tax Return, Solar water systems, the 504 RD Grant Program, and the Micro-Loans from USDA FSA.



OBRPI 15th Annual "Survival Strategies for Limited Resource, Native American and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers" Conference

David Stephens of OBHRPI gave presentation on "Renewable Energy and The Farm" which highlighted "Solar Water Well Systems" and NRCS EQIP Program. Willard Tillman, Exec. Dir. OBHRPI delivered a presentation on "Plasticulture".



Charlotte Carter, OBRPI Outreach Specialist, assists small farmers

March 21, 22, 2014 - The 8th Annual OBHRPI Rural Economic Development Conference, Langston University/Oklahoma City. David Stephens, OBRRPI Outreach Specialist, presented "Solar Water Panel" presentation. All of the staff assisted with the conference in various capacities. Ninety-four persons attended the conference where socially disadvantaged farmers including African-American, Native-American, and female farmers were present. Native-American tribal members included the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribe of Oklahoma, Cherokee, Citizen Pottawatomie, and Creek Nation.



The Agenda included the following:

Friday, March 21st

Langston University Agriculture Dept.Dwight Guy, USDA 1890 Liaison

Benefits of USDA Programs.....Dr. Carol Crouch, USDA Team-NRCS, FSA & RD

Keynote Speaker, Christian Obineme, Associate Director,

USDA, Office of Advocacy and Outreach, Washington, DC

Workshops:

- Solar Water Systems..__D. Stephens
- Schedule F____Calvin Whittaker
- Forestry Management 101
- The Economic Impact of the new Farm Bill on America's
- Small Farmer” _____Lorette Piciano, Exec. Dir., Rural Coalition, Washington, DC

USDA 1894 Program.....Lawrence Shorty, USDA, Washington, DC

Local Farmers & Ranchers Listening Session

Understanding USDA Programs Panel Discussion, NRCS, FSA, RD, Dr. Carol Crouch, Moderator

Keynote Speaker, “Economic Strategies of Small & Socially Disadvantaged Farmers”

Mr. Leonard Jordan, Associate Director for Conservation, USDA NRCS Washington, DC

USDA Program Application Process. __Dr. Carol Crouch



Dr. Carol Crouch & Lawrence Shorty

Dr. Carol Crouch, USDA NRCS State Office, delivered a step-by-step presentation about the “USDA Program Application Process”. The packet included the EQIP Application for applying for funds for a solar water well and other practices. She mentioned a new NRCS initiative - the Soil Health Trailer that will be available soon. Dr. Crouch stressed the importance of planning for our children and grandchildren’s futures.

April 22, 2014 – Boley, Oklahoma –Willard Tillman, Executive Director of OBHRPI, delivered a presentation about the CIG Project’s solar water well system. OBHRPI assisted the Town of Boley received a \$59,000 grant from the USDA Rural Development to upgrade their water system. Pat O’Brian, USDA Undersecretary with Rural Development presented the town’s committee chairman with the check. David Stephens, Alfred McKerson, and Sandra Wade-Penn, Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project Inc. (OBHRPI) staff, also visited with the farmers.



The Town of Boley receiving a \$59,000 grant from the USDA Rural Development

June 11, 2014 – Woodward, Oklahoma – The 5th Annual OSU Camp TURF Field Day was held on the Anichi-Moore Ranch and Farm owned by Kathy Moore, a farmer who networks Sandra Wade-Penn. 92

farmers and youth were in attendance. Willard Tillman delivered a presentation about the CIG Project's solar water well system featuring the Spencer, Oklahoma Project. Alfred McKerson and Sandra Wade-Penn were in attendance.



Willard Tillman delivered a presentation about the CIG Project's solar water well system in Woodward



July 30-31, 2014 – Okmulgee, Oklahoma – The OBHRPI co-sponsored and facilitated the “Empowering Youth, Veterans, Ranchers and Farmers Annual Conference”. 194 farmers, youth and agriculture professionals were in attendance. Some of the highlights were as follows:

- Solar Water Well Presentation – David Stephens, Outreach Specialist, Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
- USDA Panel –Ryan McMullen, State Director, RD, Tiffany Larry, Loan Specialist, FSA, Ronald Goedecke, Okmulgee County District Conservationist, NRCS, and Cheryl Bailey, Cooperative Forestry Management, USDA Forest ServiceWillard Tillman, Moderator
- Climate – Jeanne Schneider, Lead, USDA ARS Southern Plains Regional Climate Hub

- Soil Erosion Steven Alspach, Soil Scientist
- USDA Forest Service Cheryl Bailey, Cooperative Forestry Management, USDA
- Forest Service
- Panel of Young Ag Professionals - Joe Bufford, Tiffany Larry and Albert Holloway & Son, Ag Producers
- NRCS Programs – Gary O’Neill, Okla. State Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Charlotte Carter, OBHRPI Outreach Specialist, Willard Tillman and Sandra Wade-Penn coordinated the conference along with June Marshall, Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, who co-sponsored the conference.



Willard Tillman acting as Moderator with the Farmers' Panel

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project Inc. and Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Hosts second annual Native American Farmers Conference. This year the 2nd Annual Conference was expanded to two days. This year featured a number of presenters from USDA, Tribal and community based organizations. In addition to the focus on Native American Ag Producers and Rural Landowners, this year the conference also featured programs targeting youth.

The topics ranged from USDA NRCS Programs RD Programs, FSA Programs and Forest Service Programs which featured a visit and presentation by Smokey the Bear. As with all OBHRPI Conferences, attendees had the opportunity to directly interact with USDA officials from the Local, State and National offices.

Additionally, the conference featured a presentation and discussion about the 'OBHRPI 'Solar Water Well' initiative. OBHRPI reps showed a video and presented information about the completion of the first of four Solar Water Well demonstration projects. During the presentation, several representatives for the NRCS State Office explained that recent changes in legislation eliminated the use of this type application for crop/land irrigation. OBHRPI discussed their 3 future projects which would be projects providing water for livestock, which is allowed under the new legislation.

Another new feature added this year was presentation by young minority USDA employees. This gave the youth attending the event the opportunity to hear from young professionals how and why they choose a career in agriculture.

September 20, 2014 – Hugo, Oklahoma - OBHRPI hosted a community meeting and Solar Water Well Demonstration. The activity was held at the Ranch of Albert Holloway which is located southwest of Hugo, Oklahoma. This was the location of the second completed Solar Water Well CIG Project.



As shown in the photos, attendees were given background information about OBHRPI, and the CIG projects. All were instructed to visit the NRCS offices, register their farms and inquire about the EQIP program.

September 27, 2014 – Dover, Oklahoma – The East Dover Livestock Association and the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project Inc. co-sponsored an educational farm field day. Sandra Wade-Penn, Coordinator/Outreach Specialist of OBHRPI, coordinated the field day by creating a flyer and sending the information to the Logan County Courier and the Guthrie News Leader, inviting farmers, and recruiting speakers for the day. Twenty farmers attended the field day. Dr. Steve Hart, Langston University Research Scientist, discussed forage management, Gary O’Neill, State Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, discussed EQIP, CSP and other NRCS programs, and Willard Tillman discussed the CIG Project. The farmers visited three of the association member’s farms to view the solar well water system and various forages.

news@lccourier.com

Have News?
Call 969-2215

Educational Farm Field Day

Lone Oak Community Center – Dover, Oklahoma

September 27, 2014
10am - 1pm

- Forage Management
- Solar Well Water Pumps

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs
- Tour Native & Improved Pastures

Please RSVP by September 22nd:
(405) 740-6164 or swade03@hotmail.com

Rain or Shine – Lunch will be Provided.

Co-Sponsored by the East Dover Livestock Association & The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.

Directions: From Crescent-Dover Rd. in Crescent, go West to NW 2920 Rd., turn right, go North for 3 miles to EW 700 Rd., turn left, go 3 ½ mi. West to the community center on the Southside of the road. From Dover, go 1 mile North on Hwy 61, turn right on EW 700 Rd., for 2 ½ miles to the community center on the right.

All educational programs conducted by Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. are provided to all persons regardless of race, national origin, religion or disability.

The Logan County Courier

September 18, 2014



Willard Tillman delivered a presentation about the CIG Project’s solar water well system in Dover



October 27, 2014 – Meeting with the East Dover Farmers & Ranchers Association was attended by eleven farmers at a three hour monthly meeting. Topics discussed were the CIG solar-powered water well demonstration project at Frank Caldwell's farm, the need for a recordkeeping session and the passing on of animals to new farmers. Frank Caldwell stated that the water tank has been full since the solar-powered water well has been running. Sandra Wade-Penn will facilitate a recordkeeping session at the next monthly meeting, November 24th. The Livestock Committee decided to meet on Saturday, November 1 to inspect farmers' facilities to see if they are adequate for receiving pass-on animals.

November 15, 2014 – Tri-County Meeting in Boley, Oklahoma was attended by Sandra Wade-Penn, Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, and Woody Colbert, OBHRPI Volunteer. The meeting was attended by 55 socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and featured presentations by the USDA, Oklahoma State University Extension Service and Langston University. A recordkeeping presentation was presented, and an update on crop insurance was presented by the Risk Management Agency. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, invited the farmers to 2014 Annual Small Farms Conference and Sandra Wade-Penn passed out flyers.

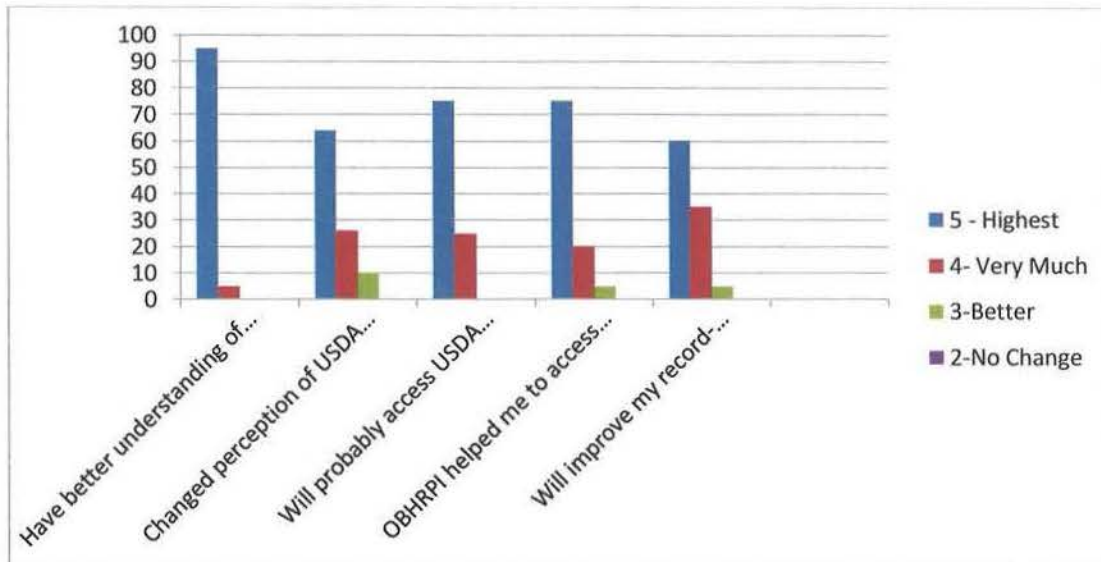
November 21-22 – 2014 – Annual Small Farms Conference, Muskogee, Oklahoma, was held which highlighted by a presentation from Keynote Speaker is Patrice Kunesh, is the Deputy Under Secretary for the USDA-Rural Development Program. Prior to joining the USDA, Patrice Kunesh, of Standing Rock Lakota descent, served as the Deputy Solicitor for Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior, where she supervised the work of the Solicitor's Office on a breadth of matters concerning American Indian tribes and individual Indians, Indian lands, and Indian gaming. She stated that the USDA is committed to assisting our rural communities with their small businesses, farming and ranching operations in order to strengthen Oklahoma's economy. Saturday's Keynote speaker is Wendell Parish, Community Organizer, Jackson, Mississippi, who spoke about the theme of the conference, ***"Tools to Assist Small Farmers & Rural Residents During Difficult Times"***. Other presentations included cooperative development in agriculture, housing, marketing, small businesses and credit unions in low income communities. David Stephens, OBHRPI Outreach Specialist, gave presentation on "Solar Water Well Systems" and the NRCS EQIP Program.

Other information included USDA Rural Housing Grants and Low-Interest Loans, USDA NRCS Cost Share Programs, Recordkeeping, cooperative development in agriculture and marketing, an Update on the USDA Lawsuits and Settlements, Solar Water Well Systems and an Awards Presentation to longtime supporters and partners. 125 farmers were in attendance for the eight hour meeting.



2014 Annual Small Farms Conference, Muskogee, Oklahoma

Evaluation forms from the conference revealed the following findings:



95% of the farmers who completed the survey have a better understanding of USDA programs. 64% changed their perception of USDA programs, 26% changed their perception of USDA programs somewhat. 75% will probably access USDA programs. 25% might access USDA programs. 75% stated OBHRPI helped them to access USDA programs. 20% stated OBHRPI helped them somewhat to access USDA programs. 60% will improve their record-keeping/planning. 35% may improve their record-keeping/planning.

December 6, 2014 – The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project Inc., Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD) partnered to be a sponsor for the *All Nations Pow-wow* held on December 6, 2014, in Ada, Oklahoma, at the East Central University Kerr Center.

There were 71 federally recognized Tribes and over 3,000 in attendance. Attendees included; American Indian families, American Indian dancers, college students, Chickasaw Nation Tribal leaders and professionals from across the state and Tribes from five other states. Over 2500 pieces of USDA informational and education materials were handed out. A special presentation of the NRCS 2014 American Indian Heritage poster was made to the fifteen members of the *Otter Trail* drum group.

Dr. Carol Crouch, NRCS State Tribal Liaison, stated, “This is a great opportunity for NRCS and our partners to be visible at an American Indian cultural event where the *grass root* American Indian landowners, their families and veterans had the opportunity to learn more about USDA programs.”



Dancers and honorary veteran dancers and elders. NRCS 2014 American Indian Heritage poster.

December 8, 2014 – Meeting with the East Dover Farmers & Ranchers Association was attended by eight farmers at a three hour monthly meeting. Kingfisher County NRCS Soil Conservationist, Brandon Burns, delivered a presentation about the USDA NRCS programs in Kingfisher County, the EQIP and CSP programs and the local Conservation District’s grants. He picked up a Kingfisher County NRCS Needs Survey, which Sandra Wade-Penn of OBHRPI, passed out to the East Dover farmers and ranchers at the November meeting. Topics discussed were passing on of animals to new farmers, and holding a recordkeeping session at the next meeting.



Brandon Burns, Kingfisher County NRCS Soil Conservationist, assists Dover farmers with EQIP Priority Surveys.

January 13, 2015 – Vinita, Oklahoma: The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. (OBHRPI), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Craig County Conservation District partnered to hold a free conservation workshop. Local farmers, ranchers, Tribes, tribal members and women in agriculture attended the workshop. Attendees were provided an overview of NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) 2014 Farm Bill programs and received instructions on completing the application process for NRCS programs. Assistant State Conservationist, Chad Kacir, made a presentation on all NRCS programs and highlighted the Environmental Quality Incentive program (EQIP). EQIP provides cost share assistance to address existing resource concerns that an eligible landowner may have. The workshop provided attendees with valuable information on how to get a good soil test, solar water wells, and an update on the Farm Service Agency's livestock disaster program.



February 10, 2015 -Press Release: For Immediate Release

The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. & Project "A" Association Farmers and Ranchers Outreach Meeting

Communications Contact: Shar Carter (918) 873-0049

Location: Cherokee Nation Tsa La Gi Community Ballroom
17725 S. Muskogee Ave. Tahlequah, OK 74464

Date: February 26, 2015 **Time:** 6 to 8 PM **Tahlequah, OK**

The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. (OBHRPI) and The Project A Association will be holding an Outreach Meeting February 26, 2014, "Empowering Farmers & Ranchers, Veterans, Meeting." Project A and OBHRPI remain committed to bringing United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awareness to rural communities. Small farms have always been the most efficient sector of agriculture and today they constitute the system best prepared to answer the need to expand the world's food supply in sustainable agriculture. However, the small farmer often works in isolation. The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project provides services to all small farmers in the State of Oklahoma and works to distribute information to the small farmers, ranchers and producers through outreach meetings with specific information on surviving the drought and promoting the solar water well system.

Currently the Project "A" Association, a group of Cow/calf producers, is selling their cattle to the Cherokee Nation through a partnership with the Elder Nutrition Centers. Lisa James and Rodslen Brown – King are partnering to feed the local elders beef produced by Cherokee and local farmers, providing the farm to table experience for the Senior Citizen Nutrition Programs. Project "A" Association assists farmers in addressing the concern that the average distance our food travels from farm to consumer in the United States is approximately 1,300 miles. Another advantage of obtaining food locally is that the money stays within the local community. Special Note: The last 2012 Farm Bill added Veterans to their programs. The Department of Labor (USDOL) reports that as of May 2012, over 25 percent of young veterans are unemployed. Moreover, recent data show that 45 percent of armed service members are from rural America. The agricultural industry is a logical solution to fill the economic gap rural veteran's face. The USDA is committed to assisting veterans to begin or continue farming and ranching operations in order to strengthen the American economy and provide livelihoods to our returning veterans. In addition, Willard Tillman will present the Solar Water Well project in collaboration with the NRCS branch of the USDA.

All persons are cordially invited. The event is free and open to the public. Dinner will be provided. To register please send an email to obhrpi@gmail.com or call 918 873- 0049.

January 30, 2015 – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, with Congressman Frank Lucas, delivered remarks on the one-year anniversary of the enactment of the 2014 Farm Bill and the impact the legislation has had for farm families and for the economy in rural communities over the past year. The event was held at the Redlands Community College, El Reno, Oklahoma. Willard Tillman, Sandra Wade-Penn and Alfred McKerson from the OBHRPI attended the meeting.



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, with Congressman Frank Lucas

March 12, 2015 - Ada, the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRPI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Pontotoc County Conservation District partnered with the Chickasaw Nation to hold two conservation workshops. Both workshops had over 80 Chickasaw tribal members in attendance. Both workshops were held at the Pontotoc County Agri-Plex, in Ada, Oklahoma.

This workshop illustrated the importance of soil health by conducting a *hands-on* demonstration with the NRCS soil health rainfall simulator. The soil health demonstration was conducted by Steve Alspach, NRCS State Soil Scientist. Jeanne Schneider, representing the USDA Southern Plains Regional Climate Hub, presented on *Climate Change: Impacts on Agriculture and Plant Life in Oklahoma*.

The second workshop focused on how to develop a Native Butterfly garden or farm, the threatened Monarch butterflies and the importance of native plants and native pollinators. Many pollinators are in danger of disappearing which would lead to the collapse of many of the

Oklahoma eco-systems and threaten 1/3 of the crops grown in the U.S. Jane Breckinridge, owner of the Euchee Butterfly Farm, presented on how to start a community butterfly garden or farm and how the monarch butterflies are threatened pollinators. David Redhage, Kerr Center Sustainable Agriculture Chief Program Officer, presented on *Native Plants and Native Pollinators*.

Representatives from the USDA NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD) and the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) had information available on the 2014 Farm Bill. The Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA) supported and the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. (OBHRPI) also had an informational booth featuring the CIG Solar Water Well Project.



Over 80 Tribal members attended.



Soil Health demonstration.

March 21, 2015 - Tahlequah, Oklahoma: A Small Farmers and Ranchers Outreach Meeting. 40 small farmers met for the informational meeting. Charlotte Carter and Woody Colbert discussed the solar water well project with producers. The meeting was in partnership with the Cherokee Nation, Project A's Director Rodslen Brown and OBHRPI. See Agenda in Appendix.

March 21, 22, 2015 - A Partners' Working Meeting was held at the 9th Annual OBHRPI Rural Economic Development Conference, Hugo, Oklahoma. David Stephens, OBRRPI Outreach Specialist, presented a "Solar Water Panel" presentation. All of the staff assisted in various capacities. Members of the Choctaw Nation were in attendance.



Partners' Working Meeting

The local NRCS District Conservationist mentioned that he has been working on five (5) solar water wells. Originally the NRCS would cost share on the casing and pump. However, now they will cost share on the casing, pump, and water tank. Cattle have a better quality water supply by drinking from the tanks rather than from most ponds. The partners' meeting was followed by a field trip to the solar water well demonstration at Albert Holloway's farm in Grants, Oklahoma.

March 24, 2015 – Pawnee, Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRPI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Pontotoc County Conservation District partnered for a Soil Conservation Workshop. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a solar water well presentation. Clay Pope, USDA ARS Specialist, delivered a presentation about weather and climate change which emphasized the drought in Oklahoma. Osage and Pawnee tribal members attend the workshop.



April 7 – Rentiesville – An Area Info Meeting was held where Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well equipment mounted on his pickup truck where he pumped water from one barrel to another using a mounted solar panel to demonstrate how the solar water well works. USDA NRCS, RD, and FSA also delivered an update about their programs. Ryan McMullen, State RD Director, announced that a new Visitors Center would be built using RD funding in Rentiesville. Sandra Wade-Penn and Shar Carter assisted with registration and presenting brochures to the attendees.



Rentiesville Area Info Meeting

April 25 – Langston University Goat Field Day – Willard Tillman delivered a demonstration using solar water well equipment mounted on his pickup truck where he pumped water from one barrel to another using a mounted solar panel to demonstrate how the solar water well works. He was assisted by Alfred McKerson and Sandra Wade-Penn.



Langston University Goat Field Day

April 30 – Okemah – A Conservation Workshop was held. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well equipment mounted on his pickup truck where he pumped water from one barrel to another using a mounted solar panel to

demonstrate how the solar water well works. USDA NRCS, RD, and FSA also delivered an update about their programs.

May 12 – Anadarko – A StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity and USDA 2014 Farm Bill Program was held. Carol Crouch, NRCS State Outreach Coordinator, announced that new StrikeForce funds would be available to farmers through EQIP funds with a short window for filing. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well system.

A series of StrikeForce meeting were to be held. Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is the key to our Nation's future. In 2010, Secretary Vilsack established USDA's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, StrikeForce teams have collaborated with more than 500 community partners and public entities across twenty states to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

StrikeForce efforts have helped direct over \$16 billion in investments to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers, and conserve natural resources in the country's most economically challenged areas. In 2015, StrikeForce expanded to include Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. Now, USDA StrikeForce teams operate in 880 counties in 21 states and



Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future. (USDA NRCS) 32 counties in Oklahoma were covered by StrikeForce funding in 2015 and could be accessed by farmers through the NRCS EQIP program.

May 18 – Wewoka – A StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity and USDA 2014 Farm Bill Program was held. Carol Crouch, NRCS State Tribal Liaison for Oklahoma, announced that new StrikeForce funds would be available to farmers through EQIP funds with a short window for filing. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well system.

June 6 – Boley – A Tri-County Agricultural Information Meeting was held. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well equipment mounted on his pickup truck where he pumped water from one barrel to another using a

mounted solar panel to demonstrate how the solar water well works. USDA NRCS, RD, Risk Management Agency and FSA also delivered an update about their programs. Sandra Wade-Penn assisted with the solar water well demonstration.

June 22 – Sallisaw – A Sequoyah County Farm Show and Soil Health Workshop was held. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well system. USDA NRCS, RD, and FSA also delivered an update about their programs. Carol Crouch, NRCS State Outreach Coordinator, announced that new StrikeForce funds would be available to farmers through EQIP project.

July 16 – Ada – Mr. Willard Tillman, Executive Director of OBHRPI, provided a brief presentation highlighting the efforts of the OBHRPI to assist producers in alleviating the effects of the drought in Oklahoma the past three years and emphasized that even though the drought is officially over in most of the state, we need to guard against being at the mercy of relying on ponds and streams for traditional sources of watering livestock.

Mr. Tillman informed the audience that the OBHRPI has partnered with NRSC to assist producers with alternate sources of electricity to pump water, a modest cost solar water well pump that can be added to existing wells or installed in new wells. These pumps can be attached to battery back-up systems, which can store energy to be used on demand.

A solar water well demonstration was performed outside the area with a portable unit to demonstrate the technology. The audience was impressed and gathered around for a number of questions, including but not limited to whether the units could be used to irrigate gardens and small pastures. Mr. Tillman answered in the affirmative. At the meeting two producers also requested contact information for follow private individual meetings. Most attendees were Native American with approximately 60/40 male/female.

July 22 – Tahlequah – A Conservation Workshop was held. Willard Tillman, OBHRPI Executive Director, delivered a demonstration using solar water well system. USDA NRCS, RD, and FSA also delivered an update about their programs. Sandra Wade-Penn presented brochures about the CIG project to the attendees.



July 29 -Shawnee – A Conservation Workshop was held. Willard Tillman,OBHRPI Executive Director,delivered a demonstration using solar water well system.USDA NRCS delivered a presentation and rainfall demonstration. A Climate: Impacts on Pastureland,Crops,Rangeland and Soil Health was presented by Jeanne Schneider,USDA Southern Plains Regional Climate Hub leader. APHIS representatives delivered presentations on Feral Hog Control and Management and APHIS Tribal Programs and Animal traceability. Sandra Wade-Penn presented brochures about the CIG project to the attendees .



Results

- 4718 farmers, agriculture professionals and youth attended workshops and meetings. These workshops and meetings taught producers about EQIP and other NRCS practices. USDA materials were disseminated to all in attendance.
- Solar water well systems installed are as follows:
 - 160 acre farm, cow/calf operator, Caddo County
 - 80 acre farm,200 head of goats, Oklahoma County
 - Langston University, Department of Agriculture Goat Farm and Outdoor Classroom
 - 80 acre farm,cow/calf operator, Logan County
 - 240 acre farm, cow/calf operator, Seminole County Mae
 - Crop Farm,Oklahoma County
 - Cow/calf operator, Kingfisher County
 - Cow/calf operator, Choctaw County OBHRPI Solar Water Well Demonstration on Truck Trailer
 - Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribe, buffalo and other stock, Canadian County
- Mentor farmers are as follows:
 - Seminole County
 - Kiowa Tribe, Caddo County
 - Kiowa Tribe,Caddo County
 - Farmer in Creek County
 - Farmer in Choctaw County
 - Farmer in Oklahoma County
 - Farmer in Kingfisher County
 - Farmer in Oklahoma County

- Farmer in Seminole County
 - Farmer in Hughes County
 - Farmer in Seminole County
 - Farmer in Muskogee County
 - Farmer in Okmulgee County
 - Farmer in Woodward County
- The OBHRPI sponsored and/or delivered presentations and participated in 63 conferences, field days, meetings and workshops.
 - 292 participants learned about recordkeeping and farm plans.
 - There was a positive partnering with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council and the Indian Nations Conservation Alliance.
 - There were 1504 contacts and one-on-one visits and approximately one third of those were return visits.
 - Schedule F in the Income Tax Return and Recordkeeping Training was included at the Small Farms Conference, Dover Community Meeting, and the Rural Economic Development Conference where 292 farmers were attendance.

It has been OBHRPI's observation that technical assistance includes workshops centered on NRCS EQIP and other USDA programs, record keeping, and the introduction of the Solar Water Well Systems. The overall project would be more effective if the project staff were allowed to implement our solar water wells in the Native American community centers community gardens. It is an important gateway into not only the Native American Community but rural Oklahoma as a whole.

Irrigation was in the original proposal as a part of the project; however, irrigation was taken out of the Farm Bill. Landowners could not apply for irrigation under EQIP any longer, so the OBHRPI staff had to reconstruct their position to address only solar well water systems for livestock operations.

Some SDA farmers and ranchers were unable to acquire EQIP funding due to the ranking system. To assist with removing this barrier, the OBHRPI staff has visited farms to access what conservation practices can be added to the EQIP applications in order for the farmers to achieve a higher score and receive more funding. Also, EQIP funds are not available continually although EQIP applications are taken on a continual basis.

The positive partnering with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council resulted in the following comment from them:

"We have had a very successful year and your partnership with OTCAC has made a difference in being able to deliver 39 workshops; specialty workshops, StrikeForce meetings, USDA programs, training to Oklahoma Tribes and a very successful Tribal consultation meeting.

OTCAC would like to continue this partnership. Please let us know if you would like to do another agreement for fiscal year 2016 to continue delivering productive meetings in Indian Country and with local farmers and ranchers" (OTCAC Board, 9/7/2015).

There has been an increase in participation in the installation of solar water well systems through this project. See the chart furnished by the State NRCS Office.

County	Sum of Obligation	Count of Practice	Sum of Payment
BEAVER	\$29,400	12	\$21,367
CADDO	\$12,997	6	\$12,997
CHEROKEE	\$12,076	3	\$-
CHOCTAW	\$2,437	1	\$2,437
CIMARRON	\$5,403	3	\$5,403
CREEK	\$7,294	3	\$4,062
CUSTER	\$16,174	8	\$16,174
DEWEY	\$6,746	3	\$4,591
ELLIS	\$2,154	1	\$2,154
GRANT	\$5,687	3	\$1,625
GREER	\$6,499	3	\$6,499
HARMON	\$4,874	2	\$4,874
HARPER	\$4,062	2	\$-
HASKELL	\$2,438	1	\$-
KIOWA	\$3,249	2	\$3,249
LATIMER	\$3,250	2	\$-
LE FLORE	\$2,437	1	\$-
LOVE	\$2,437	1	\$2,437
MAYES	\$7,294	3	\$1,625
MCCLAIN	\$11,318	4	\$11,318
MCINTOSH	\$11,373	5	\$-
NOBLE	\$2,437	1	\$-
OKMULGEE	\$2,437	1	\$2,437
OTTAWA	\$4,878	3	\$-
SEQUOYAH	\$1,626	1	\$-
STEPHENS	\$2,155	1	\$-
TILLMAN	\$1,625	1	\$-
WOODWARD	\$4,874	2	\$4,874
Grand Total	\$179,630	79	\$108,122

We, the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project Inc., will continue to promote solar water well systems as part of our outreach efforts to address the drought conditions that challenge Oklahoma farmers and ranchers.

Summary of Solar Water Well Project

The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. (OBHRPI) appreciated the opportunity of being awarded a grant to help address the drought conditions that created major challenges for Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers.

The Solar Water Well Project created another water source for farmers and ranchers during the drought, but it seems that none of them were aware of this program with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The OBHRPI development a strategies to partner with various organizations, Tribes, Community-based, Rural Communities and USDA agencies to promote the benefits of the Solar Water Well Project. The OBHRPI with its partners hosted various meeting, workshops, conference and demonstrations to exhibits the benefits with a portable solar water well system. We also had tours to farms and ranches where the farmers and ranchers could see this project actually working. The most ask question asked was "How much does it cost"? At that time I was able to explain that NRCS had a program to address that need. All they had to do was to go into the office and apply under the EQIP program. As a result of the outreach efforts there has been an increase in that practice. (Page 29-See NRCS Data). There has been a lot of interest in solar water wells by farmers, ranchers and tribes. During this project the organization has had request to present, Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Cooperatives, in Indian Spring, Mississippi and National Hispanic& Latino Annual Conference Alburque, New Mexico and the Rural Coalition Gala in Taos, New Mexico. The Cheyenne/Apraho Tribes has request our assistance in installation of (5) solar water well on their farm operation. The benefits of Solar Water Well has been a live saver for some of these farmers and ranchers that had no water and were having to pack water to their cattle daily. This is a practice that can be used in other areas. The OBHRPI will continue to promote Solar Water Well as a part of our outreach efforts.