

The LEADer



4TH QUARTER 2025

LEAD CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

LEAD Agency's National Environmental Conference was held October 7-8-9 at NEO A & M College. The attendees experienced a journey from soil and what lays beneath, understanding the water cycle and began to imagine a path to a clean and healthy environment in the future. We were pleased with the attendance and appreciated the expertise speakers and panelists shared with us.



highlights from our annual conference follow on pages 4 & 5

NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED: ELAINE IRVIN DOROTHY BALLARD

Long time LEAD Agency members, **Elaine Irvin** and **Dorothy Ballard** were elected this fall to the Board of Directors. Both have expertise and experience that widens the capacity for the organization. They join a robust board with Earl Hatley, president, Grace Goodeagle, vice president, Kelda Lorax, secretary, Herschel Kirkley, treasurer and James Walkingstick and Stephanie Addis, members. LEAD's elections are held each October. We are grateful to all who participated in this year's election. We are retiring Carl Hayes as a member and are grateful for the many years he has served on the board. If you are not yet a member of LEAD Agency, we encourage you to complete an application for membership. There are never membership fees, but your donations are always welcome to keep the organization growing and thriving as the issues keep coming. Our health and our environment needs protectors, you can help us do this work.



IT IS IN THE WATER nipinki eehteeki ~ by Jonny Skye

This significant painting provided both the image and the theme of LEAD's 27th National Tar Creek Conference and inspired LEAD's Main Street Art Show two weeks later. We featured works by Peoria Tribal member **Jonny Skye** and **Doug Lee, Tom Whipple** and **Liz Dueck**.

Visit LEAD Agency's office to see this and many other works of art showing what environmental justice looks like. Come be inspired. See the beauty that surrounds us and the nudge for us to fight for a better world.



LEAD Agency

RECLAIMING OUR WATER

I was honored to be the keynote speaker for the **Reclaiming our Water Symposium**, sponsored by the OSAGE NEWS. *The People of the Middle Waters* dove into the Osage County water discussion. Mayors, city officials, their nation's leaders, their Natural Resources director and water district representatives. Quantity and Quality. Osage County depends on surface water to meet all their water needs. Households, businesses, schools, ranching and oil production all require water. Osage County and Nation identify as the "77th county" and understand their standing in the state differs in many ways from the "lower 76" counties in Oklahoma.

It became obvious the title, **Reclaiming Our Water Symposium** was apt when I heard many say, "We're taking water serious." It certainly is with the boil order for Hominy, OK having been in place since July 2024. Let that sink in. Boil all of the water used in your home, what you cook with, drink, and do it for 16 months. Imagine the change in your budget if you supplemented your water use with commercially bottled water, month after month. People sitting at my table were filling their trunk and BACK SEATS with bottled water, for nearly a year and a half.

There are great connections between the Osage and the Quapaw. The great wealth and degradation that have occurred to both of their reservation lands. With the Quapaw, it was hard rock mining and the lasting impact it has had on our Tar Creek and the heavy metals poisoning of our children, with the Osage, their wealth from oil and gas extraction also has brought environmental harm from oil wells, left unattended, and the injection wells that are purging "salt" water that also contains benzene and other chemicals leaving their lands and streams polluted indefinitely. No simple fencing can stop this, it will take enforced legislative changes on the industry to change the way it is able to operate, hopefully before all of their aquifers and surface water sources are lost.

Ottawa County primarily uses the Rubidoux aquifer, with municipal and private wells, with a small number of homes using water coming from parts of the Boone aquifer. Our surface water leaves us and helps replenish the Grand Lake o' the Cherokees. Our runoff is drunk by nearby county residents. This is why we all have to be mindful when using pesticides and other chemicals or over applying fertilizers in our watershed, that can wash downstream in the next rain. Silt fencing can be installed along streams, construction and industrial sites to keep soil from eroding and washing downstream. To suggest sites where this will help prevent runoff call the ODEQ Hotline 1-800-522-0206. For 27 years the Tar Creek Environmental Conference has been held with the 28th already planned for next October, but what we have in mind this year is different. Let's get serious about water, just like the Osage are. They call themselves Water People. But aren't we all? Who would you want to be in the room when the OTTAWA County Water Symposium is held? Your suggestions for moderators, speakers and the actual questions as well as your input on how we design the agenda are welcome. ***Your Tar Creekkeeper ~ Rebecca Jim***

LEAD Agency, Inc.

223 A. St. SE.

Miami, OK 74354

Phone: 918 542-9399

www.leadagency.org

Board of Directors

Earl Hatley, *president*

Grace Goodeagle, *vice president*

Kelda Lorax, *secretary*

Herschel Kirkley, *treasurer*

Elaine Irvin

Stephanie Addis

James Walkingstick

Dorothy Ballard

LEAD Staff

Rebecca Jim

Martin Lively

Kindel Maymi

Moriah Bailey Stephenson

Paul Marquez

Naomi Andrews

Gina Manders

Kimberly Barker

Vera Robinson

Hunter McBee Sejong Kim *Volunteers*

Madison Giles & Bridgit Salt *Interns*

Waterkeeper Programs

Grand Riverkeeper - Martin Lively

Tar Creekkeeper - Rebecca Jim

Waterkeeper is a registered trademark and service mark of Waterkeeper Alliance, Inc. and is licensed for use herein.



WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE

MEMBER

The LEADER is published quarterly with special editions

“YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE SILENCED.” — JAMES DEVITA

AMERICORPS INTERNS REFLECT ON THEIR SERVICE

We thank Stewards' Conservation Legacy for the program. LEAD's first AmeriCorps Interns completed their terms & Thank them!

BRIDGIT SULT: "Before this experience, I had never lived in a small town or understood what rural communities faced. I have developed a stronger passion for working on environmental health issues. Taking a leap of faith and moving across the country to an area I knew nothing about has made me become a more adventurous person. My favorite thing I have learned has been ways to combat environmental injustice through community building. Starting in January, I will be attending the Environmental Assessment Graduate Certificate program through NC State University to learn more about policy-level initiatives nationwide. I never want to stop learning and sharing stories on Tar Creek. Thank you to everyone who makes the work at LEAD Agency possible!"



MADISON GILES: "As my time at Lead Agency comes to an end I'm thankful for all the amazing people I got to work with. While working here I've learned more about my areas history and tribal cultures. I've been given the opportunity to meet new people, from my local community and from other parts of the country. Working here pushed me out of my comfort zone more than once, but it also helped me discover new parts of myself. I hope to continue helping my community and Lead Agency after my service term ends."

TENA BOOTH BRINGS 27 BOXES OF BOOKS

Little Free Libraries throughout the country allows the gift of reading to be more accessible to everyone. The Little Free Library at the LEAD Agency Office, located at 223 A St. SE in Miami is filled many times by people we never meet. But this fall **Tena Booth**, a LEAD Agency member donated hundreds of books. They arrived on a flatbed trailer! This generous donation will allow us to keep our **Little Free Library** stocked for many months to come. Books range everywhere from home repair manuals to works of nonfiction and fiction. Something for everyone!



CAROL ABERNATHY GIFT FOR RESOURCES

When long time Commerce resident and educator dropped by one afternoon, the visit was special, but more so when she left us with a generous donation to help us continue sharing our resources.

NEVER



HUNTER MCBEE, NEO student volunteered this semester earning hours of service toward his Cherokee Nation Scholarship. His love of fishing and hunting guided much of his outreach educational messages. He made fishing kits for kids and designed social media posts.



"LEAD 's environmental values have been inspirational. I will be back next semester!"

"EVERY STORM RUNS OUT OF RAIN." - MAYA ANGELOU

Tar Creek Conference

The Conference was recorded and is available on-line to review thanks to Woodruff Media. A few of the highlights are included here:

Gretchen Sassenrath KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
THE POWER OF ONE:

When thinking of the Grand Lake Watershed we must consider where water comes from and how this relates to both soil health and water quality. Soil plays a critical role in the water cycle. Simply incorporating native plants can improve



Tall grass prairie

Eastern tallgrass prairie (IL, IA, MO, MN and eastern KS) is 99% gone

Western shortgrass prairie is disappearing at a rate faster than the Amazon rainforest, of about 1 million acres per year.

soil health and water recourses which will impact food production, help with nutrient cycling and water storage availability in the soil. This can also assist in controlling erosion but also enable ground water restoration. The Tall grass prairie with the roots of native plants extending deep in the ground this was an eco-system that held soil and helped manage and filter water.

We were also challenged to start with a small **3 foot square** in our own yards, planting native plants. This can demonstrate how *one person can make a difference!*

Ethan McMahan
OKLAHOMA UNIVERSITY

We Were Set up for the 2007 Flood

Analyzing the rainfall and soil moisture prior to the 2007 flood in Miami, OK, Ethan was able to determine one reason that flood was so devastating was the soil was unable to absorb back water to lower water levels sooner since it was dealing with earlier rain events the soil was holding.



Brennan Lawless **JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY**

There is a common connection between coal mining sites and Tar Creek described with insights through the toxicology on human and environmental health. Mining connects us.



Karman King, SKEO

PASSIVE/ACTIVE WATER TREATMENT EXAMPLES

SKEO reviewed mine treatment technologies EPA is using at other large Superfund sites to better understand applicability for Tar Creek cleanup.

MEGA SUPERFUND SITES: BUNKER HILL LEVIATHAN BONITIA PEAK CALIFORNIA GULCH

Technology types: Active treatment can range from simple mechanical water aeration to a complex reverse osmosis treatment plant. Active Treatment comprises all mine water technologies that rely on controlled addition of chemicals and/or depend on machinery, such as pumps, mixers, reaction tanks, multimedia filters and clarifiers to manage flows, chemical mixing, aeration and sludge handling therefore require consistent oversight, adjustment and maintenance.

- Biochemical Reactors
- Neutralization and Chemical Precipitation
- Chemical Stabilization
- Constructed Wetlands
- In-situ Treatment of Mine Pools and Pit Lakes
- Permeable Reactive Barriers
- Treatment Trains

Conventional active treatment methods typically involve neutralization of acidity by the addition of an alkaline chemical (such as lime), oxidation of ferrous iron, and precipitation of contaminant compounds in a clarifier or settling pond.

Other technologies considered to be active treatment include membrane filtration-based methods, nanofiltration or reverse osmosis, ion-exchange, electrocoagulation and other electrochemical approaches.

LIVERS OF OUR RIVERS

Mara Hamilton PEORIA TRIBE, Mussel Technician and **Kenneth Roberts TULSA UNIVERSITY** discussed the other approach to restoration with their work on mussels and their unique ability to remove toxins from rivers.

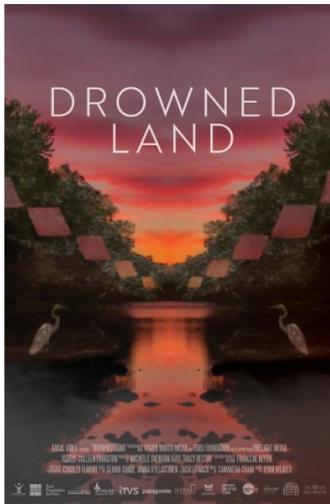
Samantha Ruch NFWF History of Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration The years long efforts by the state, federal agencies and our local tribes was explained in detail for the first time!

Conference Special Events

DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT

LEAD kicked off our conference with an inaugural disc golf tournament, the "Tar Creek Open" at the Veterans Memorial Disc Golf Course in Miami, located near Tar Creek in what used to be a residential neighborhood before residents were forced to move due to repeated flooding. It's been our dream for many years to host a disc golf tournament. **Paul Marquez**, a LEAD staff member, made that dream possible.

Bridgit Sult, an AmeriCorps Intern, created a 10-minute documentary called "From Floodplain to Fairway," which debuted at the conference. The film explores the loss of Miami homes and the place's rebirth as a community gathering place, and featured interviews with residents and tournament players.



Colleen Thurston, the filmmaker, joined us to screen **DROWNED LAND** under the stars on the NEO College campus using our "pop-up movie screen" with fresh popcorn. After viewing her film all who attended shared their feelings and reflections on the Kiamichi River and the efforts to SAVE HER around our fireless fire circle.

ACTIVIST ORGANIZING & EMPOWERMENT DAY



HOLDING HOPE IN THE STRUGGLE KEYNOTE SPEAKER JOBY TAYLOR

Joby Taylor, PhD (He/Him) Assistant Vice Provost The Shriver Center at UMBC Senior Advisor & Faculty, Community Leadership Affiliate Faculty, Language Literacy & Culture

DAY ONE of this year's conference was entitled: *Activist Organizing and Empowerment* - a training day filled with workshops to empower non-profits from NE Oklahoma.

Joby Taylor, our Keynote speaker, truly gave hope, and guided the group with examples of how others held onto hope through his experiences with Peace Corps and later his relationship with Sargent Shriver and Service Learning.



Barbara VanHankin, Neera Singh and Kelsey Royce present Arkansas River issues TAARA has identified

LEAD's 2025 MIKE SYNAR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS *presented in person with Pendleton Blankets donated by the Quappaw Environmental Department*

ELLEN ISBELL For her Commitment to Dignity and Health for all Ottawa County Residents

BRIAN STANILA For his Unwavering Dedication to Justice for Tar Creek

Also honored this year:

DR. JOHN NEUBERGER
For Understanding Early the Risks at Tar Creek and Always Seeking Justice

KARLA FORD For educating Generations of Students about the Injustices at Tar Creek

Karla's award was presented in her Wagoner HS classroom



Each of the organizations in LEAD's **Regional Resilience Collective** were able to share what they are focusing on and how they show it to the public. Workshop sessions were led by LEAD's **Gina Manders, Martin Lively, Naomi Andrews, Bailey Stephenson** and **Kim Barker**, joined by **Kaylann Loraine**, and **A2's Chris Williams**. The training day for activists, was made possible by funding from A2, the Anthropocene Alliance. Groups attending were TAARA, Women Empowered, Spring Creek Coalition, Kiamichi River, ECOSAVVY INSIGHTS, TOPS and briefly by local Salvation Army and POKI representatives.

LEAD Agency's Open Mic: VOICES FOR RESILIENCE

Our Open Mic Night inspired many to speak. Then those words inspired watercolor images. We have compiled all into a ZINE that is availed on request.

PUBLIC MEETINGS COVER A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES

LEAD Agency not only attended the series of public meetings that were held in Miami, but organized residents to be aware and encouraged the public to attend and take part by asking questions or making comments for the record. LEAD has a team of professionals on our staff who researched the wide range of issues that would be discussed but used all available methods to share what we learned with the public in advance of the meetings. The issues ranged from the process of removing benzene from a shallow aquifer at the BF Goodrich plant and the nearby neighborhood to the air permit for a local business and learning about the chemicals that would be released when operating and finally dealing with the Oklahoma Department of Mines on a 100 year permit for a limestone quarry. Learn more about each in the following stories written by Kimberly Barker.

BF GOODRICH



TIRED OF WAITING?

BENZENE CLEANUP DRAWS CONCERNS

Michelin North America and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality held a meeting on Tuesday, October 14 at NEO College to update the public on the groundwater treatment project at the former BF Goodrich facility in Miami.

The cleanup of the benzene in the groundwater is being remediated by Geosyntec Consultants, a consulting and engineering firm hired by Michelin that addresses complex problems involving the environment, natural resources, energy, and civil infrastructure. Geosyntec gave a presentation about the progress of the ongoing cleanup project, which began operation in 2023 with the goal of developing groundwater treatment of benzene. Several tribal nations and residents attended and asked the state to consider further testing due to possible offsite migration of benzene. A daycare, schools and neighborhoods are within close proximity to the defunct plant, and citizens expressed concerns about public health.

More transparency and additional meetings with the community was also requested by attendees. LEAD Agency executive director

Rebecca Jim asked if a nearby pond north of the railroad track had been tested for benzene and noted there were five deep wells that reached the Roubidoux Aquifer and stories that plant chemicals were dumped into the wells.

Elaine Irvin, who lives across the street from the plant, said there's a lot of drainage from the nearby pond and that neighboring residents are getting sick, possibly from groundwater contamination.

"There's still some concern, and although we're really happy that you're here, I wish we could've had this meeting a year ago," said Jim. "The other question that I ask is if you can give the neighbors a walking tour of what's happening and what the process looks like."

The former BF Goodrich plant, located at 1000 Goodrich Blvd. in Miami, was built in 1944 and decommissioned in 1986. A mineral spirit containing benzene was used during the manufacturing process and stored in underground tanks, causing a benzene groundwater plume at the site. Benzene is a chemical used in industrial processes and is a human carcinogen that is known to cause cancer like leukemia.

The benzene plume is being treated by a multi-phase extraction and air sparging system, which uses a vacuum to extract the contaminants from the groundwater. The technology is proving to be effective, officials said. The benzene mass has been shrinking, and benzene concentrations are decreasing in the plume. Operations of the system will continue in 2026. ~ Kimberly Barker

WE ARE THE MIND AND STEWARD OF THE LIVING WORLD — E O WILSON

ODEQ HOSTS AIR PERMIT MEETING FOR NEO FAB FACILITY

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality's (ODEQ) Air Quality Division hosted a permit meeting for the public on Thursday, October 30 in the Miami Civic Center to discuss an application filed by N.E.O. Fab Metal Fabrication Facility. Members of LEAD Agency and area tribal nations attended the meeting to ask questions and submit comments.

N.E.O. Fab, LLC., located at 604 Henley St. in Miami, operates a metal waste container manufacturing plant that fabricates, welds, and coats steel products that are shipped throughout the country. It operates 8,760 hours annually and employs about 40 people.

The company submitted an application to ODEQ for an operating permit for their facility in June 2025. Since the facility didn't obtain a permit prior to construction and operation, N.E.O. Fab was fined \$7,500.

ODEQ gave a presentation on where the facility is located, what the sources of emissions are and identified next steps in the permitting process. The actual pollutant emissions from 2021 through 2024 were listed, and the maximum projected emissions were well below the allowable emission rates.

N.E.O. F.A.B

Public Meeting

LEAD AGENCY Challenges Quarry Permit Recommendation

LEAD Agency has requested an administrative hearing from the Oklahoma Department of Mines (ODM), challenging an agency recommendation that ODM issue a mining permit to Mid-States Materials. In March 2025, Mid-States, a Kansas corporation, filed an application for a 100-year permit to operate a limestone quarry east of Miami between E 80 Rd and E 90 Rd, west of S 620 Rd.

After numerous comments in opposition from residents, Tribes, and LEAD Agency, ODM held an informal conference in August about the application. Turnout overflowed the Miami Public Library meeting room, with many people listening from the hall outside. Concerns expressed included: damage and noise from explosives, increased truck traffic, water pollution, and the failure to consult with any Tribal nations.

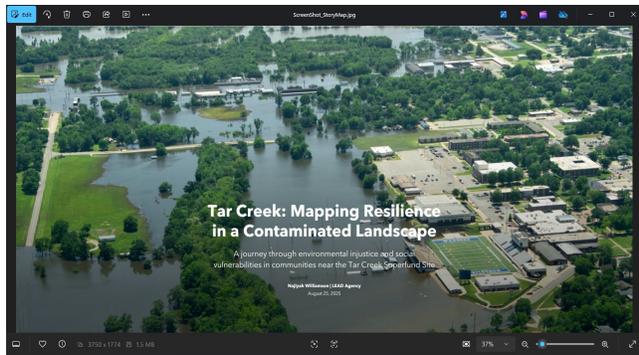
On November 3, Oklahoma Department of Mines recommended the permit be approved with some changes. LEAD remains concerned about this quarry's environmental and health consequences, and on December 3 we requested ODM hold a formal administrative hearing. In a separate filing, the Peoria Tribe did also request an administrative hearing. ODM has not yet set a date and location for the administrative hearing.

7th EPA Five-Year Review on Tar Creek Superfund Site

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its Five-Year Review Report for the Tar Creek Superfund Site on September 30. This marks the seventh Five-Year Review Report conducted at the Tar Creek Superfund Site. The document is available to read at the Miami Public Library, 200 North Main St. or can be accessed online at <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/06/100034810>.

The Five-Year Review Report is a document that determines if a site is protective of human health and the environment. EPA determined that the remedies at Operable Units 1, 2, and 4 are protective of human health and the environment for pathways that have been addressed to date, with some actions needed to maintain long-term protectiveness. The review identified seven recommendations across the three operable units to improve remedy performance. These recommendations include increasing inspection frequency of the O-3 surface water diversion dike, plugging well Q2, evaluating institutional controls for residential properties, reviewing site-specific lead data in light of updated EPA guidance, improving awareness of land use restrictions in buyout areas, repairing the Hockerville subsidence area soil cover, and continuing education on the Off-Site Rule for chat sales. Additional recommendations were also made, including to evaluate whether implementation of a fish consumption advisory for the site should be formally incorporated as a remedial component in a decision document.

CDC FOUNDATION UPDATE Gina Manders is the Community Organizer and GIS Professional who is making a real impact on the community organizations that are joining what both the CDC Foundation and the Anthropocene Alliance had called our “HUB”. The groups have become the **Regional Resilience Collective (RRC)**. Some were our “old friends” but also with many new organizations that have been interested in joining. LEAD will serve as a link to more services, grants and technical assistance and help our members grow their organizations. The next step takes us into another phase of growth. There is strength in building a wider coalition of non-profit groups. We will empower them to work together in unison on issues that bind us in solidarity.



With funding from the Anthropocene Alliance A2, we have hired **Madison Lovell** to serve as the State Wide Coordinator. She will coordinate with our RRC and assist LEAD in organizing on state-wide issues. There were always serious environmental issues here in Oklahoma and having the opportunity to organize on more of them at this time will be important.

Check out the STORY MAP on our website!
<https://www.leadagency.org/story-maps>

Rebecca Jim recognized at annual AARP Oklahoma Native American Elder Honors

Rebecca Jim, executive director of LEAD Agency and member of the Cherokee Nation, was recognized and received a medallion during the 17th annual AARP Oklahoma Native American Elder Honors on Nov. 5 in Oklahoma City at the First Americans Museum.

Jim was nominated for the honor by LEAD Agency board member and longtime AARP member, Grace Goodeagle, a 2010 AARP Oklahoma Indian Honors Recipient. Honorees this year included veterans, artists, tribal leaders, educators, culture preservationists and more.

The Native American Elder Honors was created to memorialize the work and contributions of elders who inspire future generations, according to AARP Oklahoma State Director Sean Voskuhl. "Our honorees' selfless acts of service truly make a positive difference in (the) lives of so many, while helping others live their best lives," he said in a statement.



The 17th annual AARP Oklahoma Native American Elder Honors celebrated 49 Native American elders from 24 Oklahoma tribal nations for their achievements, community service, and impact. Since 2009, AARP Oklahoma has recognized over 800 Native American elders from the state's 39 tribal nations.

This year's program featured an in-memoriam tribute, an invocation, the presentation of colors by the Chickasaw Nation Color Guard, the Dr. John and Tewanna Edwards Leadership Award to Casey Camp Horinek, and the presentation of medallions to the 2025 honorees.

WATER CREATES SO MUCH BEAUTY, LIFE AND MYSTERY. FENNEL HUDSON

ALL WE WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS **CLEAN WATER**

LEAD Agency participated in the annual Picher Christmas Parade on Dec. 6 where hundreds of former residents, alumni and children made the empty streets of downtown come alive again with cheers, floats and holiday spirit.

"Dear Santa: All We Want for Christmas Is Clean Water" sign decorated a LEAD Agency vehicle. This message symbolizes the hope that every person in Ottawa County, including the residents who once called Picher home, carries in their hearts to this day.

Signs adorning the LEAD Agency fleet: *"Make Tar Creek Merry & Bright," "We Need Clean Water"* & *"Clean Water for Christmas"* — continue to be the year-round mission for us as we navigate pollution at the Tar Creek Superfund site. One day, clean water will flow through Tar Creek, and we won't stop until then.



Riding in the Grand Riverkeeper Boat were Interns Madison Giles and Bridgit Salt, with LEAD Board Members Stephanie Addis and Kelda Lorax. Additional fleet members were Grace Goodeagle, Rebecca Jim, Sarah and Kim LeForce and son; Martin Lively, Kim Barker with Dana Jim, walking with Paul Marquez photographer.

As a journalist, I covered the Picher Parade for years, getting to know the attendees who described it as a homecoming reunion and an opportunity to share their former hometown with generations of their family who never got to see their childhood homes or school grounds. It's a special kind of loss losing your hometown, and one you may take for granted until it happens to you.

Now, being a part of LEAD Agency, I not only get to be involved in the parade, but I get to see the people we impact everyday through our environmental justice work. It's a beautiful sight to see, and one that I always look forward to every year.

I was never a resident of Picher, but I've interviewed enough locals to understand that it will always be a special place for so many, even if they don't have a physical home to go back to. The residents of Picher taught me that home isn't a place — it's the people in your community who make it whole and special. **By Kimberly Barker**

REMINDERS FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION - KELDA LORAX

It doesn't matter where electricity or fuel comes from, we can be better at conserving by remembering a few key things:

- Heating and cooling, including spaces, is much more intensive than other uses like lighting or music. This time of year we can have heavy curtains for windows overnight, only use doors that are wind-sheltered, use thermostats to not heat when not needed, and focus on strategies like wearing wool and flannel that keep us warm without needing the whole space to be warm.
- Luckily in our region our winters still often have great sunlight. Think about orienting your spaces so all the heat in south and east windows can warm a space. Think about adjusting your schedule as well to fit the warmth and light that's available in your home and office.
- Idling a car not only uses fuel but pollutes the air for others. If you use your car as an outdoor mobile living room, think about using spaces that are already heated instead, plus being social in winter is good for our mental health!
- It's good for you and the planet to get moving outdoors everyday, even in winter. Generate warmth from a brisk walk and you'll fire up the internal engine that means your home won't need to work as hard to warm you.

PEOPLE PROTECT WHAT THEY LOVE. Jacques Cousteau

EPA'S BIGGEST DEREGULATORY ACTION IN U.S. HISTORY



Kelly Hunter Foster, WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE Senior Attorney brought what she called her *Dispatch on EPA's Biggest Deregulatory Action in U.S. History*. Schedule changes allowed Kelly to have the time she needed to truly outline and note the actual dates laws were changed. All 4 pillars of our environmental protections have been weakened. The Clean Water Act, NEPA, Clean Air Act Endangered Species and CERCLA. Since EPA was established and each of these laws were established, Congress has used their power to weaken them. Now, this administration has given that power to the administrator to change the laws within the perimeters they have institutionally within the agency itself.

Bison in a Clean Tar Creek

*by Chris Mantle
Painted during Day2
of Tar Creek Conference*

Kelly Hunter Foster

*Waterkeeper Senior Attorney
is the proud owner
of the painting*



LEAD HOSTED ART SHOW WITH TAR CREEK CONFERENCE ARTISTS

Following the 27th National Environmental Tar Creek Conference LEAD Agency hosted a community Art Show for the public October 21 at **Main Attractions** during the *Sip n' Shop Boutique Crawl* in downtown Miami. The art show featured artists who showcased their creations during this year's Tar Creek Conference including Peoria tribal painter **Jonny Skye**, nature painter **Liz Dueck**, welder **Doug Lee**, nature and wildlife photographer **Tom Whipple**, with works shown from painter **Chris Mantle** and Magnum photographer **Matt Black**.

"It Is In the Water," the Jonny Skye inspirational painting for the 27th National Environmental Tar Creek Conference and many of Skye's paintings were hung illustrating how beauty stems from adversity and the natural world.

Skye's work was complemented with Chris Mantle's bison paintings created during the 2024 and 2025 Tar Creek Conferences — a bison standing in Tar Creek during the day and one standing in Tar Creek during the evening. The bison, their heads facing each other, reflected a world where we have a clean Tar Creek, one that can be enjoyed by all wildlife.

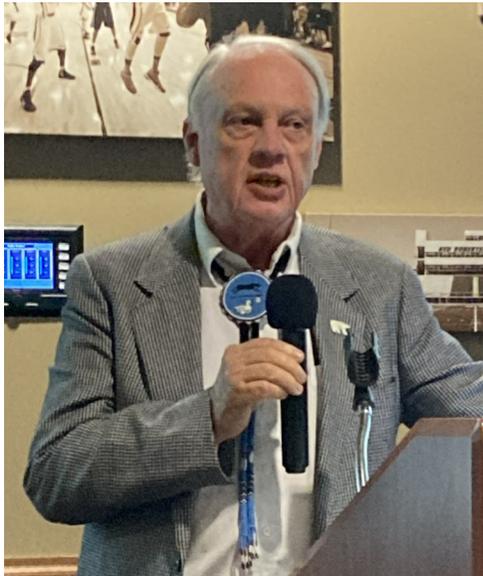
Photographer Matt Black, who spent two weeks with LEAD Agency last year, sent over wide-angle black and white portraits of photographs he captured throughout the Picher mining field. The photographs, which showed the depths of these mining remnants through shadows and heavy contrast, illustrated the deep pain that remains from legacy mining and environmental pollution. His B&W work was displayed on top of Mantle's vibrant paintings, creating juxtaposition for the viewer who had the chance to revisit pieces of the past while also looking towards a cleaner future.

Welder and poet Doug Lee set up a table showcasing his works including his heavy metal heron made out of silverware. Painter and nature artist Liz Dueck also had her work, "Reclamation Study: Tar Creek," on display where she used soil, plants and natural pigments gathered from Tar Creek to create a one-of-a-kind work of art. Nature and wildlife photographer, Tom Whipple, also had a table that featured his pictures of area birds and flowers including a framed bald eagle photograph, which he gifted to executive director, Rebecca Jim, at the end of the art show. Kelly Hunter Foster, senior attorney at Waterkeeper Alliance who spoke during this year's conference, also made an appearance. ~ **Kimberly Barker**

CREATIVITY TAKES COURAGE. ~ HENRI MATISSE

WADO

(Cherokee for Thank You!)
For Returning this year and for your continued support!



Clark Frayser, returned with words of the great Shawnee leader Tecumseh this year.



Professor Dan Brabander returned to speak at the conference and Eliza Lynch and Ainsley Crist his Wellesley College students presented during the Poster Session.

Joyce Dalgarn won the Pendelton Blanket !
Elaine Irvin sold her the chance!!

WADO

(Thank you in Cherokee)

To all who helped by taking a chance!

2025
LEAD Scholarships
Awarded to:
Jill Micka Memorial
Bailey McCarty
Don Ackerman Memorial
Berkeley Ulrey
Meridith Garvin Memorial
Averi Attacknie



Jill Micka - photo by Matt Black



Bailey McCarty received her Jill Micka Scholarship award at the LEAD Office —Jill was her aunt

AND THERE IS EVEN A HAPPINESS THAT MAKES THE HEART AFRAID.— THOMAS HOOD



WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE

MEMBER

LEAD AGENCY, INC.

223 A. ST. SE

MIAMI, OK 74354

Be Friends to the Tar Creekkeeper & Grand Riverkeeper

Your help is urgently needed. LEAD's Waterkeeper programs operate with assistance and contributions from concerned citizens such as yourself. Please show your support for environmental health and conservation within our watersheds by making a donation today. LEAD Agency is a 501 c 3 non-profit organization. Donations will be tax deductible. New/Used Life Jackets; Paddles; Kayaks or Canoes HELP us get people out on the water.



Mail or bring donations to 223 A St. SE Miami, OK
donate on-line www.leadagency.org