



# The LEADer

## BF Goodrich: Asbestos *will be Cleaned Up*



Asbestos cleanup will begin early June 2019 for the abandoned Miami, OK BF Goodrich site. This first phase will remove debris piles left behind by the so called “remediation” of the site by a contractor, who has claimed bankruptcy. His actions have been termed: *Rip and Run*, as after the valuable materials were removed, the operator left the state. The owner of that portion of the property has failed to pay taxes.

The cleanup will be conducted by contractors EPA is providing and paid for by Superfund in the hopes the responsible parties will choose to participate in the funding in the near future. Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality conducted an investigation of the site for possible exposed asbestos material last fall and discovered breaches of the fencing and the “Powerhouse” building which had been left sealed to

prevent asbestos known to be in it from being disturbed. Resealed, but broken in repeatedly, the site was referred to EPA for oversight. EPA conducted more investigation and found **All** the piles of the debris on the site contained friable and non-friable asbestos.

Located in a neighborhood with a Headstart, an elementary and the middle school helped the investigator convince EPA to provide the \$2.8 million to remove asbestos at once. More funding is requested for the rest of the contaminated buildings. This removal action will not deal with benzene known to be on site.

A Community Meeting will be held prior to removal actions June 6 from 6 - 8 pm. Residents living within a mile radius will receive a mailer.



### Miami Academy Students Research and Speak Out

The Miami High School Academy is located 380 feet from the LEAD Agency office. After asbestos was discovered at the BF Goodrich property in the fall of 2018, Rebecca Jim worked with the students as they researched asbestos and learned about the health risks exposure to asbestos can cause. The students and staff wrote letters to City, state

and federal authorities and developed materials for the public, including banners for CLEAN UP of the site. The day many of the Academy students graduated, they learned about the cleanup!



## ASBESTOS - IMPACTS CAN TAKE 30 YEARS AND SO HAS THE CLEANUP

As Executive Director and Tar Creekkeeper for LEAD Agency, I understand we have nothing if we do not have our health. So protecting our rights for Clean Air, Clean Water and an environment we can live, play and grow our own vegetables is my work. Our children should be living lead-free and not worried about being poisoned by the dust in their homes or the yard where they play.

This past year at our annual conference in September, the Department of Environmental Quality's general council assured the public that all of the asbestos at BF Goodrich, though some remained, all of it was contained safely in the remaining building. From those statements a series of actions followed that has resulted in the next step for a cleaner Miami and one closer to safe for the public.

Through the investigations ODEQ conducted and EPA's involvement, the 19 large expansive rubbish piles will be removed as well as two of the exposed buildings containing asbestos.

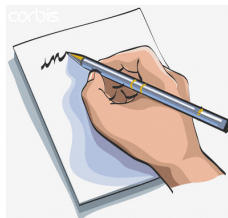
Asbestos is carcinogenic and is the only cause of mesothelioma, lung cancer. Asbestos was used throughout the BF Goodrich plant and when the demolition of the plant took place 4 years ago, all of the debris piles were left loaded with it.

Mike McAteer, Federal On-Scene Coordinator for US EPA has taken a great deal of effort to help our community, pushing for cleanup funding urgently from EPA and receiving it in unprecedented time. What he wants us all to know is this is what he is calling phase one. He will continue to press for phase two to remove the remaining buildings and deal with them as quickly as possible.

Do you want that? I certainly do. There are ways this can happen quicker. I am going to write the corporate offices for BF Goodrich (and Michelin) and assure them we will be a grateful people if they would take on this cleanup. I want them to take responsibility for all the asbestos removal. The same asbestos that has killed fathers and mothers who worked at the plant, the same asbestos that is sending former workers to specialists to assist them in living a few more months, a few more years.

But those letters will not stop there, this same company has ruined lives all over this country, leaving sites as superfund sites contaminated with benzene and the other chemicals we have in the plume under the residential properties near the plant. Jobs are important to a community, I understand that. But BY GOLLY so our the workers, so are the neighborhoods and so are the schools where our kids go to school.

*Your Tar Creekkeeper ~ Rebecca Jim*



## LEAD Agency, Inc.

**223 A. St. SE.**

**Miami, OK 74354**

Phone: 918 542-9399

918-256-5269

leadagency@att.net

www.leadagency.org

### Board of Directors

Louis "Red" Mathia, president

Grace Goodeagle

Kelda Lorax

Carl Hayes

Roxanne Weldon

Kindel Maymi

### Executive Director

Rebecca Jim

### LEAD Staff

Martin Lively

(1st Yr. VISTA Completed)

Tim Jones, AARP

Lois Lively, AARP

J. Michael Scruggs

(LEADON / Artist in Garden)

Berkeley Ulrey, Volunteer

Kit Waters, Volunteer

### Grand Riverkeeper

### Tar Creekkeeper

### Programs

Tar Creekkeeper - Rebecca Jim

Grand Riverkeeper - Earl L. Hatley

**The LEADER is published quarterly  
and special editions**

Riverkeeper and Creekkeeper are registered trademarks and service mark of Riverkeeper, Inc. and is licensed for use herein.

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



# WRITE YOUR LETTERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

## From *Your* Grand Riverkeeper—*Earl L. Hatley*



According to Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA), Grand Lake, "at its normal maximum surface elevation of 745 feet (Pensacola Datum), covers approximately 45,200 acres and stores approximately 1,680,000 acre-feet of water. With its many bays, coves, tributaries, and islands, Grand Lake is very sinuous in shape—featuring over 650 miles of shoreline and extending about 66 miles upstream from Pensacola Dam." It was once a very blue, clear jewel that is now something different.

I am hard pressed to find people living in the area that love to swim in the lake. I talk to fishers who fear falling in. Why are they fishing? Like me, they have always fished and love eating fish. Rebecca's question, "is the environment making us sick?". My question, "are the fish safe to eat?" The ODEQ issued a Fish Consumption Advisory on fish caught in Grand Lake, Spring & Neosho Rivers in 2007. LEAD Agency, after conducting a mercury study of over 2,000 fish samples of every species in Grand & upper Hudson Lakes and all their feeder streams and hair samples from 152 fishers, issued a fish consumption guide for reducing mercury exposure. Grand Lake is a Primary Public Water Supply. Many communities and rural water districts in the area get their drinking water from the lake, including my own rural water district.

As a Riverkeeper my primary mission is to find out if the water body I patrol is Swimmable, Fishable & Drinkable. I am trying to apply that standard to the upper Grand River Watershed. Hudson Lake barely meets the standard but will not for long at the rate things are going. Grand Lake and her tributaries do not! The Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) lists all three sections of Grand Lake as impaired and not meeting at least one of its listed beneficial uses. In all three cases the beneficial use not met is Fishing, due to lead. Another beneficial use not met is Warm Water Aquatic Community, due to dissolved oxygen, nutrients. All the tributaries to Grand Lake are on the impaired list Warm Water Aquatic Community for the same reason, including sedimentation in the case of Neosho River. Spring River is impaired the same way except that river is a Cool Water Aquatic Community.

Our climate is unforgiving now, as evidenced by recent flooding. I fear this could be followed by a long dry period. The big rains will come again, and so on. For a while, this will be our cycle. So much moisture is rising into our atmosphere because of global warming, that when it rains, it really pours. But, because of increasingly warming temps, when it's dry, it's really dry for a while. As the polar winds slow down, due to slowing of the ocean currents as the oceans warm, we may see the slowing of the northern fronts stir our weather. As this happens, the rain and dry cycles last longer, making each more devastating. At some point, however, the long term trend becomes more clear as Oklahoma becomes more dry.

What do we do? Agriculture, energy & transportation. These are the areas that contribute the most carbon dioxide and methane emissions into our atmosphere, causing global warming, thus climate change. Right now, we can't expect much from our federal or state government in way of help on this, although we have to keep trying.

**We have to act locally!** Learn about Regenerative Agriculture. This is how farming practices can store carbon and build soil, rather than the opposite (which is what we are doing now). And, no it does not mean getting rid of cows, just the opposite. Even if you are vegan, RA needs large apex animals for building carbon storing soil. Cows do just fine. Don't let idiots in Congress tell you that's what the Green New Deal is about. Regenerative Agriculture is the "ag" part of the Deal.





## TOXIC TOUR CONDUCTED

Science Instructor Karla Ford has been bringing students to visit and learn from Tar Creek and one of the largest outdoor classrooms since 1999. Her Wagner High School students spend a month learning about superfund and the issues surrounding our site BEFORE they arrive. They research every aspect, political, social, tribal history and both the environmental and the environmental justices pieces of what is Tar Creek. The site visit always includes water sampling and the opportunity to visit the Quapaw Powwow Grounds to learn more about the history of this place valued by the Quapaws as home.

"Teachers are the one & only people who save nations." -Mustafa Ataturk

## 2019 Miami LEADERSHIP CLASS & Miami Youth LEADERSHIP VISIT

*Each year the Miami Regional Chamber of Commerce sponsors Leadership Miami, a program designed to stimulate and develop community leaders. The program develops a sense of community stewardship in the participants which will benefit all of the county. The program broadens perspectives of those present and future community leaders participating and introduces them to issues the county faces. They visit non-profits, businesses and tribes they may never have known to exist in the county. For the last several years, LEAD Agency has been part of their environmental day, allowing the group to learn more about us and how we serve the public.*

*The Miami Youth Leadership class arrived on their Miami Wardog Bus, driven by Virgil Tarter, a longtime member of LEAD Agency. One of the first off the bus was one of our first class of Youth Activists, Tyler Tinsley!*



**EXAMPLE IS LEADERSHIP—ALBERT SCHWEITZER**

## LEAD Agency's Community Garden Celebrates 5th Season



Art installations are popping up all through our garden plots, designed by **J. Michael Scruggs**. These colorful and sometimes whimsical features nest in with the flowers and vegetables, inviting not only humans, but also beneficial insects and pollinators.

Walls of flowers and colorful raised beds will invite you to ask, "What's growing?"

You will enter and exit through these structures and may be invited to add your own marks and colors to complete them.

Many of these works of art are one of a kind and may be purchased from the artist during the series of Garden Parties LEAD will be hosting throughout the summer.



The Ottawa County's Boys and Girls Club members are returning for their 5th season in our garden. LEAD's Youth Activist Berkeley Ulrey is planting and tending new seedlings. Though many of this year's gardeners will be children they will be joined by our volunteers, our staff and master gardeners like June Taylor and Kelda Lorax.

We are grateful to be part of the Healthy Gardening / Literacy Program this year and for the permanent garden bed they donated this spring. Academy students assembled the bed and filled it with the organic soil provided through the grant funding. They filled it with tomatoes and marigolds donated by Vinita's Frisby's Greenhouse.



## NATIONAL SERVICE IN OTTAWA COUNTY



The Corporation for National and Community Service encourages all Americans to connect with their community and lend a helping hand. When you volunteer, you do more than serve your community, you open yourself up to health benefits like increased energy, improved mood, and decreased social isolation. Volunteers are the lifeblood of many organizations, faith-based groups, community projects, and nonprofits, so we urge everyone with a heart for service to get involved now.

Since 1965, AmeriCorps VISTA members (Volunteers in Service to America) have brought their passion and perseverance where the need is greatest: to organizations that help alleviate poverty. Each year, over 8,500 AmeriCorps VISTA members serve as catalysts for change, living and working alongside community members to advance local solutions. VISTA members serve in a professional setting building partnerships, writing grants, and organizing volunteers.

Two National Service members Martin Lively and Shelby Crum have completed their year as members of AmeriCorps VISTA. At the in-service training held in Denver last year for new members they were surprised they would both be placed in Oklahoma, and in Ottawa County.

Shelby is from Rockville, Indiana, and is a graduate of Butler University with a degree in Science, Technology and Society. She applied and was accepted as an AmeriCorps/VISTA through the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas has spent her year with the Quapaw Services. Her major project was conducting a food access assessment and 90% of those surveyed a local Farmers Market since there is no grocery store in the town to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. Shelby wrote a grant the Quapaw Farmers Market in Quapaw. She will continue with the Farmers Market until fall when she will attend the University of Oklahoma to pursue a Master's in Public Health. Shelby's VISTA year has been spent at LEAD Agency. His position through Conservation Legacy was a shared cost posing partial funding.



Shelby Crum and Martin Lively have completed their year of Service in Ottawa County

Martin spent his secondary years with his parents Lois and Michael. He attended High School, practiced law outside State, came back to care for his

Pauline Sanders. Martin has been an adjunct instructor at NEO A&M College, teaching government and will return in the fall as a full-time professor. Service comes naturally to Martin and in his VISTA position with LEAD his understanding of the community proved to be an asset for his year of service. He immediately took on the challenge of upgrading LEAD Agency's social media and outreach abilities, created and carried out fundraising campaigns and engaged and empowered volunteers of all ages. As the only environmental justice organization in the area, Martin took on the issues as they came, from the abandoned BF Goodrich site, Tar Creek, and the encroachment of industrial poultry operations, and the ever present risk of lead poisoning in our children.

school years in Miami with his Lively. He graduated from Miami Grinnell and Law School at Ohio Atlanta, Georgia for 8 years, then aging grandparents Jack and

LEAD has been awarded a second year VISTA. If you are interested in serving your community with us or would like to contribute to our cost share please call us at 918-542-9399.

## DEQ Yard Removal Comes to LEAD Agency

LEAD Agency was gifted some soil and found it tested too high in lead for a safe garden, so we have had it covered, bordered with railroad ties with messages to **NEVER use EITHER** for several years.

We requested DEQ remove the soil which will enlarge our Community Garden. The schedule has been made and we are on it! Martin Lively met with the contractors and DEQ's Ellen Isbell and Brian Stanila, in charge of the OU 2 Yard Removal Program funded by EPA. You can make that call, too and get your yard tested and cleaned up for a safe yard and garden on your property. All residential properties in Ottawa County can be tested for free.



Martin Lively, Kyle Roblyer, Ellen Isbell & Brian Stanila examine a yard removal project at LEAD Agency.



***Is your yard lead safe? Your unpaved driveway? Testing is FREE!***

If high levels are found DEQ will remove it & replace it for FREE!

**Call DEQ Hotline to sign up  
1-800-522-0206**

### ***PARENTS:***

As you already know, as of Oct. 2017, it is mandatory in Oklahoma to have your child tested for lead. Children can have their blood lead sampled *free* at the Ottawa County Health Department and the North-east Tribal Health System.



**The Tar Creek Superfund Site has been on the NPL since 1983 and been on the EPA's latest list for accelerated attention for one year. The Tar Creek Strategic Plan was announced in March 2019 and the final report is expected mid-year.**

*Thanks everyone for making your comments to help make the plan be the best it can be!*



## The Magic of Life on Two Wheels—*Martin Lively*

Miami's tornado sirens sounded recently. My phone's radar showed red cells from Kansas City to well south of OKC; it looked to be a long, windy slog. I retreated to the basement. A few minutes later I realized I'd left something precious upstairs. I sped back up and returned with my bicycle. Of all my possessions, I couldn't bear losing my bike to a tornado.

I've got big plans for that bike. This summer it will be my constant companion as I pedal the 2,400 miles from Oklahoma to Seattle. It will stand guard over my tent at night, hang out on the back porch of Warm Showers hosts offering free accommodation, and of course it will carry me and my gear up hill and down, through tunnels, and across prairie and desert. I will depend on it, rely on its strength to propel me forward through long days in the saddle.

"Martin's lost his mind," you say. Perhaps, but before you commit to that position, hear me out. When you're done reading you may still think me crazy (and, really, I can't fault you for that). But instead you might feel as I do that this "grand adventure" is little more than the repetition of a daily joy accompanied by amazing scenery.

Why am I doing this crazy thing, riding a bicycle halfway across the country? It's not for adventure. It's not for adrenaline. It's not to compete with anyone else, or with myself. It's not even for the destination. By doing this ride, every day I will do something good for myself. When I ride, wherever I ride, I come a little bit closer to a better version of myself. Riding pulls me inside my own mind; it clarifies what in my life that day is really important. It also expands my world outward, creates a felt connection between me and the world in which I live.

Whether I'm headed to work, picking up groceries, or visiting family, when I'm riding my bike that inward awareness and outward connection appear as if by magic. I can't explain it. Experts say even moderate physical activity has a significant impact on mental and physical health. However, this clarity comes to me not after exertion, but with the first strokes of the pedal. There is something special about this, I think; or perhaps I've only trained myself as Pavlov trained his dog. Whatever the cause, I want more of this magic in my days.

When I'm off the bike I struggle to maintain this inner clarity and feeling of connection. Life fills my day with work to be done, emails to return, bills to pay, worries to keep at bay, and all the things I never quite get around to. It's a constant juggling act, and my self can be lost in the mix. These things I do are important, but they are not "what" is important. What is important is ephemeral, shimmering and shifting, never quite where you expect to find it and never in the same place for long. When life gets busy, I tend to stop seeking it out – and life is almost always busy. The important stuff gets harder and harder to find, the busier life becomes.

Why do I love my bicycle so much? Why do I leave a perfectly safe basement to keep it safe during a tornado warning? Why am I riding to Seattle this summer? I ride because riding keeps me sane, because it makes me happy, because it helps me remember what's important. Riding to Seattle means I will have two months to explore what is important as I explore places I've never seen. Every day, I get to ride my bike and pedal my pedals.

These benefits of riding feel special to me; they may seem special to you. But they are not special, and I am not special in experiencing them. Ask anyone who rides a bicycle, and you'll hear a variation on this theme. Cycling to the store, to the library, to school, to work, it is all magic, and for each of us that magic is special. You can experience this magic. Just go out and ride a bike.



**NOTHING COMPARES TO THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF A BIKE RIDE** *PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY*

# 21<sup>st</sup> National Environmental Conference at **TAR CREEK** Sept. 17-18, 2019

*See you in September at NEO!*

*Quapaw Art Students will be attending and will be preparing art to display*

Make plans to attend. Catch up on Tar Creek,  
BF Goodrich, Flooding, Climate Change, Lead  
and Health Impacts on Humans,  
our Birds, Pollinators and Fish



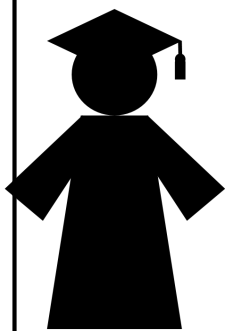
## Save the Date

*LEAD is Seeking Sponsorships this year'  
Contact us if you would like to be a sponsor*

### LEAD's 2019 Scholarship

LEAD Agency announces our \$250 Scholarship for 2019 graduating high school seniors.

Funding for the annual scholarship is raised from the Silent Auction held during our fall National Tar Creek Conference. We remain grateful for those who give items for the auction and those who bid to help fund this cause.



Application for the Scholarship is located on our website. This year's high school graduates from Commerce, Miami, and Quapaw may apply until August 1.

Award will be announced during this year's 21<sup>st</sup> National Environmental Conference at Tar Creek.

### Want to Help LEAD Agency?

*Just Select*

*Local Environmental Action Demanded* on amazonsmile & each purchase helps

**Support  
LEAD Agency, Inc..**

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com),  
Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

**amazonsmile**

Choose *goodsearch* as a search engine and  
each search will raise a penny for LEAD

 **goodsearch**

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STARTS WITH YOU

## *The Garden Parties*

LEAD Agency's  
*Summer Garden Parties begin June 6.*

*Each month join us as our garden grows and the entertainment and fun continues.*

*Meet our staff, our volunteers and learn about the plants we grow and the issues we take on.*

*Environmental Justice begins in our garden.*

LEAD Agency Invites you to our Fundraiser!

## Come to LEAD's Garden Party



Featuring Music by:

**Grant Smith**

**In our GARDEN**

Family Friendly Yard Games  
Food and Drinks

**June 6**

4 to 6 p.m.

223 A. St. S.E.  
Miami, OK



Enjoy our Community Garden  
and come back each month  
to watch it grow.

Enjoy LEAD's 5<sup>th</sup> Season  
It is better with you in it.


Fundraiser for LEAD Agency and our environmental projects LEAD Agency is a 501 c 3 non-profit organization

June Garden Party Sponsor: Doug Pewitt Attorney at Law



**Stardust Market Garden**  
**Organic Farm Shares available!**  
Fresh Sheet on our Facebook page  
Buy farm credit & get free deliveries!  
**In-season veggies, berries, herbs, medicine**  
Kelda 918-676-1040

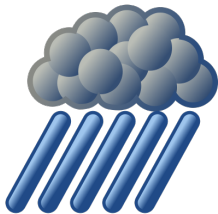
## June's Garden Party Sponsor:



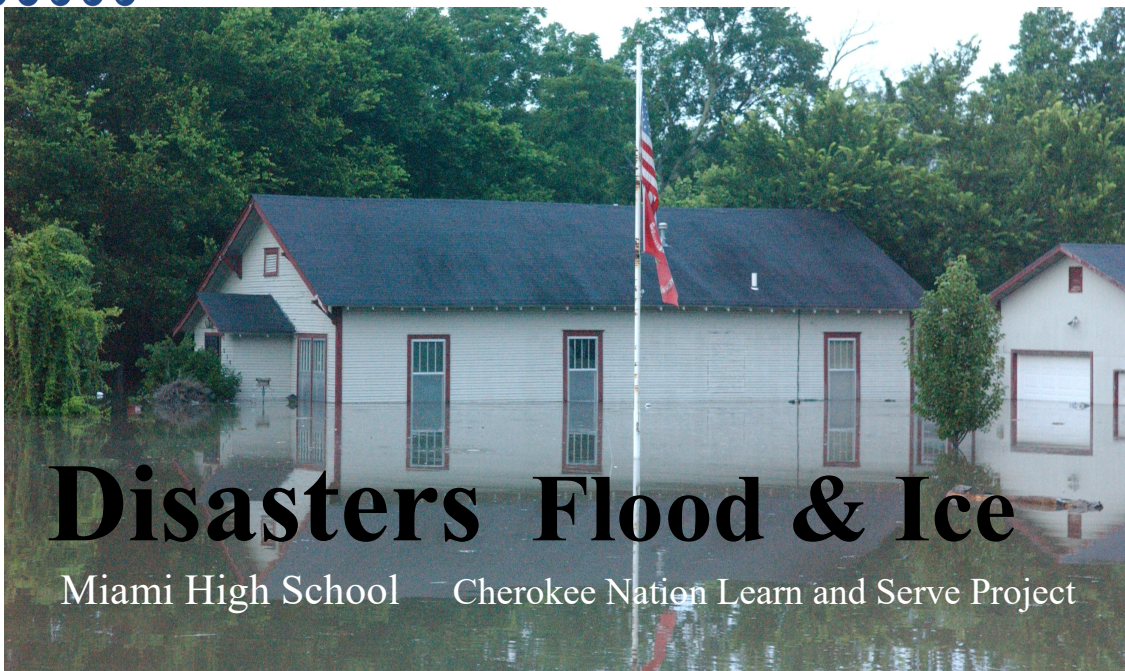
**PEWITT**  
**LAW OFFICES**  
918-542-8400 [pewittlawoffices.com](http://pewittlawoffices.com)  
**Douglas S. Pewitt**  
**Attorney At Law**

**RAFAEL CASANOVA** Rafael received a Mike Synar Environmental Excellence Award from LEAD Agency in 2018. You may never have met him, but he worked with us for the last 2 decades as a Project Manager with the EPA for the Tar Creek Superfund site. He began here working on the yard cleanups because so many of our children were lead poisoned. Because he could read and speak Spanish, he worked tirelessly to educate the Hispanic population on lead poisoning prevention. Rafael worked with the Ottawa County Health Department and their efforts to educate children on how to protect themselves from lead while EPA did the work to make their playgrounds and front yards safer. He worked with LEAD Agency and the tribes to ensure they got as much information as they needed to help lower lead levels in our children. In the recent years he has worked with the Quapaws on the chat removal efforts. He spent his career helping to protect the health at superfund sites. He was exposed to asbestos and passed away May 23, 2019 from mesothelioma. He would be so pleased to learn about EPA's latest work to remove asbestos from BF Goodrich, so no one else is exposed to that material.

I could see  
we were actually  
getting something  
done.  
It's all education.  
It's all cleanup.  
And it is a lot  
of work.



THE RECENT FLOODING TAKES A TOLL ON EACH OF US, AS WHAT HAPPENS TO ONE AFFECTS US ALL. BE PATIENT, DRY WEATHER WILL COME,. HELP A NEIGHBOR OR THE GENTLE SOULS YOU NEVER MET



LEAD Agency has copies of the remarkable book **Disaster: Flood & Ice**. It will inspire you as you read Miami High School student poetry and essays and view the artwork inspired by what they endured during the last flood in 2007. We encourage you to read it and get a copy to share with others.

LEAD Agency, Inc.  
223 A. St. S. E.  
Miami, OK 74354



918-542-9399  
[www.leadagency.org](http://www.leadagency.org)



## Important Dates

*Public Always Welcome at LEAD Agency Meetings and Events!*

**May 30** 5:30 LEAD Meeting (covered dish) at our office 223 A. St. S.E. Miami, OK

**June 27** 5:30 LEAD Meeting (covered dish) at our office 223 A. St. S.E. Miami, OK

**June 6** Garden Party Fundraiser 4 - 6 p.m. LEAD Agency with Grant Smith

**June 6** BFG Community Meeting 6 - 8 p.m. Civic Center, Miami, OK

***SAVE THIS DATE:***

**Sept. 17-18** National Environmental Conference at **TAR CREEK**



**CHECK OUT THIS INTERACTIVE WEBSITE**

**[HTTPS://WWW.EPA.GOV/EJSCREEN](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen)**

**Youth Activist Training** — *FREE* open to youth 10 –16 **June 26-28**

call 918-542-9399 for information and to sign up!

