



# The LEADer

## LEADING THE WAY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

**DIGITAL AGE** LEAD Agency has a new website that is now live. This project has been months in the works and will continue to grow with time. Naomi Andrews and Kindel Maymi have been working to organize and design the elements and different pages that bring to light the work LEAD Agency is doing while Lucas Freeman has been adding to the blog postings. The current home page has been focusing on the Flood issue in and around Miami, but as the scope of work changes and shifts, so too will the home page. Click on [www.leadagency.org](http://www.leadagency.org) and explore the site. At this time anyone living in the 100 year floodplain in and around Miami can take our Flood survey on line or answer the door when we knock! — **KINDEL MAYMI**

## CONGRATULATIONS!



### JAMES WALKINGSTICK HARVARD GRADUATE 2023

LEAD is proud of James and proud to have him serving as one of LEAD's Board of Directors. Once he became associated with our organization the focus of his undergraduate work began to include the issues we face and that he faced as a local resident.

Mitigating lead poisoning risks through activism fueled his thesis to create a new Land Use Plan for the Quapaw Nation, to serve as a guest critic for the Harvard School of Design for landscape project designs. James' research led him to study the solutions to water pollution Waterkeepers in London, Miami and Hawaii are using. James represented LEAD on the Steering Committee for the Western Mining Action Network in their efforts to protect communities dealing with mining.

**"MY HOME AND MY FAMILY'S WELLBEING MOTIVATED MY ACADEMIC JOURNEY" — JAMES WALKINGSTICK**



## FLOODED WITH MEMORIES

*I want to swim in Tar Creek ~ I want to fish in Tar Creek ~ I want to play in Tar Creek ~  
Maybe someday*

*Tar Creek is my creek ~~ EPA won't you please take those chat piles away...*

There is something special about the sound of children's voices and the urge to join in with them in song one cannot resist. This song and another resounded both inside and outside during last week's Youth Activist Camp.

One of their founders, Harriet Festing reached out several years ago wondering if we might have a need for funding to put up a billboard. That was the first assistance we received from the only national non-profit group working with communities dealing with disasters, beginning with flooding and later expanding to communities dealing with the complicated ways climate change is changing our world.

The next assistance we received from A2 was the possibility to work with AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange and with that process our Flood Map was developed. From that we were connected to the Climigration and Buy-In who designed the Flood Survey for Community members in our 100-year floodplain.

All of this happened because we trusted a stranger. We hope you will too.

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Our Flood surveyors are knocking on doors and hoping to find you at home, but leaving a trail of cards in their wake, noting they had been there, but also leaving our number if you should want to call to discuss or take the survey over the phone. Many of you are completing the survey and the last question asks if you would like to participate in our oral history project: Air, Water and Work. Many of you are saying YES. Your stories are stacking up with us. The summer and fall will be filled with reaching back out to you. We are ready to listen. Your experiences shouldn't be held as secrets. We believe the shared past this community has experienced is our history.

One of the men who shared his Work stories of his time at BF Goodrich with us last summer brought with him a piece of his families' history. On several sheets of paper was an oral interview that was conducted in the 1930's with one of his relatives, no longer living. The connection he had to the one who had gone on, made me understand more clearly the importance of listening and recording YOUR stories now. These will be the treasure your unborn will discover, too one day.

Over this last weekend, you may have been flooded with memories, since that last flood wasn't that long ago. But Memorial Day gives us all pause to reflect and perhaps also visit the graves of our loved ones and remember their times with us. I was remembered by a former student who called to ask for a little help from Ms Jim. It had been a day since being called this way. But just that quickly I responded to offer what I could.

I hope you are remembered and in such a way be offered a chance to be the person you were remembered to be. —*Your Tar Creekkeeper, Rebecca Jim*

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#### Waterkeeper Programs

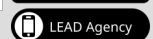
Tar Creekkeeper - Rebecca Jim

Grand Riverkeeper - Martin Lively

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and special editions**

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# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STARTS WITH YOU

# FLOOD US WITH ART!



## FLOOD US WITH ART – LUCAS FREEMAN

Since COVID restrictions were mostly lifted, we realized we need to reconnect with our local students and the community in an artistic way. We also are always looking to incorporate art into the story LEAD Agency helps Ottawa County tell.

In April, we began to promote via Facebook and through in-person visits to local schools, our art contest centered on flooding. I got to visit a handful of the schools as their schedules allowed, asking teachers and students how we can help them, and asking them to send us any flooding-related art they wanted to make. In the end, we wound up with a box of art as well as art submitted online that had a wide range of flooding represented. It was beautiful to see the ways people approached the question and how they saw flooding in their lives, and it was a great experience starting to reconnect with the community in that way. We're hopeful that we can build on these connections in the next school year. For my part, it was a great experience getting to interact with the teachers and students, even on a short timeframe.

*The drawing below was created by one of Dawn Hill's MHS Art students.*



**“WE MUST BUILD DIKES OF COURAGE TO HOLD BACK THE FLOOD OF FEAR.” MLK JR**

# COMPLETE your FLOOD leadagency.org Survey

## FLOOD SURVEY CONTINUES IN MIAMI

With guidance and support from *Buy-In* and *Climigration*, LEAD Agency has been conducting the Flood Survey of residents who live in the 100 year floodplain. Over 300 households have participated thus far, answering a series of questions about their experience with flooding. Data will be compiled and shared with neighborhoods as the survey comes closer to completion. The data will be available for city, county and tribal governments to use to find funding to address the needs and wishes of the impacted residents. This may be to provide assistance to improve residential resilience with adaptations to save the homeowner from expensive repairs or may provide numbers of residents who are ready for a buyout of their already compromised homes and the cost that might require. We encourage you to answer the door or do it on line at [www.leadagency.org](http://www.leadagency.org).

For all who have already completed the survey:



*Thank you*



Paul Marquez and other LEAD surveyors are knocking on doors throughout the 100 year floodplain in and near Miami, OK.

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

## WHERE THE WIND COMES SWEEPING DOWN THE PLAINS — KINDEL MAYMI

Oklahoma weather over the last 20 years can give you whiplash: droughts, flooding, extreme heat, extreme cold, high winds, tornadoes, ice storms. The night of June 17-18, 2023 storms swept in from the west. Winds in Catoosa, OK were tracked at 100mph.

Classified as a **derecho**, *a higher end storm complex that produces sever high-end winds of at least 58mph*, damage occurred over an area at least 400 miles long and stretching 60 miles wide. Many people suffered building damage, broken windows, roof damage, loss/damage of vehicles, large trees pulled up at the roots, power poles snapped and lines down.

300,000 people were without power over the state. The damage from the storm was comparable to the 2007 Ice storm. The week following the storm temperatures were in the 90s.

As our weather patterns change here in Oklahoma we have to look into the future and prepare for more dramatic weather events.

Living in Oklahoma my entire life, I have come to live with the drastic weather we can have here. In my 30+ years, we've dealt with a lot weather-wise to say the least. Oklahoma weather over the last 20 years can give you whiplash; droughts, flooding, extreme heat, extreme cold, high winds, tornadoes, ice storms.

Last year alone Tulsa's temps ranged from 108 degrees in July to zero degrees in December.

Being a mother of 2, I tend to be very weather aware, the news had been reporting for days that we had an elevated chance of server weather. So, the night before Father's Day I sat up watching the weather, waiting to see how things would play out.

As storms swept in from the west things were not looking good with wide spread damage from winds topping 80 mph near Stillwater with no indication that they were weakening as they were entering near my home area of Catoosa.

Living in a home with no storm shelter, with 2 children, in Oklahoma can be very stressful. The news stations were telling viewers to take tornado precautions due to the

severity of wind damage potential. Having put my kids to bed hours before, I would have to wake them up to put them in the safest place in my home, a closet in the hallway just big enough for the two of them.

Tornado sirens sounded as the storm entered Tulsa, the quiet evening quickly turned as the storm barreled through the area. This was one of the worst weather events I have been through. Sitting in my hallway, with my kids in the closet, hoping the roof would hold, thinking about the very large tree that sits right next to the house, listening to debris hitting my home, waiting.

With the wind the storm brought lots of lightening and rain, making it hard to assess the damage after the wind moved on. Winds in Catoosa were tracked at 100mph. Classified as a **derecho**, *a higher end storm complex*, it's damage extended over at least 400 miles and stretched 60 miles wide.

My family was lucky! We lost several smaller trees. Some of my neighbors were not as lucky, many with roof damage, large trees pulled up at the roots, power poles snapped and lines down.

300,000 people were without power over the state. The damage from the storm was comparable to the 2007 Ice storm. The week following the storm temperatures were in the 90s. The temps inside my house were in the upper 80s with high humidity, miserable to say the least.

For several days, gas was hard to find, ice was nonexistent, hotels were full, phone service was spotty. Linemen swarmed the area working long, hard hours to get us all back on grid. We saw community come together to help each other; cleaning up debris, opening cooling stations (for people and pets), providing meals.

**“LIVING IN A HOME WITHOUT A STORM SHELTER CAN BE STRESSFUL”**

## LEAD AGENCY ENCOURAGES COMMUNITY ACTION

HOW DO WE STOP OUR FLOODING?

WE CAN'T.

IT IS NOT OUR FAULT.

WE HAVE TO  
PRESSURE  
POWERFUL

AGENCIES TO PROTECT US



Tell FERC how you feel  
*Post Cards and Letters*

Write FERC:

Attn: Secretary Kimberly Bose

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

888 First Street NE, Room 1 A

Washington, DC 20426

Demand action on  
**Toxic Flooding**



LEAD’s Community Garden qualified this spring in the Community Resilience Project: YARD BY YARD. In order to be recognized in this program our garden was found to be a habitat for bees, butterflies and other pollinators, and birds. We encourage native species, save seeds and share them. We capture water in our rainbarrels to water the garden. The garden is unfenced and open the public.

**For More Information:**  
**Ottawa County Conservation District Office**  
 630 E. Steve Owens Blvd. Ste. 3 Miami, Ok 74354

## BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Once a week this June, the little ones returned to LEAD’s garden. They were able to prepare garden beds, plant them with vegetables and take turns watering them during one of the hottest summers on record. We can’t wait till they return to see how their garden grew!

## LEAD AGENCY & NEO COLLEGE



## EARTH DAY CLEAN UP & PAINTED RAINBARRELS



Spring connected LEAD with NEO College. Members of the National Honor Society and Natural Resources joined us in our annual Earth Day Clean Up for Tar Creek to work with local volunteers. The young ones worked along the banks and the students and LEAD staff worked to clear stormwater tree debris blocking the flow of the creek. LEAD also partnered with the Art Department, furnishing rain barrels the art students painted.

**'GARDENS GROW WHEN WE ALL SHOW UP'**

# L.E.A.D. CAMP 2023

## LEAD'S YOUTH ACTIVIST SUMMER CAMPS

This year's, 2 and 3-Day camps, focused youth who are interested in the environment and allowed them to make a difference!

The Young Campers discovered how to use social media / what environmentalism can mean today and how to use plants and flowers to create designs on clothing to be worn!

They learned about the Tar Creek Superfund Site and went to see what it really looked like. They learned from one of AAPG's Teachers of the Year how water can move through all kinds of rocks. They listened to a podcast and interviewed Rebecca Nagle on how to conduct an interview. They then recruited a person who had experienced a flood and interviewed him. What they learned was when it rains heavily, it floods in Miami, OK. The Pensacola Dam was opened in 1940, and since then, communities upstream of the dam have experienced extreme flooding. Flooding in northeastern Oklahoma is [#ToxicFlooding](#)! Flooding disperses dangerous heavy metals flowing from the Tar Creek Superfund Site (a former lead and zinc mining site)

Our local youth are sharing a petition asking the EPA and FERC to work together to stop preventable & [#ToxicFlooding](#)! Take action. Sign & share their petition widely! <https://chnng.it/2JxwQyxSss>  
Take action. Sign & share their petition widely!  
<https://>



Bailey Stephenson, organizer and camp leader, composed inspiring environmental songs with the young campers.

**STOP TOXIC FLOODING**

**SIGN THE**

**PETITION TODAY**

**Flooding in Ottawa County is:**

- **Toxic!** Flooding disperses heavy metals from the Tar Creek Superfund Site.
- **Preventable!** The flooding is caused by a backwater effect from the Pensacola Dam. Better water management is possible!
- **Environmental Injustice!** Wealthy vacation properties along Grand Lake are being prioritized over children's homes and health.

Take Action:  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/STOPTOXICFLOODING](https://bit.ly/stoptoxicflooding)

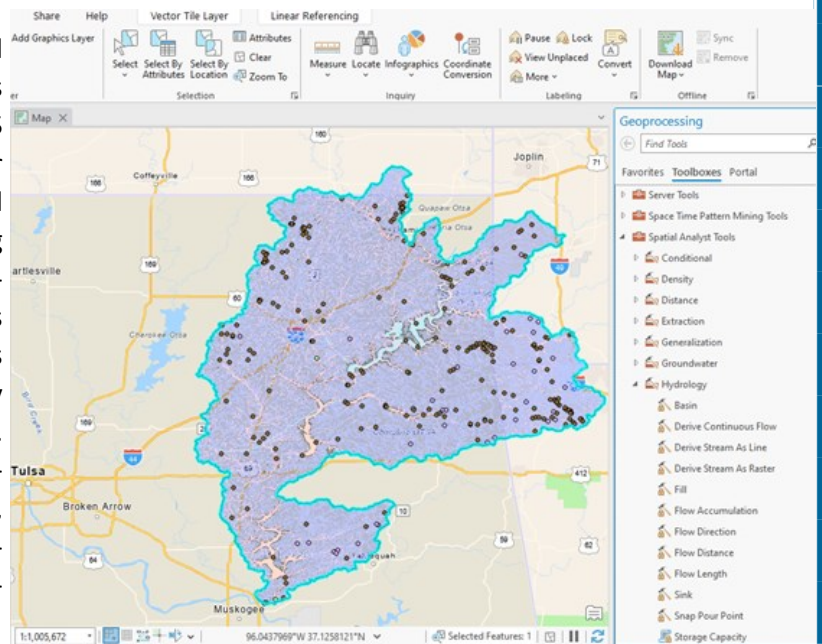


**PLANT ~ HARVEST TOMORROW**



## WATERKEEPERS ACQUIRE PREMIERE MAP-MAKING LICENSES

LEAD Agency's Tar Creekkeeper and Grand Riverkeeper programs have acquired licenses for Esri's ArcGIS map-making software. ArcGIS combines robust data about water quality, air quality, pollution violations and permits, land use, and more with the latest tools in displaying these data on maps of our watersheds. Displaying complex scientific data on digital maps brings to life not only what individual datasets mean for our environment, but also how they relate to one another within the landscape. LEAD acquired these licenses thanks to a partnership between Waterkeeper Alliance and Esri, which makes the industry-standard GIS software. These licenses are a new permanent benefit of Waterkeeper Alliance membership.



*“We are incredibly fortunate to have access to this robust map-making tool,” said Grand Riverkeeper Martin Lively, “It will significantly enhance our ability to better understand our watersheds and to communicate this knowledge to the public in clear, powerful new ways.”*

### LEAD'S WATERKEEPERS ATTEND REGIONAL SUMMIT

LEAD's Grand Riverkeeper, Martin Lively and our Tar Creekkeeper, Rebecca Jim drove this spring to the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Summit held in Birmingham, Alabama attended by over 50 Waterkeeper groups.

The Summit Integrated JEDI, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion principles throughout. One thing that will be bringing us all together as one will be the hunt for the new essential elements, the rush to mine in our watersheds. Tar Creek is the example of what happens when mining occurs and leaves the land and the water degraded for decades. The new Green movement for renewable sources of energy away from fossil fuels will require the elements laying beneath our watersheds.

The Regional Summit was a great way to pull our neighboring Waterkeepers together to build the relationships we will need in our efforts to protect all our watersheds.



**Ed Kehley took LEAD's team to tour early mining sites in part of the Picher Mining Field.**

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

## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AT TAR CREEK JESSICA TRAN

### Exploring the Connections between Community Based Research and Environmental Justice at the Tar Creek Superfund Site.

What can science do if it is informed by the community's goals and questions? As a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, my work focuses on this central question. For my research, through using interviews and surveys, I am working with LEAD to understand how community driven science projects support local advocacy efforts. I traveled to Miami in June to begin my work, and I had a fun time working with and learning from LEAD. Meeting folks and seeing the area's landscape was amazing I can't wait to come back next time!

## GOOD FRIENDS BROUGHT THEIR TALENTS TO TAR CREEK



### MARYANN HURTT'S POETRY WORKSHOP

Friends came together to join in the writing session Maryann led us through. Our papers were full and sharing our work brought us real joy and a sense of great accomplishment!

***Turning Pen &  
Paper Into Words***

**A MAP BROUGHT US TOGETHER** After spending years in zoom meetings, we were delighted to meet our "map maker" in person. We were connected to Kate Meierdiercks, through AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange. Kate came in June and brought her young daughter to see Ottawa County, a place Kate had come to know and helped our community know better. It started with a desire to "see" our flood and how it impacts our towns, tribes and individuals and it went on to be much more than that. It became a teaching tool for environmental justice. We were able to show them the sites, but also to share a wonderful evening at the Miami Tribal PowWow.

**THE BEST RESEARCH YOU CAN DO IS TO TALK TO PEOPLE - TERRY PRATCHETT**



The 2023 Hollywood Climate Summit held with Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences united filmmakers, artists, activists, climate organizations and scientists in Hollywood used informed strategies, tools and information about climate change to leverage its platform and effectively communicate with audiences.

From the Oscar winning movie Everywhere All At Once, Stephanie Hsu took part in the “Not A Future Generations Problem: Intergenerational Conversations Around Climate” workshop on June 23 alongside Rebecca Jim (Tar Creekkeeper), Loren Waters (filmmaker/activist), Genesis Butler (founder, Genesis For Animals) and Pooja Tivawala (founder, Youth Climate Collaborative) and Mimi Kennedy from MOM.



## MANAGED RETREAT CONFERENCE

Columbia University hosted a session on Climate-Induced Human Migration with Rebecca Jim participating with Kristin Marcell from the Climigration Network. The relationship LEAD has developed through our shared efforts can be used as a template for the next steps others will need to take. The June event was held in New York City to bring professionals together to share insights and programs that are working in communities to assist in addressing the impacts climate is having and will have in the future.

## TRIP ON BIG CABIN

Our Grand Riverkeeper, Martin Lively stayed closer to home with a trip down the West Fork of Big Cabin to examine one of the waterways that flow into his watershed’s “jurisdiction.” He entered the water with the canoe and the gear he would need for the over-nights adventure he was taking on. Just after setting up camp the weather changed and the storm that took out the electricity in all of Tulsa came on him. He emerged at daylight not knowing that he had lived through the **derecho** that had done such damage in Oklahoma.

