LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION DEMANDED

TAR CREEK CLEANUP TAKES MINUTES

(Miami, OK) – The 40 minute Tar Creek Cleanup took place at the NEO A&M campus in Miami, OK along Tar Creek, Monday September 16 picking up trash that has accumulated along the banks. Gloves were provided and participants were warned to leave pets and children at home. Tar Creek itself is too polluted for individuals to clean up, that is why the US EPA declared the creek and 40 square miles around her a Superfund site and are spending millions of dollars to make our future better. The least we could do was to clean what we could.

The 40 minute Tar Creek Cleanup is symbolic for the 40 years the creek has been flowing heavy metals through our community.

It was the kickoff for the 21st National Environmental Conference at Tar Creek held on the NEO A&M College campus. The cleanup was a great success. Volunteers from the community as well as NEO students worked together collecting trash.

One of LEAD’s Youth Activist, too young to participate in the cleanup, used our megaphone encouraging all of the volunteers throughout the cleanup.

LEAD Agency is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance. Both the Tar Creekkeeper and the Grand Riverkeeper as well as NEO and our partner Miami Academy members were pleased with the participation. A creek running through town and a college campus should be able to be used.

Volunteers: Tim Jones, Pam Bevis, Berkeley Ulrey, Diane Pierce, NEO and Miami Academy students Michael Mayer, Chase Fairweretner, Tyler Hollam, Montana Patrick with Rebecca Jim at Tar Creek Cleanup

WE WANT FISHABLE SWIMMABLE DRINKABLE WATER
WHY SAY SOMETHING?
Recently while walking backward into the past on a long avoided part of my property, my past, the land’s past and the water, the ever present water, still good, not tainted from a neighbor or his neighbor’s wrong choices. How incredibly precious this place is that my grandfather found and began using before statehood, and knew this place must be part of our lives, it must be kept.

And then I knew the why I work and push and hope so much, it is for the bad lands, the harmed lands the little streams containing toxins and metals and less life found in it. How this is just wrong and knowing all of it can be undone.

Rights can be righted for the water, the silent always running water and willing it so must work if only enough of us do the willing, right?

And enough of us speak up for the what needs righting as the time is fitting might be what works and why not try it, since silence has not worked.

One easy speak out would be to call Senator Inhofe and ask him to remove his amendment from the National Defense Authorization Act, which can be found in section 6021. He could listen, just because he doesn’t always, doesn’t mean we don’t ask when we call 202 224 4721 every time we call.

Use your voice. My grandfather who was born One hundred years before me, my grandfather who found this piece of land I now live upon. I never heard his the spirit that lived in his voice, I never thought to ask my dad, to tell me about that voice and did he speak about this land? the little creek that runs through it? The clean water he would have seen. Did he remember his father telling how he had been alive?

And can we remember when we were alive? And how that felt? Then begin to think of what made us feel that and that the generations to come should be, also alive with where they live and how it is for them. Which takes me and us to what we do to protect this one precious earth for those who come.

We have only this much time to right it for them and by golly to do it for ourselves.

We can buckle down and begin and with that begin to be alive again and find the spirit in us our future ones will know existed. We fought at the end of our lives before the end of time, to protect us from flooding, to stop that eternal flow of evil running down Tar Creek, to celebrate the last fiber of asbestos as it rolls out of town wrapped in the protective blanket that protects us from it.

—Your Tar Creekkeeper, Rebecca Jim
GRDA and the Inhofe Amendment

When flooding strikes northeast Oklahoma, more water in Grand Lake causes more flooding upstream in Ottawa County. Senator James Inhofe is using his position as Chairman of the US Senate Armed Services Committee and the military funding process to raise water levels at Grand Lake while changing regulatory procedures to cut out the voices of upstream communities who will be plagued by flooding and toxic pollution. Senator Inhofe snuck an amendment, into the Senate version of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Section 6021 includes the amendment which would prevent FERC the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission from even considering the impacts of flooding and pollution on communities upstream from Grand Lake when making a decision on the re-licensing the Pensacola Dam.

This is a blatant attempt to abuse the budget process for the benefit of wealthy lakeside landowners at the expense of tribal and low-income communities’ health and well-being. Please call Senator Inhofe at (202) 224-4721 today and ask him to stop betraying upstream communities and remove section 6021 from the NDAA bill. Complaining years from now will not help. A phone call now MIGHT.

No individual rain drop considers itself responsible for the flood.  

John Ruskin

Senator Inhofe:

We didn’t elect you to flood us.

When Grand Lake levels are high,  
Our community suffers.

Call 202-224-4721
Demand the removal of Inhofe Amendment in section 6021 from the NDAA

LEAD Agency Awarded Flood Fighters Mini Grant

The Anthropocene Alliance has awarded LEAD Agency the Flood Fighters Mini Grant. This grant was designed to help neighbors come together to influence local policies and practices while expanding the Higher Ground grassroots network. We received support for our flood fighting work, which pulls us together and gives us a louder voice by empowering our neighbors to speak out to the person in power to protect us from flooding. We are in a unique situation and a precarious one. Our moment to act is now. Later won’t help.

WHEN YOU DEMAND IT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WORKS
From *Your Grand Riverkeeper—Earl L. Hatley*

How does this all relate to us here on the Grand River?

First, the obvious, we live in Oklahoma! We claim the former oil capitol of the world (Tulsa) and now claim the largest oil hub in the lower 48 (Cushing), the pipeline crossroads. Closer to home, however, GRDA operates two coal-fired power plants and maintains a large coal ash dump along with several wastewater ponds. These have been found to have contaminated the groundwater with arsenic and other contaminants. In addition, a tar sands pipeline runs from Illinois to Cushing, OK and it crosses under the Neosho River near Chanute, KS north of the OK state line. In 2010 a similar pipeline blowout spilled thousands of gallons of tar sands into the Kalamazoo River in MI. To this day the river is not cleaned up, and all the homes and businesses along that several miles of river are gone. Many people became sick and some died.

LEAD Agency has studied and documented the mercury in the fish resulting from the fallout of mercury from GRDA and other regional coal-fired power plants that drop mercury into our watershed. In addition, the groundwater under the GRDA facility is contaminated (what that means for the underlying aquifer and the Grand River is unknown). What would happen if there was a tar sands spill in the Neosho River, or if a coal train or train carrying oil (bomb train) were to spill its content into our river and, thus, into Grand Lake?

Two things are happening that are contradictory and problematic to our world. Fossil fuels are not the future for energy and transportation, yet infrastructure to accommodate those fuels is rapidly developed and pushed on communities as if these fuels ARE THE FUTURE! At some point investors will pay the price for over investment in infrastructure, exploration and extraction that the market can’t bear.

Look at tar sands. Production with tar sands in Alberta Canada is going down to the point that all the majors have gotten out. Yet, pipelines from there are a priority in the US! Over production of natural gas has greatly reduced the price, yet production continues to the point that 5 new plants are being built in the Ohio River valley to manufacture pellets for feed stocks to make plastic, most of which will be exported to Europe, just so that the shale fracking boom in PA and surrounding area can continue. All while the world chokes on plastic!! And, methane rules are being reduced to accommodate more drilling, especially in national parks and wildlife areas where it was banned in the previous Administration.

Mercury and plastics are in our Grand Lake and her feeder streams, along with other petroleum based contaminants. We don’t want tar sands either, that can’t be cleaned up! And, as we see from other articles in this newsletter, we are suffering from toxic flooding as well. I think the picture is emerging that we cannot count on our government right now to do the right thing.

It is going to take US, the citizens, to steer our country in the right direction. After all this is a democracy isn’t it?? That’s how it should be! Let your elected leaders know you are tired of this and tell them what you want. Elect someone else if you are not happy with them. They are elected to serve us. We pay their salaries. They serve us, not the corpo-

**SPEAK UP**  **SPEAK OUT**  **SAY IT OUT LOUD**
BF GOODRICH UPDATE

Remediation at Goodrich moved into Phase 2 work a few weeks ago. An abatement contractor’s is working steadily “locked” inside the big Powerhouse Building with a dozen in that crew. The EPA contractor’s second team is doing the non-Powerhouse Building work and is nearing completion as well as cleaning out the utility pits. A separate crew is working inside the Autoclave basement removing lots of asbestos pipe wrap. After this is completed they will begin to deal with the carbon black tank. They have hope in December to work on the large Banbury Mixers. The completion time will be January if the weather holds. All work will be shut down during the holidays to allow the crew time off.

We were given the greatest news: “Our air monitoring is still going and we haven’t seen any asbestos fibers!” according to the site coordinator, Mike McAteer. He also said, “it always makes me feel good to know people are interested in our progress.”

“The crew will be thrilled to know the community appreciates their efforts…. We don’t often get that.”

Boy are we interested and certainly appreciative!

We are showing the workers cleaning up the asbestos how grateful we are for the risks they are taking to make our community safer.
24 workers, that means 2 dozen cookies.
So far treats have been delivered straight from the kitchens of Judy Campbell, Martha Jordan, Debbie East, and LEAD Agency Carla Lillie bought out the donut shop last week.
Which day will you make cookies? What kind? Give us a Call if you will make 2 dozen cookies. 918-542-9399

Marla Stidham Wins Award
Miami Academy and one of their teachers were nominated for state alternative school awards by LEAD Agency this fall.

We received the news recently Marla Stidham had received TEACHER OF THE YEAR for Oklahoma Alternative Schools for 2019.

Congratulation! And thank you and the students at the Miami Academy for their efforts throughout the last year to speak out and stand up for environmental justice. We look forward for continued partnering this year.
This began with the students preparing cookies for the BFGoodrich workers!
AT THE 40 YEARS OF BAD WATER MARK,
EPA STOOD WITH LEAD AND THE QUAPAW NATION
TO RECOGNIZE THIS YEAR’S MIKE SYNAR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE Awardees:
Janetta Coats—Craig Kreman—Mike McAteer

Forty years ago this fall mine water began discharging into Tar Creek at a rate of 13 tons of heavy metal evey day. We have been patient, we have waited for Tar Creek to flow clean again, and yet we may be only halfway there to that reality. More decades to wait.

EPA, DEQ and the Quapaw Nation updated us at our conference on progress at our superfund site. The new work will be the actual streams from bank to bank. Individual yard cleanup in the county has been on-going, but MORE is needed to ever get to halfway on OU2.

Thirty-three years ago BF Goodrich closed. DEQ and EPA both updated the community at the conference. The asbestos will be dealt with but there is more to be decided before the community will be satisfied with the progress by DEQ and Michelin for benzene in the perched aquifer beneath the plant and neighborhood.

All who attend the conference walked through the art exhibit that floated in the breeze attendees created. The photo images of Picher as it once was and the chat piles were like the ghosts in the room.

The opening event, the Poetry Slam was well attended by poets and readers and a “slammer” with the poetry collected into the Selected Poetry 2019 LEAD has printed and has available for a donation to cover printing and postage. Entries were judged by Debbie East and Martha Jordan and the winners were: Patty Shinn, Earl Hatley, Tyler Tinsley and Laura Edington. Each was awarded a copy of Martha Jordan’s novel, The Setting Sun and coupons from local restaurants and gift cards from Eastern Shawnee Tribe.

With the generous donations from the community, the sale of raffle tickets on the Pendleton Blanket, tickets for the Fish Fry the Afton Mason Lodge #76 provided and the results from both Live and Silence Auctions, LEAD Agency was able to raise over $4,000 to help us continue to do our work and for the 2020 scholarship program. With these results calculated, the Masons were able to award us an additional $1,500.

All of the 21st National Environmental Conference at Tar Creek is posted on our Facebook page at LEAD Agency, Inc. Tune in now and watch, or check back to confirm what you heard. We appreciate all who presented and all who attended. We all left knowing more than we did.
A comminatory plaque was presented by the Quapaw Nation to the EPA in remembrance of Rafael Casanova for his years of service to the people and the environment at the Tar Creek Superfund Site. He was truly loved here and his service valued because of the deep respect he showed us all. Pictured: Craig Kreman, EPA Regional Administrator Ken McQueen and Tim Kent.

We are grateful for the interest taken by the community and with their attendance, and were pleased with the collaborations on projects and the commitment made by agencies to listen to our residents. The Western Mining Action’s Indigenous Caucus members attended this year as our special guests.

Special Thanks to the Following for their conference support:

Our Water Protectors

Grand Lake Watershed Alliance

Our River Guardians: Our Creek Believers:

2019 Planning Committee: Martin Lively, Craig Kreman, James Walkingstick, Deborah Dodson, Tammy Arnold, Tim Jones, Keesha Bunch, Elaine Irvin, Lois Lively, Linda Sue Warner, Ben Bingham, Grace Goodeagle, Earl Hatley, Cathy Sloan, Rebecca Jim, Kit Waters

Conference T-shirts and printed copies of Selected Poetry 2019 are each available for $10 plus $5 for postage if mailing is necessary.
Owasso HS Environmental Class Site Visit

Shannon Chatwin’s students spent part of the day at Tar Creek with Quapaw Environmental Dept. Summer King taking water samples. They came to LEAD Agency to learn about how to be the Environmental Activists we knew they would aspire to be! They each made a statement: Don’t Flood Us!

Focus On Youth: Téa Haws is the recent the recipient of one of "LEAD ON”s" Outdoor Adventure Backpacks. She is a member of Troop 687, the First All Girl BSA troop, in Ottawa County area. The Troop is associated with All Saint’s Episcopal Church and is in the Cherokee Area Council. We are proud of this young woman who encourages all of us to get up and go outside and to begin our very own adventures.

Items in the Backpack were all donated to LEAD Agency to benefit youth in the area. The Cherokee Nation, as well as established businesses dealing with outdoor equipment. We appreciate the efforts Michael Scruggs has exhibited locating donations, organizing and making these items available to members of our local community.

WANT TO HELP LEAD AGENCY?

LEAD Agency operates with volunteers and donations. You can help our organization by participating in our fundraisers, donating your time, your talent, or by making a personal cash donation or asking your business, your team or family to contribute. LEAD can do more for our community with your support. We have levels of support we recognize: Water Protectors, River Guardians, and Creek Believers.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates.

Choose goodsearch as a search engine and each search will raise a penny for
Introduction to Permaculture
Kelda Lorax, Stardust Garden and LEAD Board Member presented an introduction to permaculture to a full house this month. There was a discussion which followed indicating a desire to continue the dialogue and request for more sessions on how a community such as ours changes to permaculture: a permanent culture of growing the foods we need. Humans have lived sustainably on this planet for thousands of years.

Permaculture is the design of sustainable, and even regenerative, human habitat. Permaculture is a curriculum in systems-thinking that makes us generalists in 'the cutting edge of ten thousand year old technologies'. It offers a training in living similar to what an earth-based grandparent steeped in local ecological knowledge might slowly train a child. Kelda is credentialed to lead full Permaculture Design Courses through PINA (Permaculture Institute of North America) Mike Scruggs prepared a light meal with parsley, cabbage from our Community Garden.

Seed Collecting
To grow our Seed Library
The 5th season in our Community Garden produced vegetables, forbs and pollinator friendly plants, but it produced even more. It produced gardeners, more Ottawa County Boys and Girls and local volunteers learned new ways to garden, some for the first time ever. Other master gardeners like June Taylor, Elaine Irvin and Kelda Lorax gave valuable time to our garden. This season also produced great partners and support. LEAD became a partner in the Health Literacy Project, receiving a new raised bed, more plants and a great new sign for the garden! LEAD’s Community Garden also was awarded funding through TSET, the Northeast Tribal Health Services. J. Michael Scruggs produced the Garden Art to accent the variety of plants throughout the front and back gardens.
We added a bucket garden to grow our pumpkin patch, The Eastern Shawnee seedlings grew tall too.

Is your yard lead safe? What about your unpaved driveway?
Testing is FREE!
If high levels are found DEQ will remove it & replace for FREE
Call DEQ Hotline to sign up your yard
1-800-522-0206 Save the number!
Martin Lively begins 2nd Yr. VISTA at LEAD

LEAD has been awarded a second year VISTA. Martin Lively has committed to filling this position for LEAD beginning by being sworn in November 12th. This position is partially funded through Steward Legacy and the Office Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. LEAD Agency is responsible for funding the match. Any contribution toward that match, would be appreciated.

“I’ll always remember Wednesday. It was the first day of public impeachment hearings - a historic moment regardless of personal politics. Listening to opening statements, I realized that just 18 hours earlier I had taken the same oath of office presidents take. In reciting that oath Tuesday, I began my second year as an AmeriCorps VISTA serving with LEAD Agency.

We call oaths solemn, which they are, but so is any dedication to a worthy cause. When I look at the people working in and with LEAD Agency, I see people using unique talents to preserve, protect, and defend the fragile and threatened natural world we call home. That work you do, in whatever form, is solemn. As a VISTA, my role is to support your work and increase LEAD Agency’s ability to meet the needs of our communities and our environment in the years to come. It’s a privilege to do what I can, and I hope each of you will continue offering your talents “~ Martin Lively

LeadCare2 – Team Trained

Jose Gonzalez, currently an NEO College student was trained in how to use the LeadCare2 instrument the Mount Sinai Hospital donated to LEAD Agency. He has returned and trained two of our staff members: Lois Lively and Jamie Chance. They will now be available to give community members an opportunity to check blood lead levels. The two were delighted to learn this skill and even happier when their own levels were below the level of concern!

LEAD will continue partnering with the Ottawa County Health Department. They will test children 6 and younger and LEAD can test those older including the parents.

If you are interested in being trained and working with LEAD as a volunteer tester, contact us. Suggest a venue for LEAD Agency to set up as a testing site.

Tim Jones Retires

We were sorry to say goodbye to Tim, but wish him the best in his retirement! But reminded him he is always welcome back!

WIOA Places – Jamie Chance

After a month of volunteering and now with the assistance from Mona Poole at the Miami WorkForce through the WIOA program, LEAD Agency will benefit with their placement of Jamie Chance. Welcome Jamie!

Volunteers Make the Difference

Let’s

Lower

Lead

Levels

for

All

Natasha McKibben

Every Friday morning like clock work, LEAD hears a knock on the door. Natasha spends her Fridays with us. She is incredibly resourceful and comes to us with skills we are still discovering. We are delighted to have her join our team.
Here’s Your Open Invitation from LEAD Agency … become a member, attend a meeting, be moved to action. We are all stronger with your involvement.