

GARLAND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NEWS AND VIEWS

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Board of Directors: Tommy Sorrells David Parker Davin Anderson Kayla Hardage Brad Phillips

HAPPY *New Year*

As the New Year dawns, let us hold close the years gone by, for they have led us to this very moment. With every challenge that we meet and every triumph that we celebrate, our lives are shaped into who we are and who we have yet to become. In each New Year, let love and compassion, mindfulness and empathy, be your guides to becoming the best version of yourself.

Welcome - Garrielle Stephens Acting District Conservationist



Hello, my name is Garrielle Stephens. I have had the privilege of working with the USDA-NRCS since 2009. I have gained valuable experience working in Northwest Missouri. I graduated from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in 2008. I'm happily married and the proud mother of four boys. I am excited to be Acting District Conservationist for the next 120 days. I'm looking forward to contributing to the continued success of our team in Garland County.

AACD Dave Ferguson Scholarship



Local high school students who plan to study agriculture, environmental science, forestry, wildlife biology, soil science, or any other natural resource conservation related field have the chance to win up to \$1,000 towards college expenses. GCCD is offering a \$250 scholarship through the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts' "Dave Ferguson" scholarship contest. The winner will then be eligible to compete at both the area and state level with the chance to win up to \$1,000. The contest is open to all sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are residents of Garland County, with a minimum 2.5 GPA and will follow a conservation related course of study. Entries must be post-marked by February 7, 2025. Visit garlandcountycd.org or call our office at 501.545.4016 for more information.

Rain Barrel Workshop GC Library Community Garden



As part of our Stormwater and Water Quality Awareness Campaign, GCCD sponsored our first rain barrel workshop October 15th at the Garland County Library's Community Garden. GCCD partnered with the Garland County Master Gardeners and Garland County U of A Extension to install gutters and a rain barrel on the existing storage shed at the community garden. Participants learned how capturing water from a roof can be used to water lawns and gardens and reduce the amount of runoff and stormwater pollution. Stay tuned for our next rain barrel workshop!

Arkansas GROWN Conference & Expo January 30-Feb 1



The Hot Springs Convention Center will host the 2025 Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo from January 30 to February 1. The conference is made possible by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and several agricultural partners including Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts. The conference and expo focuses on farmers, businesses, and individuals that provide agriculture services across Arkansas. Focused on strengthening the local food system, the event will feature workshops, informative keynote sessions, and a public Arkansas Grown & Made Market. For more information and to register visit arkansasgrown.org/arkansas-grown-conference-expo

Fallen leaves and water quality

Fallen leaves can significantly impact water quality, especially when left to accumulate on hard surfaces. Leaves contain high amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen. When left to decompose on impermeable surfaces, leaves are carried by stormwater into drains that lead directly into our creeks, rivers, lakes, and streams. High levels of those nutrients cause algae blooms to grow in water bodies, depleting oxygen and releasing toxins. Here are three ways you can help to manage your leaves properly:

- 1 MULCH THEM** Blow leaves onto grassy areas then use your mower to chop into small pieces.
- 2 COMPOST THEM** Dried leaves are brown material in a compost pile; releasing nitrogen somewhat like fertilizer.
- 3 PILES FOR WILDLIFE** Birds, reptiles, and mammals use leaf mounds as shelter.

Area Chapter Interest Meeting

Anna Grace White
Farm Bill Biologist
agwhite@quailforever.org



In 1982, a group of pheasant hunters saw the connection between upland habitat loss and the decline in pheasant populations. An organization dedicated to wildlife habitat conservation was needed, and Pheasants Forever was formed. In 2005, as a response to the continued decline of quail populations and suitable habitat, Pheasants Forever formed a quail division, Quail Forever. Quail Forever's mission is to conserve quail, pheasants, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education, and conservation advocacy. If you are interested in learning more about Quail Forever and to discuss interest in starting a new chapter in Hot Springs for Clark, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, contact our office at 501-545-4016 for times and locations of upcoming interest meetings.

Equipment For Rent



COSMO P500 BROADCAST SPREADER

\$60 per day



GARDEN SPRAYER

25 gallon
\$25 per day



SPECO 35 TON LOG SPLITTER

Vertical/Horizontal splitting
\$50 first day
\$25 each additional day



TYE NO-TILL DRILL

7-foot with hydraulic remote outlets
\$7 per acre
\$50 minimum



PASTURE SPRAYER

300 gallon
\$50 per day



Basics of Hydroponics

Hydroponics is the method of growing plants using a water based nutrient solution rather than soil. This technique of growing offers benefits including higher yield, rapid plant growth, fewer pests, less disease, and reduced water usage. Here are some basics of hydroponics to help you get started.

Types of Systems

- Active:** Nutrient solution is moved by a pump
- Passive:** Relies on capillary action of a growing medium or a wick
- Recirculating:** Reuses nutrient solution
- Non-recovery:** Nutrient solution is applied to the medium

Best Plant Picks

- Lettuce:** Fast grower, shallow root system
- Herbs:** Resilient, continuous harvest
- Green onions:** Mature quickly, easily propagated from cuttings
- Strawberries:** Thrive in controlled environment, high yield



Leafy greens are packed with vitamins A,C,E and K, as well as minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, and potassium. They also contain fiber, which is good for digestion and gut health. By eating more Kale, Spinach, Collard greens, Bok choy, Arugala, Romaine lettuce (just to name a few) you can lower your risk of heart disease, increase muscle strength, and boost your immune system. So GO GREEN this year!

Greens and Beans Ham Soup

- 1 cup dried pinto beans (soaked)
- 4 strips bacon, cut to 1/2" pcs
- 3 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ham bone (or hock)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 head cabbage, shredded
- 1 bunch kale, chopped
- pepper to taste
- hot sauce or vinegar, for serving

1. Heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add bacon, cook until crisp, 5 to 7 minutes; remove and save for garnish. Add carrots, celery, onion & garlic to the bacon fat in pan. Cook until softened.
2. Add 8 cups water, ham bone or hock, bay leaf and salt, bring to a boil over high heat; add beans, reduce heat to med-low and simmer for 30 mins. Add cabbage, simmer 30 mins. Add kale, simmer until kale is soft but still vibrantly green, about 15 mins.
3. Remove ham bone or hock from pot. Take off any meat and stir back into soup with pepper, a dash of hot sauce or vinegar. Crumble reserved bacon on top when serving.

Kale Quinoa Salad

Lisa Warren

- 1 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup tomato juice
- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 tbl olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- salt and pepper
- 6 cups coarsely chopped kale
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 tbl balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest

1. In a large saucepan, bring water and tomato juice to a boil. Add quinoa. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until liquid is absorbed, 18-22 minutes. Remove from the heat; fluff with a fork.
2. In a large skillet, saute onion in oil until tender. Add garlic and pepper flakes; cook 1 minute. Add kale and cook 3-4 minutes.
3. Stir in pine nuts and berries; cook until kale is tender, about 2 minutes. Stir in vinegar, lemon juice, zest, salt and pepper; cook 1-2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat and stir in quinoa. Serve at room temperature.

Conservation Stewardship Program



The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while also strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, we can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. We can help you identify natural resource problems in your operation and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems or attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. NRCS works with producers to develop a conservation plan that outlines and enhances existing efforts, using new conservation practices, based on management objectives for your individual operation. Producers implement practices and activities in their conservation plan that expands on the benefits of cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving their agricultural operations. The first step in the process, is to notify NRCS of your interest in CSP. Then a conservation planner will schedule a visit to your property to walk the land with you and discuss any resource concerns. Following the site visit, they will develop a conservation plan that includes a variety of conservation practices, activities and enhancements to improve the level of conservation benefit and to address the resource concerns. Applications for NRCS conservation programs are accepted on a continuous basis. However, application ranking dates are set at key times throughout the year. Contact your local NRCS office at 501-545-4016 for more information.

Saving the Monarchs



Monarch butterflies with their iconic orange and black wings are important pollinators and a key part of many ecosystems, but their numbers have been steadily declining. Monarch populations have declined by over 80% in some areas due to habitat loss, pesticides, climate change, and other threats. The decline in numbers has prompted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to identify threats and take steps to conserve monarchs. The FWS has published a proposal in the Federal Register to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). For more than 50 years, the ESA has been an effective catalyst for on-the-ground collaborative conservation, promoting the recovery of wildlife and conserving the habitats upon which they depend. This proposed rule will help build on and enhance conservation efforts for monarchs. Everyone can play a role in saving the monarch butterfly. To learn more about the monarch listing proposal and how you can help visit fws.gov/initiative/pollinators/save-monarch