



2015-2016 "Stewarding our Water Cycle" Grant Report to High Plains Underground Water Conservation District

Summary:

With \$4,000 of funding from High Plains Water District awarded in June 2015, Ogallala Commons was able to meet its projected outcomes in the "Stewarding Our Water Cycle" Project: creating a Community Internship tasked with creating 3 videos on water conservation and rainwater harvesting as part of OC's Stewarding Our Aquifer Initiative (www.stewardingouraquifer.com), and hosting 3 Playa Field Days to educate landowners and the interested public about playa ecosystems.

The following is an overview of our accomplishments.

Projected Outcomes:

1. Intern for Stewarding Our Aquifer Initiative
(\$2,500 of HPUWCD grant funding)
Britt Snipes, an applicant from Borger, TX and a student at West Texas A&M University majoring in Communications, was selected as OC's Community Intern to work on OC's SOA Initiative.

Measurable Results:

- During her 230-hour internships, Britt was able to plan, interview, and film 3 videos that were posted on Stewarding Our Aquifer's (SOA) Facebook page (paste links in your Internet browser to see the videos):

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UctQU6zCW2_rqW0ggHigvGPO.
The YouTube channel had 375 views.

SOA Facebook Posts:

- <http://blog.stewardingouraquifer.com/soa/stewards-video-series-dr.-habersang-s-approach-to-food-security> (226 views)

- <http://blog.stewardingouraquifer.com/soa/stewards-video-series-jason-hodges-is-building-better-landscapes> (248 views)
- <http://blog.stewardingouraquifer.com/soa/stewards-video-series-russ-finch-is-growing-tropical-fruits-in-the-snow> (81 views)
- <http://blog.stewardingouraquifer.com/soa/stewards-video-series-how-james-cathey-grows-a-better-plant> (151 views)
- <http://blog.stewardingouraquifer.com/soa/stewards-video-series-jim-and-barbara-whittens-full-tanks> (117 views)
- <http://blog.stewardingouraquifer.com/soa/stewards-video-series-dave-stebbins-his-water-efficient-house> (291 views)

In total, 1,114 viewers read the blogs. On SOA's Facebook page, the blog posts had a total reach of 7,668 people.

2. Playa Field Days (\$1,500 of HPUWCD grant funding)

Ogallala Commons conducted 3 Playa Management Field Days in Hale and Castro counties to raise awareness of how playas can recharge the Ogallala Aquifer, as well as to provide education on best practices for playa management.

Measurable Results:

- OC convened a Playa Field Day on June 25, 2015 at the Texas AgriLife Extension Research Station in Halfway, TX. The event was attended by 17 people, including 5 playa landowners. Presentations on building soil health through playa management was given by Dr. Tim Steffens, grazing specialist with Texas AgriLife Extension Center in Amarillo. A field excursion was taken to see a playa basin near Edmonson, TX, owned by Mark Hilliard, and enrolled in USDA-NRCS's Wetlands Reserve Program
- A couple weeks later, on July 11th, in conjunction with the annual German Festival in Nazareth, OC held another Playa Field Day, due to abundant surface water in the playa in the middle of summer. A group of 18 adults attended the tour (6 who owned playas), led by Dr. Darryl Birkenfeld, which focused on playa plant identification tour.
- On March 23, 2016, OC conducted a third Playa Field Day, starting with

presentations at the Senior Citizens Building in Dimmitt, TX. The event was co-sponsored by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Presentations were given by Kevin Kraai and Don Kahl from Texas Parks & Wildlife, with a focus on waterfowl management. Thought it was a windy spring day, 15 adults attended, including 6 playa landowners. A tour of the Dimmitt Unit playa (west of Dimmitt) occurred later in the morning, and the event ended with lunch.

A total of 40 landowners (17 who owned playas) attended our 3 Field Days.

“Stewarding our Water Cycle” Grant Final Project Budget

Project Income

Grant Funding from High Plains UWCD	\$ 4,000
CoBank sponsorship for OC Intern Orientation Retreat	\$10,000
CoBank sponsorship for program development	\$ 5,000
Registrations for 3 Playa Field Days	\$ 250
CHS Funding for program coordination by OC Staff	\$ 5,750
Sub-Total	\$25,000

Project Expenses

Stipends paid to Intern Britt Snipes	\$ 2,100
SOA Project Development & Coordination by OC Staff	\$10,750
Playa Field Days Project Coordination by OC Staff	\$ 1,500
OC Intern Orientation Retreat meals, lodging & rental	\$10,000
Meals and beverages at Playa Field Days	\$ 250
Administrative Services	\$ 400
Sub-Total	\$25,000

Conclusion:

Ogallala Commons greatly appreciates the support of High Plains Water District for this project, and we look forward to submitting a new grant proposal in 2017.

Sincerely,

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