

CONSERVING OKLAHOMA

The Nature Conservancy's Approach to Public Policy

Sustaining healthy natural systems that are the foundation for our economy, security and way of life by building on Oklahoma's nonpartisan conservation tradition.



Bison at the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in Pawhuska. © Carmon Briggs

ABOUT THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF OKLAHOMA

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Founded in the United States in 1951, TNC works in every state and in 79 countries and territories around the world to make a lasting difference. Since 1986, the Conservancy has worked to conserve Oklahoma's magnificent landscapes and unique biodiversity totaling over 105,000 acres.

Guided by science, TNC collaborates with local landowners, communities and businesses to implement practical conservation solutions that benefit people and nature.

TNC is supported by more than 1 million members and by boards of trustees made up of local leaders in each of the states and countries where TNC works. The organization is nonpartisan—trustees, members and staff come from across the political spectrum.

Its recommendations are drawn from the hands-on experience of more than 60 years working with people from all walks of life, with businesses and industries and with governments from the local to the national level. TNC seeks opportunities to advance solutions that work for people and nature and stands ready to defend its core values and bedrock environmental laws.

TNC believes the health of natural systems and the welfare of human communities are closely linked and that diverse public and private interests can work together to achieve lasting conservation success.



OUR APPROACH TO PUBLIC POLICY

TNC proposes initiatives that:

- Promote more efficient solutions to resource management problems.
- Are ambitious but practical, with long-term benefits.
- Take advantage of the power and value of nature.
- Respect human needs.
- Use market mechanisms to achieve resource management goals.
- Emphasize cooperation across agency, political and organizational boundaries.
- Recognize public sector fiscal constraints.

OUR TRUSTEES IN OKLAHOMA

- Dr. Craig Abbott - OKC
- Brian Bourgeois - Collinsville
- Neal McCaleb - Edmond
- Chad Dillingham - Enid
- Ford Drummond - Bartlesville
- Mark Helm - OKC
- Rudy Herrmann - Tulsa
- Deanne Hughes - Tulsa
- John D. Groendyke - Enid
- Jenk Jones Jr. - Tulsa
- Leslie Kutz - Ardmore
- John Lindsay - Tulsa
- J. Larry Nichols - OKC
- John Nickel - Tulsa
- Jody Parker, Jr. - Tulsa
- Caroline Patton - OKC
- David Riggs - Tulsa
- John Seldenrust - OKC
- Miles Tolbert - OKC
- Usha Turner - OKC

OKLAHOMA POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Protect Land and Water

Conservation programs have not kept pace with Oklahoma's growing economy and population. Sustained, strong levels of conservation funding are critical to communities and their economies. Opportunities exist to effectively fund conservation while streamlining the budget.

- Fully fund and support our precious state lands, including state parks and wildlife management areas, protected for the benefit and enjoyment of Oklahomans and our visitors.
- Support programs that minimize negative impacts to native habitats and wildlife from invasive species, such as destructive feral hogs and problematic Eastern redcedar.
- Ensure science-based and sustainable use of waters from Oklahoma aquifers to benefit the fish and wildlife, as well as the people that depend on them for drinking water.

Invest in Nature as an Infrastructure Solution

Oklahoma communities and their economies depend on healthy natural systems that provide clean drinking water, food, air quality, storm protection, flood control, recreation and more. Nature-based solutions can be a cost-effective way to meet the needs of society and reduce risks to nature and people.

- Ensure our state has comprehensive plans for prolonged droughts and more frequent extreme flooding events to better protect our communities and reduce natural disaster costs.
- Encourage increased use of prescribed burns in a way to prevent mega wildfires by expanding funding and policies supporting prescribed burns as a tool for proper land management.
- Advance disaster risk-reduction legislation, regulation and programs that facilitate conservation and restoration of natural systems while contributing to community safety.

Promote Efficient Energy

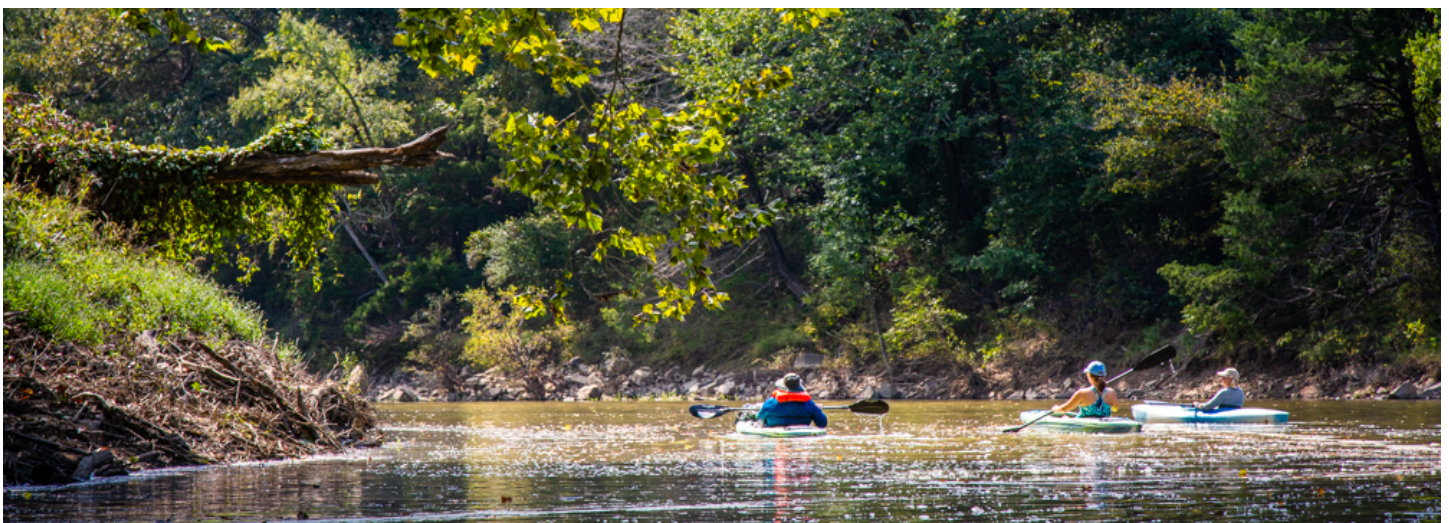
Rapid growth in the demand for energy worldwide is impacting our ability to conserve Oklahoma's natural resources. Energy development is expanding and impacting our remaining native intact landscapes such as the Tallgrass prairie, as well as the health and well-being of our residents.

- Encourage voluntary use of low-risk wind siting tools which offer major benefits to utility companies, Oklahoma's growing renewable energy sector, electric customers, wildlife, and provide new economic opportunities for our state.
- Act on opportunities to advance state policies that promote efficient energy production and emissions reduction, such as carbon capture innovations and natural climate solutions.

Support Sustainable Agriculture & Ranching

By increasing carbon storage in living things, we can tap a natural process to draw down atmospheric carbon for increased climate resiliency. Oklahoma's land provides an opportunity to do just this with sustainable farming and grazing practices such as cover crop expansion and rotational grazing.

- Support agriculture-based carbon sequestration efforts to open Oklahoma as a market for carbon credits.
- Expand funding that supports sustainable agriculture and grazing programs, including pollinator strips and no-till drilling.
- Advance collaborative programs that allow adoption of soil health management systems to provide conservation and economic benefits for farmers, communities and future generations.



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