



### Position Update

This winter has been busy training and becoming better acquainted with the new GPFI program, as well as continuing to push our EQIP Monarch program. The work load is once again in no shortage this year. Programs are in full swing, CRP is impatiently waiting to be assessed, and CRP Grasslands is right around the corner.



This is a 2017 aerial picture of one of the cedar strongholds we will be restoring with EQIP Monarch funds.

### Supply and Demand

The new Grasslands Initiative has the potential to really make a positive difference at the desired large, landscape level scale. The response and interest thus far is remarkable, and when accompanied with the way we utilize EQIP Monarch here in NW OK, the best of both worlds takes place. Clearing heavier infestation levels with Monarch, and the light canopy with GPFI, with others filtered into local/team funds, we are able to restore/preserve larger swaths of land and connect the dots at a faster pace than before. Hopefully we get some rain out here soon and get out of the burn ban, that way we can get some more prescribed fire on the ground.

#### Conservation Planning

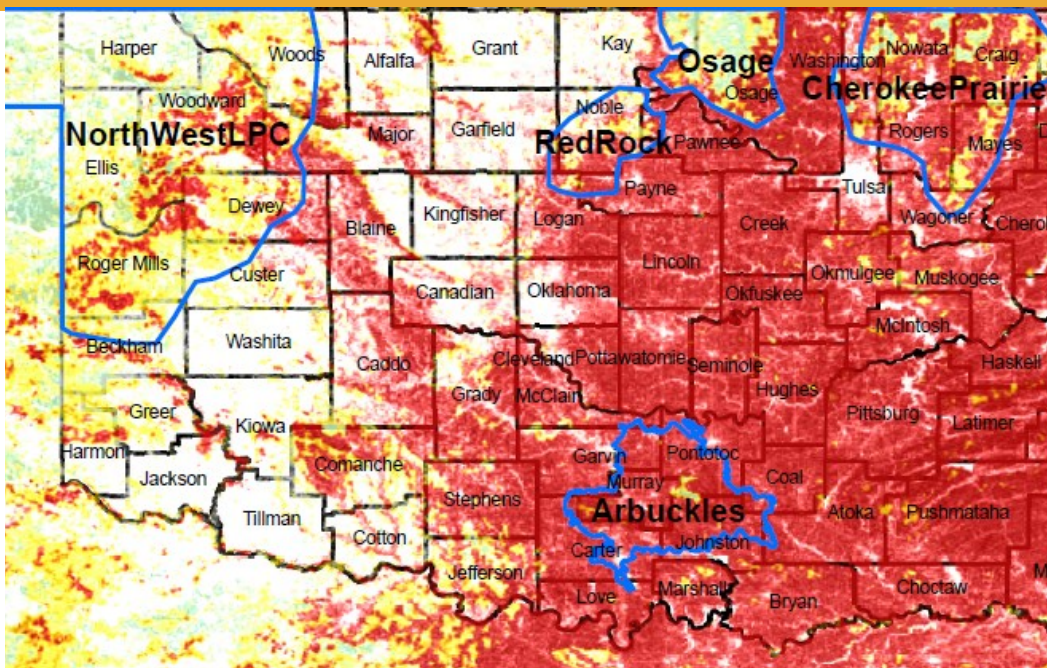
- 68 Landowner Contacts
- 49 Site Visits

Other Programs	Acres Assessed	Acres Impacted
<b>CTA</b> USDA/Nonprogram/State Cost Share		
<b>EQIP</b> Brush Management, Conservation Cover, Forest Stand Improvement, Wetland Restoration, Prescribed Fire	14,724.23	
<b>OLAP</b>		
<b>CRP</b> General, Grasslands		
<b>GPFI</b>	20,650	
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,374.23</b>	



Local SWCDs

**Thank you so much for your support! Without this partnership, I wouldn't be able to provide assistance to private landowners and positively impact conservation in Oklahoma!**



### Outreach & Education

- I met with ODWC and PFQF chapter members at the new Sandhills WMA, about potential projects around the WMA that the chapter could donate money to help fund.
- Gave presentation to the WWCPBA members at their annual meeting about the new USFWS cost share program for PBA members wanting to conduct prescribed burning.
- Several items are in the works that'll be unveiled in the near future.

We are hopeful and optimistic that with GPGI we can turn much of the red in this map to green in the near future.

Outreach & Education	Count
Newsletter Articles/State Facebook Articles Written	1
Conservation/Outreach Event	2
Workshops	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>



# Coordinating Wildlife Biologist **USDA**

## Quarterly Partners' Report



**Tanner Swank - Northwest Oklahoma**

**January–March 2022**



This picture was taken during some WHEG training for EQIP Monarch application.

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
<b>ODWC</b>	Several meetings and collaborations about OLAP, and other items in the works that will hopefully come to fruition in the near future.
<b>GPGI Trainings</b>	Attended several meetings and trainings throughout on how GPGI will be implemented, from the computer evaluation to the field evaluations, moving forward with current applications.
<b>ACR Training/ Meeting</b>	Attended partner meeting in Tulsa for meetings with national Audubon Society about the conservation ranching program
<b>WHEG Training</b>	Provided refresher WHEG training for field staff and new employees.

### Looking Forward

- I will be continuing to implement GPGI through NW OK, as the program is taking off and the first round of contracts is working on heading out the door.
- I will also be continuing to implement the next round of EQIP Monarch in NW OK. We have a strategy to utilize GPGI, General EQIP, and EQIP Monarch to combat cedars at all levels of infestation, and are contracting crucial seed sources to be removed this round.
- I will be working with partners to host a couple outreach meetings this spring/summer on cedar encroachment and GPGI.
- I will be attending the all-team PFQF meeting in may.
- I will also be attending a partner meeting with ODWC in the coming months on some unique opportunities.
- I will be continuing to do the rain dance, hopefully we keep getting some rains out here!

*\*If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.*

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# Coordinating Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Leslie Elmore- Statewide

January - March 2022

## Oklahoma Joins in the Working Lands for Bobwhite Framework

Historical records indicate that much of Oklahoma's forests of post oak and black jack oak, and eastern redcedar were once open tallgrass savanna with sparse tree cover. With low canopy cover, this ecosystem had abundant and diverse grasses, shrubs, wildflowers, and wildlife, including bobwhite quail.

Like most of the rest of Oklahoma, around the turn of the 20th Century, fire was excluded from these plant communities and landowners took a hands-off "management" approach. Most Oklahomans do not even realize how degraded our hardwood forests have become. As the canopy closed in, it squeezed out sunlight and grassland birds that previously used the areas.

Most of the Crosstimbers in Oklahoma have ~75-90% canopy cover. This level is much too much for quail (preferring 15-30%) and even past the ideal range for deer and turkey (~40-60%). Stunted oaks cannot realize their potential for acorn production; and shading prevents midstory development that could provide food and cover for wildlife.

Now, with the help of NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentive Program funding through the Crosstimbers Initiative, the **Working Lands for Wildlife - Northern Bobwhite** program benefits have come to Oklahoma!

Crosstimbers in its historic Tallgrass Savanna state offers enormously productive forage for ranchers in the central and east-central portions of Oklahoma. We will work to change perceptions and transform the landscape for working lands and for wildlife.



*The Working Lands for Wildlife program will be implemented in counties eligible for the EQIP Crosstimbers Initiative in Oklahoma.*

Other Programs	Acres Impacted
<b>EQIP</b>	
314 - Brush Management	27
338 - Rx Burning (patch burn-grazing)	57.5
550 - Range Planting (monarch focus)	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>

Conservation Planning
◆ 16 landowner contacts
◆ 5 site visits
◆ 2 habitat plans
◆ 1 seed mix



Local SWCDs

**Thank you so much for your support!**

**Without this partnership we would not be able to provide assistance to private landowners and positively impact conservation in Oklahoma!**

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Statewide

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# Coordinating Wildlife Biologist

## Quarterly Partners' Report



Leslie Elmore - Statewide

January - March 2022

### Outreach & Education

- I briefly introduced myself and my role in the QF biologist program at the 2022 Red Bud QF Chapter Banquet.
- I participated in the 2022 Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic, working at the Ringneck Booth, Archery Range, and Pollinator Plaza.
- One Facebook post highlighted the Pollinator Plaza at Pheasant Fest.
- A Facebook post I shared encouraged landowners to protect young shrub mottes during prescribed burns so the mottes could continue to expand for the benefit of grassland birds.
- I updated the Oklahoma Quail Forever Team flyer to include two new members of the team: Jordan Menge (state coordinator) and Zach Brewer (biologist).



*Red Bud Chapter Banquet*

*A very well trained bird dog amuses his handler at Pheasant Fest.*



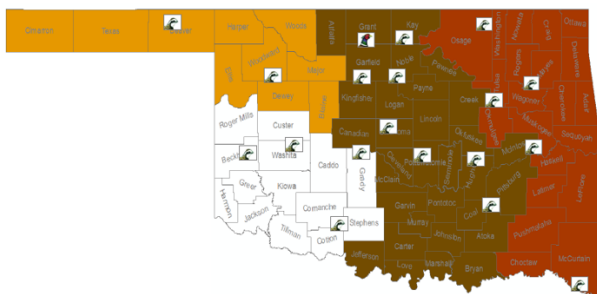
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**Zach Brewer**  
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Outreach & Education	Count
Events/Workshops	2
Participants	100
Presentations Delivered	1
Social Media Articles	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

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# Coordinating Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



**Leslie Elmore- Statewide**

**January - March 2022**



*A property enrolled in the Audubon Conservation Ranching program is working to benefit the herd and the birds.*



*This closed-canopy woodland is contracted to become tallgrass savanna, benefitting multiple wildlife species. An appreciation for monarch butterflies started this landowner and his family down the "programs" path.*



Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
<b>Audubon Conservation Ranching Training</b>	I took part in the ACR program training to learn how to implement it in Oklahoma.
<b>Oklahoma Chapter of The Wildlife Society virtual meeting</b>	I made arrangements for two speakers and planned the logistics for the 2022 TWS-OC virtual meeting.
<b>Best Practices for Pollinators 2022</b>	This training hosted by the Xerces Society, covered a variety of topics, including roadsides, ranching, restoration, and much more.
<b>Mandatory Trainings</b>	I completed training courses mandated by NRCS: Section 508, NEPA, and Workplace Violence training.
<b>Field Training</b>	The NRCS State Biologist made a site visit with me to demonstrate how to conduct zig-zag transects for assessing tree density. This will be tremendously helpful in assessing Crosstimbers for the WLFW-Bobwhite.

## Looking Forward

- The field season for CTA is gearing up. I have a few landowners in queue for a visit as soon as things start to getting growing.
- Writing burn plans for producers accepted into EQIP and CSP.
- Writing two fact sheets on minimizing wildlife damage from ranching infrastructure for NRCS.
- (Finally) attending Employee Orientation and the PF/QF All-Team Meeting in Red Wing, MN.
- Participating in a Quail Field Day at James Collins WMA and work day with the local QF Chapter.

*If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested, please contact me at the information below.*

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# Field Staff

## Quarterly Partners' Report



Zach Brewer - Northeast Oklahoma Counties

April 2022

### Position Update

In December 2021, I transfer from Nebraska where I work as a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist 2 (FBWB2). I will continue providing technical assistance for conservation practices to producers and landowners in addition to the FBWB 2 duties. These duties entail serving as a resource to team 15,16, and 17 by providing leadership and expertise as well as casting vision for getting even more conservation on the ground in Northeast Oklahoma

### If you build it, they will come!

This famous quote from *Field of Dreams* not only applies to baseball, but also wildlife habitat. What I mean by that is, if you provide suitable, quality habitat and there are decent wildlife populations in the surround area, they should come!

With that in mind, each Wildlife project takes proper planning on the front end, proper implementation and constant evaluation to provide and maintain high quality habitat. These past few months have been filled with providing landowners technical assistance for CTA projects. Whether it is a establishing a native prairie seeding, conducting timber stand improvement or evaluating a CSP & EQIP prior to ranking for program selection, these projects all go through the conservation planning process. This quarter, I have conducted several landowners contact to educating landowners on native grass, assist with plant identification, and to provide overall guidance for establishing and maintaining quality habitat. Additionally, I have contacted landowners to provide habitat proposals for future projects on their properties to make them even more wildlife friendly.



This photo was taken in Jan '21 of a CSP - Pollinator seeding that was planted using a broad cast seeding in Jun '21.

#### Conservation Planning

- 20 Landowner Contacts
- 2 Habitat Proposals & Conservation Plans
- 1 Burn Plan
- 5 Site Visits
- 2 landowner assist with prescribed burn

Other Programs	Acres Impacted
CSP	0
EQIP Prescribed Burn , Burn Plan	30.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.6</b>

**Thank you so much for your support! Without this partnership, I wouldn't be able to provide assistance to private landowners and positively impact conservation in Oklahoma!**



# Field Staff

## Quarterly Partners' Report

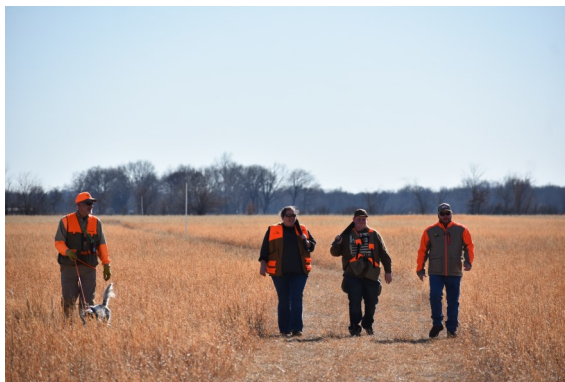


Zach Brewer - Northeast Oklahoma

April 2022

### Outreach & Education

- On January 11th, I attended the **Bluestem QF Chapter** meeting and delivered a presentation on NRCS , QF, and ODWC programs
- On January 17<sup>th</sup>, I attended QF Youth Mentor hunt at **Tulsa Bird Dog club** for the youth to learn about the importance of wildlife conservation.
- On February 22nd , I attended the chapter meeting of the **Tulsa Bird Dog Club** to talk to the members about CSP & EQIP programs and different conservation practices with in each program.
- On March 8th, I attended the **Tall Grass Heritage QF Chapter** Meeting and delivered a presentation on NRCS , QF, and ODWC programs



This photo was taken at the Indian Territory/ Tall Grass Heritage QF Youth mentor hunt. I was able to accompany youth into the field and talk to them about Habitat and bird biology.

- The Indian Territory QF Chapter and Tall Grass Heritage Chapter team up to put on a youth mentor hunt for youth in the Claremore/ Pryor area located in the Northeast Corner of Oklahoma . The youth event had about 40 participants attend the event from around the local area. The event help teach kids the importance of wildlife conservation and hunter safety.

Outreach & Education	Count
Presentations Delivered	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>





# Field Staff

## Quarterly Partners' Report



Zach Brewer - Northeast Oklahoma Counties

April 2022

### Biologist's Point of View - Prescribed burn in Wagner County



This photo was taken in March 2022 of a Native Grass field in Northern Wagoner county burn. Season is here again!

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
<b>Audubon Bird Friendly Ranching Training</b>	This field day was put on by The Audubon society in Glenpool ok . The training was very interesting and it could help with the decline in native bird population here in the state of Oklahoma. This program would be go od for landowner
<b>Oklahoma Private lands Biologist Meeting in early April</b>	Upcoming Meeting with the Oklahoma Department Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) private land biologist meeting here in mid April
<b>NRCS Conservation Planning Boot Camp</b>	In April, I will be attending the conservation planning boot camp that the NRCS puts on for new employees . This training will give me more insight into planning projects and a better understand of the NRCS programs here in Oklahoma .

### Looking Forward

- I will be helping with a booth at the Woodward Farm & Ranch show in Woodward, Ok on April 3th at Woodward County Fair Grounds
- This upcoming quarter, I plan to focus on writing RCPP specific habitat proposals for landowners in Craig, Nowata, Osage County to promote implementation of conservation practices to provide quality wildlife habitat.
- I will continue providing technical assistance to landowners who are working on current projects as well as those who want to plan for new projects

*\*If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.*

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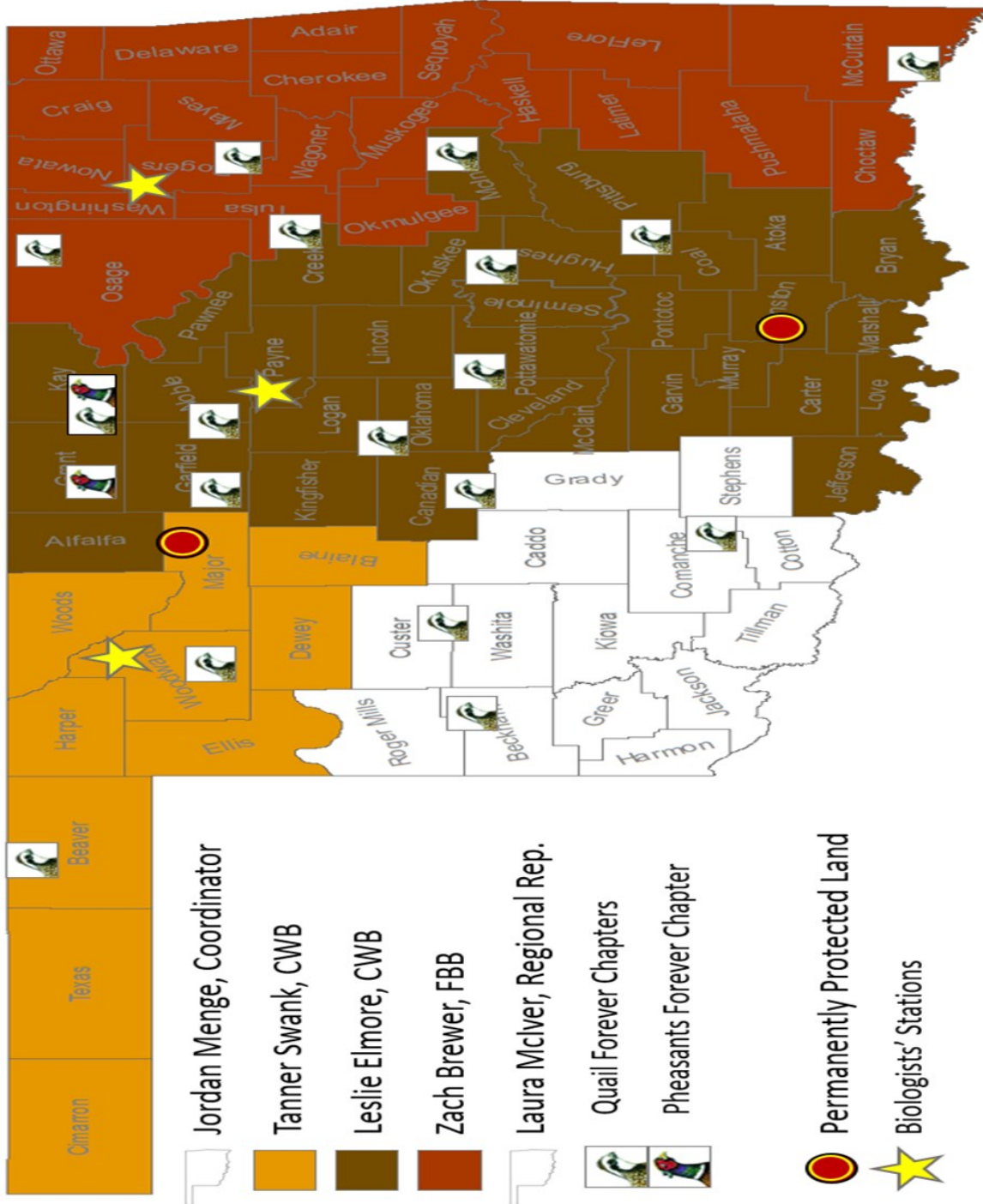
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Northeast Oklahoma Counties



# Field Staff

## Quarterly Partners' Report



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