

EVENT PROGRAM

# Southern Plains Grasslands Summit

May 27-29, 2026

The Salt Fork Event Center

27251 County Road 460  
Alva, Oklahoma 73717

Working Lands | Wildlife | Conservation

Schedule details, breakout sessions, field tours, and attendee information.

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**The Southern Plains GRASSLANDS SUMMIT**

May 27, 28, and 29, 2026 - Salt Fork Event Center

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Resource Conservation and Development

**OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

## Summit Overview

### WEDNESDAY | MAY 27

#### Packet Pick-Up and Social Mixer

5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Alva Beer Company, 327 Barnes Avenue,  
Downtown Alva

### THURSDAY | MAY 28

#### Registration, Plenary, and Breakout Sessions

7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The Salt Fork Event Center

### FRIDAY | MAY 29

#### Bus Tours and Box Lunch

8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Depart from The Salt Fork Event Center

## Venue and Contact

**Location:** The Salt Fork Event Center, 27251 County Road 460, Alva, Oklahoma 73717

**Summit contact:** Kay Decker

**Phone:** 580.327.7649

**Email:** KLDecker@nwsu.edu

All program activities are scheduled in local time. Thursday sessions take place at the Salt Fork Event Center unless otherwise noted.

## Registration and Attendee Notes

**Full summit registration:** \$175.00 per person

**Single-day registration:** \$75.00 per person

Scholarships are available for agriculture producers. Contact Kay Decker for details.

Continuing education credits through Northwest Career and Technology Center are available. Contact Kay Decker for more information.

Participants with dietary restrictions should contact Kay Decker for assistance and information.

## Venue Hours and Vendor Access

Wednesday, May 27 | Vendor booth set-up: 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 28 | Event center open: 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. for participants, presenters, and vendors.

Friday, May 29 | Bus tours depart at 8:45 a.m. and return by 4:00 p.m.

## Travel and Lodging

Holiday Inn Express & Suites | 580.327.1400 | 1230 East Oklahoma Blvd., Alva, OK

Comfort Inn | 580.327.0000 | 1278 East Oklahoma Blvd., Alva, OK

OK Welcome Home Hotel | 580.609.6291 | 800 Oklahoma Blvd., Alva, OK

The Alva Regional Airport offers general aviation fuel and jet fuel capacity. 580.327.2898 | U.S. Highway 281 South, Alva

## Wednesday, May 27

### Time

5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### Program Details

Registration packet pick-up and social mixer with live music, Grasslands Beer, and food. Location: Alva Beer Company, 327 Barnes Avenue, Downtown Alva

## Thursday, May 28 - Opening Program

Time	Program Details
7:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	On-site registration. Location: The Salt Fork Event Center, Mackey Great Room
8:45 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Welcome by Trey Lam, Executive Director, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, followed by the plenary address from Trey Malone, Ph.D., Boehlje Endowed Chair of Managerial Economics in Agri-Business, Purdue University. Plenary session: "Farm Business Strategies in an Age of Noise: Using AI to Help Make Decisions When Everything Feels Urgent"

## Morning Breakout Sessions | 10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Room	Track	Presenters and Topics
Mackey Great Room	Ranching and Working Lands	- David Kraft-KGLC - Meg Greski, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Soil Health Specialist - Cale Hinrichson, Halter Fencing, Chickasha, Oklahoma
Conference Room	Wildlife and Biodiversity	- Jacob Yetter, National Audubon Society, Conservation Ranching Program in Oklahoma and Kansas - Anne Bartuszevige, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, and Jennifer Timmer, Bird Conservancy - "Newly Available Decision Support Tools for Grasslands Bird Conservation: Understanding Their Development and Intended Uses"
Expo Room	Conservation and Resource Management	- The Barn Group with Gene T. Miller and Connor Almond - NRCS Programs and Regenerative Agriculture - Adam Ray, Coordinating Wildlife Biologist, and Tanner Swank, Grassland Biome Program Manager (Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever) - Prescribed Burning

*Concurrent sessions: choose one room for each breakout block.*

### Lunch Program | 12:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Lunch panel discussion: Mitigating Eastern Red Cedar - The Terry Peach Watershed Program with Trey Lam, Executive Director, Oklahoma Conservation Commission; Adam Ray, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever; and State Representative Mike Dobrinski, Okeene.

Featured presentation: Karen Hickman, Ph.D., Director of the Environmental Science Program at OSU, presents "Eastern Red Cedar Through the Generations," the story of her family's legacy land ownership in Woods County, Oklahoma.

## Afternoon Breakout Sessions | 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Room	Track	Presenters and Topics
Mackey Great Room	Conservation and Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blane Stacy, Rangelands Ecologist with Oklahoma Conservation Commission - Rotational Grazing, Rangeland Ecology, and Cattle Production</li> <li>- Colin Weldon, Texas Ag Land Trust - Conservation Easements</li> <li>- Matt Gard, Advanced Avigation, LLC - "Drone Technology in the Grasslands"</li> </ul>
Conference Room	Ranching and Working Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop featuring Trey Malone, Ph.D. - "Bad Strategy, Broke Ranch: Using Strategic Management to Improve Profitability"</li> </ul>
Expo Room	Wildlife and Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Josh Richardson from ODWC</li> <li>- The Nature Conservancy with Brian Serpan</li> </ul>

Concurrent sessions: choose one room for each breakout block.

### Friday, May 29 - Bus Tours

#### Field Tour Schedule

Load buses at 8:45 a.m. from The Salt Fork Event Center. Return to the event center at 4:00 p.m.

Box lunches will be provided. Please indicate your preferred tour when registering. Maximum bus occupancy is 52.

Participants should dress for field and outdoor walking. Water will be provided on the tours.

#### Bus Tour 1 | Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Byron Fish Hatchery, and the deVine Water Plant

Participants will tour the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Byron Fish Hatchery, and the deVine Water Plant. The history of the region will be shared throughout the tour.

#### Bus Tour 2 | Legacy Ranches in Southern Woods County on the Cimarron River

These ranches have used conservation practices to eradicate or mitigate Eastern Red Cedar and brush; improve soil health, water resources, wildlife habitat, and pollinator habitat; and implement programs through USDA-NRCS, Woods County Conservation District programs, and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Each ranch approaches conservation a little differently, and the history of the region will be shared with participants.

#### Important Participant Reminders

Scholarships for agriculture producers and continuing education credits are available; contact Kay Decker for details.

Registered participants with dietary restrictions should contact Kay Decker in advance for assistance.

Bus tours depart from and return to The Salt Fork Event Center.

**Featured Speaker Bios*****Trey Malone, Ph.D.*****Boehlje Endowed Chair in Managerial Economics for Agribusiness, Purdue University**

Trey Malone is an agricultural economist whose work leverages the science of decision-making with the practice of agribusiness management. His research examines what shapes the performance and strategy of agri-food businesses. He has published more than 75 peer-reviewed articles in journals including the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, the Journal of Business Venturing Insights, and the Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics.

His research has been funded by agencies including the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the World Wildlife Fund. Dr. Malone has received over a dozen research awards and fellowships, including the Emerging Scholar Award from the Southern Agricultural Economics Association and the Presidential Award for Excellence in Research and Communication from the Food Distribution Research Society.

In 2025, he became the only academic ever named to Farm Journal's The Scoop 40 Under 40 for his contributions to agribusiness thought leadership. Beyond academia, Dr. Malone is a frequent public voice on the future of food, strategy, and innovation. His insights have appeared in outlets such as Fast Company, the New York Times, Good Morning America, and CNBC.

He has also shared his ideas in a TEDx talk at Michigan State University and in multiple ag media outlets, including the Future of Agriculture podcast, U.S. Farm Report, and AgDay. An award-winning educator, Dr. Malone teaches undergraduate, graduate, and executive courses on managerial economics, agribusiness strategy, and entrepreneurship.

A sought-after speaker for producer organizations, agribusiness firms, and academic audiences nationwide, he delivers lectures and workshops on strategic decision-making, behavioral economics, and innovation management. At Purdue, Dr. Malone serves as the Boehlje Endowed Chair in Managerial Economics for Agribusiness, advancing the university's century-long legacy of integrating rigorous economic research with real-world business impact. He also serves as North American Managing Editor of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Review and Associate Editor of Managerial and Decision Economics.

*Speaker biographical information and portraits are included for attendee reference.*

## Featured Speaker Bios, continued



### ***Karen Hickman, Ph.D.***

**Director, Environmental Science Program, Oklahoma State University**

Dr. Hickman focuses primarily on addressing and understanding the effects of various management practices on plant and animal populations and communities within rangeland ecosystems of the Great Plains. Native rangelands, grasslands, and pasturelands in Oklahoma as well as throughout the central and southern Great Plains are under new threats from invasion by exotic and native species and exurban sprawl, as well as traditional challenges associated with livestock and wildlife management.

Her primary research goals are to further evaluate effects of management practices, including grazing, patch burning, herbicide application, and revegetation, on invasive species in Oklahoma grasslands, and to elucidate abiotic, plant-plant, and plant-animal interactions that might be involved in limiting invasions of native systems by various invasive species. Ultimately, her research goals are to establish collaborations with other researchers throughout the U.S. and northern Mexico and continue to collaborate with researchers at OSU in order to conduct research whose results can be influential in the development and application of proper and adoptable land management practices. Dr. Hickman is an award-winning professor at OSU and is a native of Alva, Oklahoma.



### ***Trey Lam***

**Executive Director, Oklahoma Conservation Commission**

Trey Lam has served as Executive Director of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for over 10 years. Lam is a lifelong conservationist who has served on the Garvin Conservation District board and as President of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts.

Following in his father's footsteps, who also served on the Garvin District board, Lam has taken his knowledge of Oklahoma's land and agriculture to the national stage as Oklahoma's representative on the National Association of Conservation Districts' board.

Lam uses conservation practices such as no-till and cover crops to make the most of his land at Lam Farms, where his family has transitioned from raising alfalfa, corn, soybeans, and wheat to grazing cattle on grass, cool-season cereals, and cover crops. He also works closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and OSU to develop farm plans for crop rotation and equipment usage.

Lam's previous leadership positions include Oklahoma Soybean Association President, Oklahoma Soybean Checkoff board member, Oklahoma Crop Improvement Association President, Oklahoma Alfalfa Hay and Seed Association Vice President, and OSU Dean of Agriculture Advisory Council member. He is a Yale University graduate.

## Featured Speaker Bios, continued



### *Representative Mike Dobrinski*

**Oklahoma House of Representatives, House District 59**

Representative Mike Dobrinski proudly serves House District 59, which includes Blaine, Dewey, Garfield, Kingfisher, and Woodward Counties. He was first elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 2020. Dobrinski was born and raised in Okeene and is the fourth generation of his family to call House District 59 home. Dobrinski loves western Oklahoma and understands the interests and concerns of rural communities because he shares them from a lifetime of experience.

Dobrinski graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. His wife, Ginny, is a retired public school teacher. They have four children and six grandchildren, all living in Oklahoma. A well-known and successful businessman, Dobrinski and his brother Jim owned and operated Chevy dealerships in Okeene and Kingfisher for over 35 years before he sold the business in 2018 and retired. He was also in the restaurant business like his grandparents before him.

Dobrinski has long been involved in cattle ranching and knows how hard Oklahoma farmers work and the importance of agriculture to Oklahoma's economy. He is known for his work ethic and for being fair and honest. He says his jobs have always been about serving people and solving problems.



### *Adam Ray*

**Wildlife Biologist, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever**

Adam Ray is a wildlife biologist with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, specializing in habitat management and prescribed fire. A native of Stillwater, Oklahoma, he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Natural Resource Ecology and Management from Oklahoma State University. Adam currently serves as secretary of a prescribed burn association in Noble County, Oklahoma, where he advocates for the safe and effective use of prescribed fire on private lands.

Throughout his career, he has conducted more than 200 prescribed burns across Oklahoma and Texas and has shared his expertise in fire ecology in states including Nebraska and Florida. He is passionate about helping landowners implement practical, science-based management practices that enhance wildlife habitat and improve overall ecosystem health.

# Summit Sponsors and Partners

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