



The LEADer

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY EPA AND FERC

WHAT ABOUT THE DAM RE-LICENSING?

Our efforts are working, and we must continue. The dam, the proposed WMA, and the City's flooding suit are each being decided by the same people at FERC, so good outcomes on one make good outcomes more likely for the others. The relicensing process may slow down until GRDA's appeal is resolved, but we should continue talking to FERC.

Your postcards and letters have made the difference for us all. Real people write them, and real people read them. Continue writing. Tell the other story, the one you held back last time. This is what can happen when we work together and speak up for what we need.

**“The postcard campaign allowed
the Miami citizens to have a voice**

TEAMWORK PAYS OFF Upstream Flooding Victory for Miami

In January FERC issued a stunning rebuke to the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) when it ruled that GRDA's operation of the dam is responsible for upstream flooding in Miami. Not only did the final decision come out against GRDA, but FERC ruled against GRDA on every single issue to be decided. Dam operators often receive the benefit of the doubt from FERC, making this strongly-worded ruling even more remarkable for the number of properties affected by FERC's ruling.

FERC's determination that GRDA is responsible for upstream flooding is a testament not only to the tenacity of the City of Miami's leadership, but also to the hundreds of residents who sent letters and postcards to FERC, telling stories of pain and loss and demanding justice and protection. “The people of Miami have FERC's ear,” says Miami Mayor Bless Parker, “The postcard campaign is allowing the Miami citizens to have a voice and it is clearly being heard.”

Under the order, GRDA is required to purchase flood easements (or buy outright) the properties it is responsible for flooding. FERC has ordered a study be complet-

On Jan. 17, 2024, the U.S. EPA updated its [residential lead screening levels for soil](#).

The [updated guidance](#) is a culmination of a years-long effort to strengthen the investigation and cleanup of lead-contaminated soil to protect children from lead exposure. The updated guidance lowers the recommended lead screening levels for direct contact with soil to 200 mg/kg for residential settings and recommends application of 100 mg/kg if additional sources of lead exposure are present (e.g., lead in drinking water, lead paint, etc.). Our soil screening level has been 500 ppm. This will increase the number of properties that will



GIVE ME SOMETHING SONG

There is a photo that we had enlarged and framed which shows my son’s father and his father’s grandfather standing outside of the Hogan they were living on the Navajo Reservation. The grandfather is wearing a beautiful turquoise necklace that is the source of this story.

One day back then while singing a song, there was a knock on the side of the wall of the Hogan and the grandfather found that a Pueblo man was there and presented the turquoise necklace as a gift to him. My son’s father then asked why had the gift come and the answer was, “because of the Give-Me-Something Song” that was sung. There was a great pause, then the question came, “Grandfather, can you teach me that song?”

As it turned out, he did not learn the song. But it is very much like LEAD Agency has learned the song, as we are receiving gifts in the mail in response to a fund raising letter, we mailed out the end of February and we have received very positive responses to all these appeals we have sent out, receiving technical assistance and your generous donations keep coming!

We have to think of the possible, we have to sometimes hum the tune and re-



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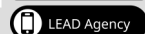
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Waterkeeper Programs



Environmental Justice Starts with YOU

LOREN WATER'S FILM ᐱᐢᐱ ᐅᐱᐱ

ᐱᐢᐱ ᐅᐱᐱ Meet Me at the Creek

The documentary created by Loren Waters: Meet Me at the Creek tells a story of interconnectedness and Cherokee values through the lifelong fight of Rebecca Jim, a Cherokee Nation citizen and Waterkeeper Warrior, as she leads the effort to restore Tar Creek located in Miami, Oklahoma. U.S. government officials have designated Tar Creek as “irreversibly damaged,” but Rebecca refuses to accept that. Rebecca Jim attended the BIG SKY Documentary Film Festival in Missoula, Montana with filmmaker Loren Waters for the premiere of her film.

Loren Waters has not stopped after the filming was completed, she has proceed with efforts to make the film have a real impact for LEAD Agency and the work we are doing for Tar Creek and the surrounding environment and the people who reside here. Beginning with an interview on Indian Country Today, followed by coverage by OSIYO. With a grant she and Bailey Stephenson wrote, the Rural Film Cinema will be providing a portable screen and equipment to host outdoor movies throughout the area. She then reached out to the National Parks and applied for their technical assistance which we believe will be for the NEXT 5 YEARS!

The ROSE FOUNDATION for Communities and the Environment's Grass-roots Leadership's Cohort provided grant funding for general support to LEAD Agency. That support began as the country was closing down during the COVID Pandemic and was a catalyst for much of the success LEAD has had during the grant years. We will always be appreciative of the support and the ability to grow



Remember to be Kind and Always
Remember those who sat with you
and worked to make the world
a better place.



L.E.A.D. CAMP

It is almost summer, and we are incredibly excited to host LEAD summer camp again this year! LEAD Summer Camp 2024 will be held May 20th-24th for children and youth (grades K-12) who live in Ottawa County. This year, the camp will be facilitated in partnership with award-winning filmmaker Loren Waters! Campers will learn about filmmaking and gain hands-on experience creating films. They will gain the tools to creatively convey their own narratives and experiences of living near the Tar Creek Superfund Site. The camp will also include tours of the Tar Creek Superfund Site, arts, crafts, music, gardening, mapmaking, and more! Through arts and outdoor exploration, campers will learn about environmental science, history, and activism at the Tar Creek Superfund Site.

LEAD camps are donation-based and no child will be turned away due to lack of funds.

We cannot host this camp without the support of our community. If you are able, please do-



We welcome any of the following item donations: art supplies, kayaks, life vests, camera equipment, gardening equipment, and more.

If you have items to donate, please email our camp coordinator:

moriah.bailey@leadagency.org

MARTIN LIVELY BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE MULTI-GOVERNMENTAL INVESTIGATION TEAM – ED KEHELEY

Martin Lively, a member of the L.E.A.D. Agency was recently asked by the multi-governmental investigation team to assist in the search for the remains of two young girls missing since late 1999. The multi-governmental team includes investigators from the Mayes, Rogers and Craig County District Attorney's Office, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, Oklahoma State Medical Examiner's Office, the FBI and the Federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, area County Sheriffs and other technical experts.

Martin was specifically asked to provide his expertise in flying drones to assist in identifying possible open mine shafts west of Treece, Kansas that might contain the remains of the two girls. Martin volunteered his drone and served as pilot on three different extended low-level flights over the identified area during February and March 2024. Over 70 minutes of drone flight was provided by Martin. He then edited the drone flight down to



Ed Keheley also continues providing valuable information and documents for our Toxic Library.

DRONE images Martin Lively took during this winter and our questions were sent to the Region 6 Project Manager for the Tar Creek Superfund Site for a response and when none came, our attorneys at the Vermont Law School forwarded copies to others in Dallas and to EPA headquarters. There have been some communication from Region 6, but issues we brought forward have to our knowledge continued to be releasing hazardous material downstream unabated.

GRDA Proposes Wildlife Management Area Wetland Using Contaminated Water

GRDA has asked FERC to approve a new wildlife management area near the confluence of Coal Creek and the Neosho River west of Miami. The proposed WMA is an attempt to fulfill GRDA's legal obligation to mitigate the harmful effects of higher lake levels authorized in 1996. WMAs are supposed to provide safe and appropriate habitat for birds, fish, and land animals. GRDA's proposal, however, would create a WMA that is only a small fraction of the size required by FERC. Further, GRDA proposes pumping water from the Neosho River to create a wetland within the WMA. The Neosho River at this location is contaminated with heavy metals from Elm Creek, which flows through the mining field to the north. These contaminants would then be pumped into what is meant to be a safe, protected habitat.

In response to GRDA's proposal, LEAD Agency, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the City of Miami, and the Quapaw Nation each submitted comments to FERC raising these and other concerns. FERC has instructed GRDA to provide further information about their proposal, specifically mentioning the contamination concerns. We are awaiting GRDA's response.



NCHH : Increasing Rural Community Capacity for Lead Poisoning Prevention

We are grateful that Gina Manders took on writing and submitting the NCHH grant. We did not receive the funding, but we have received the technical assistance which is HUGE!

The most knowledgeable in lead poisoning prevention in the US are advising us and will be providing

MS FOUNDATION MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

As Spring Break was winding down for many, we were ready to wind up for a season of kayak trip possibilities! Rebecca Jim, Kim Baker, and Kindel Maymi headed to Tulsa Kayak in Jenks, OK to purchase several kayaks and equipment. To say the experience was amazing is an understatement.

Alex, the kayak salesperson was the only person working, was incredibly patient and helpful in helping us make choices for L.E.A.D.'s unique needs. We even had help from some of the patrons in the store! We ended the trip purchasing 2 Jackson kayaks, a small single kayak, and a large tandem kayak. Alex helped us load up them all on our kayak trailer that has been waiting for this very moment. He took his time explaining and demonstrating how to secure our new kayaks for their very windy trip home.

Ms. South is a multiyear program strategy of the Ms. Foundation for Women. It launched in 2020 with the goals of strengthening the organizational and financial sustainability of an ecosystem of women and girl of color (WGOC)-led organizations; increasing connectivity between WGOC-led organizations; and positioning leaders as decision-makers in shaping policy and culture change.



VISTA

Volunteers in Service to America

COME WORK WITH US

LEAD Agency has an AmeriCorps VISTA position opening soon, and we would love to have one of you or someone you know join us for the next year! VISTAs, or Volunteers in Service to America, are positions designed to help non-profits and other organizations work on a host of goals, like a domestic PeaceCorps.

At LEAD Agency, this means you'll be working on grants, helping with events and planning, and occasionally removing dams or working in the garden if that suits you. Whatever your specific skills, if you've got a desire to help the

FLOOD

leadagency.org Survey



Results from the Flood Survey will be shared in our next newsletter. Our hope is to share to the neighborhoods as soon as we have the final report returned to us from our partner Buy-In. Funding from Climigration will allow us to take

“YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE SILENCED.” — JAMES DEVITA

LEAD OUT OF THE OFFICE



Lucas Freeman, VISTA and Kimberly Barker, LEAD’s Communication Director were invited and served as judges in the Quapaw Nation’s 2024 **STEM FAIR**. The North-eastern Oklahoma Intertribal STEM Fair was sponsored by the Quapaw Nation’s Education Department and the Library. It was held at the Downstream Pavilion. Native

2024 OKLAHOMA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION EXPO “USE LESS BY LEARNING MORE”

The 2024 Oklahoma Environmental Education Expo focused on wise use of our natural resources to ensure there are resources for future generations. Conservation Education is a lifetime learning process that promotes the understanding of natural resources and ecosystems – their interrelationships, conservation, use, management and value – conservation education is an effective, dynamic means for connecting people with their environment.



LEAD’s Bailey Stephenson and Kimberly Barker attended the Education Expo and brought back the very valuable information.

Professor Jonathan Levy and fellow professor Jason Rech had received their Toxic Tour of the Tar Creek Superfund Site many years ago, but remembered the experience. When the conversation for this year’s trans-disciplinary conversation focused on environmental justice in the Altman Program, Dr. Levy reached out with the

DRINKING WATER SURVEY DEVELOPED FOR WELCH, OK

Paul Marquez and Rebecca Jim consulted with the Welch City Mayor and City Clerk in the development of an instrument to collect important information from citizens using Welch drinking water. The **EJ Data Grant** will be providing the funding for



Martin Lively gave his new canoe her maiden voyage recently on a day-trip of the lower reaches of Big Cabin Creek near the Pensacola Dam. The Esquif Adirondack is light weight and allows our Riverkeeper to gain access to more shallow areas of his watershed.

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WE MUST BUILD DIKES OF COURAGE TO HOLD BACK THE FLOOD OF FEAR

Martin Luther King Jr.