

POSTER #9

The Kiamichi Watershed

Michael Stanton

*Department of Anthropology, Center For Applied Social Research
University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK*

stanthro@gmail.com

This poster summarizes the preliminary findings of ethnographic fieldwork in the Kiamichi Region of southeastern Oklahoma. The geographical focus of this ethnographic research has so far been primarily in LeFlore, Latimer, and Pushmataha Counties within the Choctaw Nation due to proximity to Lake Sardis and several small towns along the Kiamichi River. Lake Sardis, located near Clayton in the upper watershed impounds Jackfork Creek and is of particular interest to the study because of ongoing controversies over water rights, availability, allocation, and water quality. Water plays a key role in the timber, farming, and tourism industries of the region. The Kiamichi basin is covered by 65.5% forested lands while 25% is pastureland. Although annual precipitation ranges between 48 and 56 inches annually, the steep topography of the Ouachita and Kiamichi mountains results in the Kiamichi Watershed having very high runoff per square mile and therefore highly susceptible to drought conditions. This research focuses on the socio-ecological impacts of changing land and resource use patterns over time and how those changes have shaped perceptions of risk and subsistence strategies within the watershed.