



**In This Issue**

- Heart to Heart with Hardisty
- Employee Spotlight—Elana Cass
- Hoosier Happenings
- Black History Month
- Partners' Web Links
- Personnel Updates
- Featured Website—Employee Assistance Program
- Mark Your Calendar

Heart to Heart  
... with Hardisty



 This year's IASWCD Annual Conference provided a great opportunity for our partnership employees to receive some new resources, connect with each other, and get acquainted with some new folks. I would like to thank the district conservationists and the RC&D coordinators for their participation in the conference, which helped to make it such a successful event.

 NRCS in Indiana has worked diligently to obligate the 2008 program dollars. I personally am very pleased at the progress that has been made and want to thank each of you for your tireless efforts.

 We are all waiting patiently for a new Farm Bill and for the direction it will bring. Hopefully, by the next issue of Hoosier Headlines we will have a better grasp on how the Farm Bill will look. However, for now we still have a lot of conservation work to accomplish. Let us focus on the core activities of conservation planning and technical assistance, that is the essence of who we are and what we do.

*Jane E. Hardisty*

**\* \* \* \* Employee Spotlight \* \* \* \***

**Elana Cass  
Administrative Officer, State Office**

**Q:** Some folks might not know how long you've been with NRCS. Please tell us about your history with the agency.

**A:** Well, I've been with NRCS long enough that I have seniority among state office employees! I started working for the Soil Conservation Service in 1977 coloring maps for the Soils section as a GS-1, Step-1 in the "Stay in School" program. After graduating high school, I was hired full time as a secretary for the state resource conservationist and his staff, and I also did some work for the Watershed Planning staff. From there, I worked in the Records and Communications Center as a typist, then applied for a GS-4 accounting technician position on the Financial Management Staff, which at the time was called Budget and Finance (B&F). As a product of the Upward Mobility Program, I received the needed training to switch from accounting to the budget arena. For several years I served as a budget analyst and then as the budget officer before advancing to state administrative officer in 2001.



**Q:** What have you found most rewarding about your work with NRCS?

**A:** I can tell you that I never dreamed when I was a GS-1 that I would ever be in the position that I am today. The opportunities that I have received with SCS, now NRCS, have been an incredible blessing. I realize how extremely fortunate I am. Also, I have worked with a lot of wonderful people over the last 30 years; a lot of great people that I will never forget.

**Q:** On a personal note, what does life look like for you outside of the office?

**A:** Well, I have been married to my wonderful husband for 28 years. We don't have any children, but we have a dog named Harley! We also have 13 terrific nieces and nephews that we are very involved with and love very much. A young man from Iowa, who joined an internship program at

our church, lives with us and has for the past year and a half. My husband and I like to play golf and spend time with family. We also volunteer at our church with computer graphics and audio/visual support to the technical director on Sunday mornings.

**Q:** Tell us about the recent ministry trip with your church choir.

**A:** We attend Lakeview Church in Indianapolis and are part of the Worship and Creative Ministries (WCM) Team. The WCM took a team of volunteers to Holland in 2004 and again in 2006 to encourage and support local churches in worship services. We love music, but don't really sing all that well. However, we went with the choir team to Holland on both trips as "roadies." (...is that what they still call them?) We basically set-up the stage with all the gear needed to perform live music, tear down the stage, pack everything, and load and unload all of the equipment and instruments for the worship services. It was an awesome experience to be involved in and to witness God transform lives in a foreign land. The WCM team at Lakeview Church has recorded six CDs; the latest CD, titled "Make You Known," was picked up and produced by Integrity Music in 2007 and is sold in Christian retail stores. It was also distributed to 25,000 worship leaders around the world. It is amazing to watch how God is using this relatively small church band and choir at home and abroad!

**Q:** Any final words for our readers?

**A:** Well, back to the job. My desire has always been to help bridge the gap between the state office employees and the field employees. We all have many facets of our jobs and many customers. A lot of our time on the administrative staff is spent working on different reports, projects, various initiatives for headquarters, and implementing policies and regulations that we must follow (and anything else Jane wants us to do). Because of this, we work on a lot of things that aren't always well received. And even though we don't get to make the rules, there really is a lot of effort on the part of all the state office staffs to minimize impacts on our field employees.

We are here to provide support to the field and are committed to doing our best for every employee, our agency, and our Indiana landowners. I am very proud of our administrative staff, and as I work with them, I have the great opportunity to see their "hearts." Next time you're in the state office, please stop by and say "hi"!

## Hoosier Happenings

### KUDOS to...

**\*\*Chris Torp** and **Anne Burget** for staffing the NRCS booth at the Indiana Farm Bureau Convention. We applaud their willingness to market NRCS and provide information to Hoosier farmers at this statewide convention!

**\*\*Tony Bailey** for assisting Michigan and Ohio manure management experts in training TSPs, NRCS employees, and others at the Tri-State CNMP Course. TSPs from Indiana made up over half of the attendees. Through Tony's efforts, the interest from TSPs to help Indiana producers with their CNMPs is still strong.

**\*\*Cathy Deal** for her great work as this year's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) State Coordinator! NRCS employees in the Greater Indiana CFC area made 28 pledges totaling \$9,134. An additional \$394.50 was raised for CFC at a baked goods auction held at the state office.

**\*\*Bruce Milligan** for his work with the Technology staff in developing an all-inclusive 'Certifications Database.' The database documents individuals certified in Conservation Planning, Cultural Resources, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans, Wetland Delineations, and Prescribed Burning. It is available to state office and area office managers and will be updated as employees become certified or change locations.

### Hoos-Your Grazing Available

The winter edition of the Hoos-Your Grazing Network newsletter is now available on the Web. Go to [www.blueboniff.com/HOOS-YOUR-WINTER2.pdf](http://www.blueboniff.com/HOOS-YOUR-WINTER2.pdf) to view or print the newsletter, which is full of interesting information for graziers. Thanks, Shannon Zezula, for the heads up!

### Volunteers Provide Valuable Assistance

Earth Team volunteers (ETVs) at the Miami County SWCD are the embodiment of the national Earth Team mission. Assisting NRCS in accomplishing its mission, these ETVs provide technical assistance to NRCS District Conservationist Rick Duff. Duff, a strong supporter of ETVs, utilizes the volunteers as technicians to survey grassed waterways and grade

stabilization structures.

ETVs also serve as educators in the county. The Miami County SWCD has over 70 Earth Team volunteers educating all fourth grade students at the annual Miami County Fourth Grade Ag Field Day. During the day students attend 14 sessions, which include soils, forestry, wildlife, crops, animals, recycling, 4-H, farm machinery, farm safety, and other basic conservation topics. Miami County's ETVs also go into schools to educate fifth graders about forestry, agriculture, wildflowers, and wildlife in conjunction with a spring hike on the historical Lost Sister Trail located near the Mississinewa Reservoir.

- By Nancy Manion, Indiana's Earth Team Coordinator

### President Honors Jim Lake

Jim Lake, a veteran in the Indiana natural resources arena, was honored last month at the Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Annual Conference. IASWCD President Jim Droege presented Lake with this year's IASWCD President's Award.



(Pictured above, left to right: Jim Droege, Jim Lake)

Droege recognized Lake for his great enthusiasm, expert leadership, technical support, and effectiveness. Lake serves the North-Northeast region of Indiana as a district support specialist for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Division of Soil Conservation.

**—Special Emphasis—**

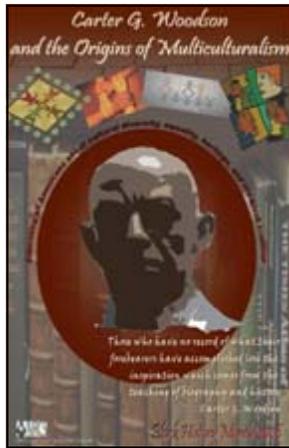
**February—Black History Month**

America has been a landscape peopled by diverse ethnic and racial groups. If America has always been racially and ethnically diverse, the nation's self-image has not always recognized its multicultural history. Until the last decades of the twentieth century, America has seen itself largely as the flowering of Anglo-Saxon culture and prided itself on allowing immigrants to adopt the American way.

During the early years of the twentieth century, a small number of intellectuals began to question whether America was simply a transplant of English civilization. Among those intellectuals of the Progressive era, Carter G. Woodson did most to forge a movement to educate Americans about cultural diversity and democracy. For the sake of African Americans and all Americans, Woodson heralded the contributions of African Americans and the black tradition. In 1915, he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and by the time of his death in 1950, he had laid the foundation for a rethinking of American identity. The multiculturalism of our times is built on the intellectual and institutional labors of Woodson and the association he established. He should be known not simply as the Father of Black History, but as pioneer of multiculturalism as well.

For this reason, this year's theme for Black History Month is "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism."

—Source: ASALH 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference  
Bennie Clark, Jr., Black Emphasis Program Manager



**Hoosiers Happenings (cont.)**

**Conservation Day Impacts Legislators**

A Conservation Day was held at the Statehouse on January 10, 2008 to show legislators that Hoosiers care about Indiana's natural resources. The Indiana Conservation Alliance, comprised of non profit organizations, sponsored the event. NRCS was present to support the Indiana Conservation Alliance and to answer questions from legislators, as well as the public regarding our conservation efforts. Assistant State Conservationist for Outreach and Communications Jill Reinhart represented NRCS.

**Pigeon Creek Project Makes the News**

Among the nation's success stories for 2007, we find Indiana's own Pigeon Creek project in the news! The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Web site at [http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/Success319/state/pdf/in\\_pigeon.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/Success319/state/pdf/in_pigeon.pdf) has the full story.

In 1996, Pigeon Creek in southwestern Indiana was found to be impaired with chlordane and other chemicals used on ag lands with poor stream buffers and high soil loss. A partnership was formed and developed a watershed plan to improve the water quality. Installing best management practices and educating landowners produced the desired results.

NRCS assisted with the project and allocated \$135,000 each year from 1997 to 1998 through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The Four Rivers RC&D and SWCDs in Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, and Posey counties played an important role in the project's success.

**New USDA Service Center Now Open**

December's open house for the new USDA Service Center in Greensburg drew 100 folks, including Greensburg's Mayor—who not only attended, but cut the ribbon!



**PARTNERSHIP LINKS**

Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, *Weekly Updates*:  
<http://www.iaswcd.org/WeeklyUpdatesJan07.htm>

ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation  
<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/>

Purdue University - [www.purdue.edu](http://www.purdue.edu)

Indiana Conservation Partnership Strategic Plan Information  
<http://www.in.gov/isda/2333.htm>

## PERSONNEL UPDATE

Retirement:

Chuck Froehle, Civil Engineering Technician, Princeton Tech Team, effective 02-02-2008

## Featured Website—Employee Assistance Program

<http://www.sandcreekeap.com/aboutus.php>

Did you know NRCS employees have an Employee Assistance Program offered **free** of charge? The Sand Creek Group provides this **confidential, convenient service** that is a problem-solving resource for you and your family. Employees can get assistance on a variety of issues, such as



stress or burnout, financial concerns, marriage and family problems, loss and grief, alcohol or chemical dependency, work-related problems, parent-child difficulties, and emotional problems.

Check out their Web site to learn more. For assistance through the program, call **1-888-2HELP44**.

## Mark Your Calendar

February

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 02/13/08    | SE Area Meeting   |
| 02/12-14/08 | Train the Trainer Workshop, Indianapolis, State Office  |
| 02/15-16/08 | Indiana Cattle and Forage Symposium, Indianapolis Marriott East   |
| 02/18/08    | Presidents' Day—HOLIDAY   |
| 02/26/08    | NW Area Meeting   |
| 02/27/08    | SW Area Meeting   |
| 02/27/08    | Tri-State Conservation Farming Expo, Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, Auburn, Indiana (More information at <a href="http://www.sjrwi.org">www.sjrwi.org</a> ) |

March

- 03/04/08 Hamilton County Soil & Water Annual Meeting, Hamilton County 4-H Exhibition Center, Noblesville. RSVP (317) 773-2181, ext. 101 for free lunch.
- 03/07/08 SWCS Meeting, Indianapolis, State Office
- 03/12/08 SE Area Meeting
- 03/25/08 NW Area Meeting
- 03/26/08 SW Area Meeting

April

- 04/01/08 NE Area Meeting
- 04/04/08 SWCS Meeting, Indianapolis, State Office
- 04/09/08 SE Area Meeting
- 04/27/08 2008 NACD Stewardship Week  
to  
05/04/08
- 04/29/08 NW Area Meeting
- 04/30/08 SW Area Meeting

Note: For a listing of Natural Resources Education Center workshops, go to [www.in.gov/dnr/nrec](http://www.in.gov/dnr/nrec)

*Helping People Help the Land*