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Heart to Heart
... with Hardisty



 April 1, 2008 was a monumental day as USDA Secretary Ed Schafer visited Indiana and spoke to NRCS and FSA state office employees who gathered in our conference room. We were honored to have the Secretary share some of his personal stories, as well as his candid thoughts with us regarding USDA—referring to it as the “People’s Department” as President Abraham Lincoln named it. The Secretary graciously took time to meet individuals and pose for a photo with them.

 The Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up has been announced for the Upper East Fork White River Watershed and plans are well underway. Our folks in the Southeast Area and at the state office have been working diligently in preparation for CSP in this watershed. I want to thank all of you for your hard work that you have done and continue to do to assist farmers with this conservation stewardship program.

 One of our most valuable and dedicated employees, Harold Thompson, has retired and will be missed more than we can say. Harold most recently served as the Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, but has worked in many aspects during his 39 years with the agency. A farewell party is being planned for the future, but until then, I want to wish Harold good luck and say thanks for the memories!

Jane E. Hardisty

*** * * * Employee Spotlight * * * ***

**Brenda McGovern
Field Office Assistant, Southeast Area**

Q: Brenda, though you've been with NRCS for a long time, some of our new employees might not have had a chance to get to know you. Please tell us a little about your background.

A: I was born and raised in Jennings County. In 1970, I married a Decatur County farmer. We had two sons, Chad and Corey, who weighed in at 11 lbs. 1 oz. and 10 lbs. 11 oz. respectively. WHEW! For the next 23 years, in addition to having two children and working outside the home part of the time, I was very involved in the family farm. I helped with the spring and fall field work driving the tractors and combine, and I also worked with the 200 sow farrowing operation.



Q: How and when did you begin working for the agency?

A: I started with the Soil Conservation Service in 1967. After graduation in 1967, I took a Civil Service test and months later received a phone call from Bill Reichenbach asking me to come in for an interview. I was hired to work at the area office in Jennings County as a clerk-typist. My main responsibility was typing the preliminary soil survey reports at Bartholomew, Clark, Floyd, and Jennings counties before they actually went to print. Back then, we didn't have computers. I had to type one original and 10 carbon copies of everything. If you made a mistake, you had to erase all 10 carbon copies. It didn't take me long to figure out not to make many mistakes! I decided after the birth of my second child to stay

home, raise my children, and work on the family farm. Then, in 1982, I went back to work part time for the Decatur SWCD. In 1991, Miss Jane Hardisty rehired me to work for NRCS. During the process of rehiring me, Jane needed my previous Personnel files. Needless to say, it took a while as they had already been archived.

Q: You've worked with a variety of individuals at NRCS. Can you give us the scoop?

A: When you have been around as long as I have you do have the opportunity to work with several different individuals. Most of the older folks I worked with have long retired, such as Bill Reichenbach, my first area conservationist (AC). Then, of course, I had the privilege of having Jane Hardisty as my second AC, now our state conservationist. I also worked with Leonard Jordan, who is now program manager for NRCS in Washington, DC. And I can never forget working with Harold Thompson (HT) before he moved up to the state office as assistant state conservationist for Programs.

Q: Do you have any hobbies or outside interests you can share with our readers?

A: I have several different hobbies. I guess my number one hobby would be my grandson, Austin! I also do oil paintings, which some are displayed at the area office. My other hobbies include working in my flowers, golfing, and bike riding.

Q: If you had to choose one, what would be your life "motto"?

A: To always be positive, cherish each day as though it is your last, and treat others as you would want to be treated!

Hoosier Happenings

KUDOS to...

****Barry Fisher** for doing an outstanding job of advancing No-Till farming in Indiana. Several NRCS personnel attended the 2008 No-Till Conference (where Barry spoke) to learn more about No-Till so they could take back the information to landowners and farmers in Indiana. Wow, what a great concept! You are very fortunate to have a person such as Barry Fisher on your staff. He is one of the best people out there today, promoting No-Till in a positive way.—Butch Fisher, RC, Tuscola, IL

****Jeff Cannaday** for assisting NRCS in New York after summer storms and severe flooding devastated the Catskill Mountain region in Delaware County in June of 2006. When funding became available through the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection program, Jeff rose to the challenge by answering our plea for help. With Jeff's assistance NRCS was able to stabilize more than 16,000 lineal feet of stream banks, thus helping restore the agricultural and community infrastructure for the citizens of Delaware County, New York.—State Conservationist Ronald Alvarado

****Darrell Rice** and **Dave Elgin** for their efforts in the Eagle Slough project. Eagle Slough, the historic name for 127 acres of low, swampy land in southwest Indiana, is becoming a new wildlife preservation area. In addition to being a flood plain, the lakes on the land provide a perfect habitat for water fowl.

Darrell took the initiative as the catalyst to get the project started, and Dave worked hard to pull a core group together to facilitate the project's accomplishments and to get deeds to all of the land. Eagle Slough will be operated by Four Rivers RC&D.

NRCS Retiree Receives ETV Award

Earth Team volunteers help NRCS accomplish conservation work and deserve our thanks. A big thanks goes to Bill Swern, the 2008 Indiana Earth Team Volunteer (ETV) award winner. As an NRCS retiree, Bill understands the need for volunteers to get the job done. For more than 15 years Bill has served the conservation effort in Parke County as an ETV, using the knowledge and experience of his career to benefit youth, local citizens, and the natural resources around him. Bill, a former RC&D Coordinator, continues to

support the efforts of the Sycamore Trails RC&D as a volunteer. He has been an active member of the Forestry Committee, assisting with Timber Stand Improvement fields days and producing spot announcements to promote forest management on local radio stations.



Pictured above: Bill Swern (at left) accepts 2008 Indiana Earth Team Volunteer award from District Conservationist Don Donovan.

Bill continues to be an inspiration to many in the conservation community. “We are stewards of the land. It’s ours for a lifetime, but just for a lifetime,” Bill says. He exemplifies his motto, “dream big and work hard,” which appears on his award plaque.

89-Year-Old Sets the Pace

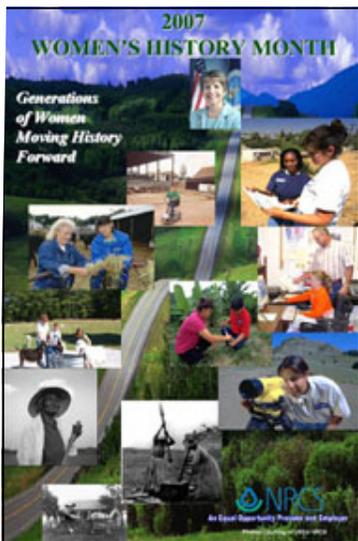
Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D made local and statewide news recently, thanks to 89-year-old Eugene Myers, a St. Joseph County retired farmer who is known for his agricultural advocacy. Myers has set the benchmark for other farmers in the area, because he is the first farmer in the county to enroll his land in a Farmland Conservation Easement managed by the Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D, Inc. of Angola. In hopes of persuading other farmers to follow his lead and protect their farmland, Myers made the announcement to a small group of peers and officials at his farmstead on March 20.

(continued on page 4)

—Special Emphasis—

March—Women’s History Month

In 1980, the idea of National Women’s History Month was initiated to serve as a major vehicle for discovering and honoring women’s history. This year, as we cele-



brated our 28th anniversary of promoting the recognition of women’s historic achievements, we were amazed by the tens of thousands of women’s history events that took place during March.

To honor the originality, beauty, imagination, and multiple dimensions of women’s lives, *Women’s Art: Women’s Vision*

was chosen as the 2008 theme for National Women’s History Month. The history of women and art is quintessential women’s history. It is the story of amazing women’s accomplishments acclaimed at the time but written out of history. This year’s theme provided a special opportunity to discover and celebrate women’s visual arts in a variety of forms and mediums that help expand our perceptions of ourselves and each other.

For more information on Women’s History, click on Quick Access to Indiana Civil Rights link at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov> or visit the national site at <http://www.nwhp.org/>

—Contact: Rita Schaus, Federal Women’s Program Manager for Indiana at rita.schaus@in.usda.gov

Hoosiers Happenings (cont.)

He pointed out that it was the first day of spring and National Agriculture Day—a fitting time for the occasion.

According to RC&D Coordinator Kathy Latz, the Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D has enrolled about 1,400 acres of farmland in the Farmland Conservation Easement program.

Grazing Conference Attendees Exceed 500

Despite an eight-inch snowfall in the early morning, the Northern Indiana Grazing Conference was well attended with nearly

560 farmers on February 1 in Shipshewana. About two-thirds of the attendees were Amish farmers who were particularly interested in this year’s theme, “Grazing



Management Important to Small Family Farms.” Partnering with the LaGrange County SWCD and Purdue University Extension Service, NRCS played a major role with District Conservation Dave Hague on the steering committee and Grazing Specialist Jerry Perkins on the executive committee, as well as facilitating sessions during the conference.



PARTNERSHIP LINKS

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

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

Purdue University - www.purdue.edu

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

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Retirement:

Harold Thompson, Assistant State Conservationist (Programs), effective 04-03-2008

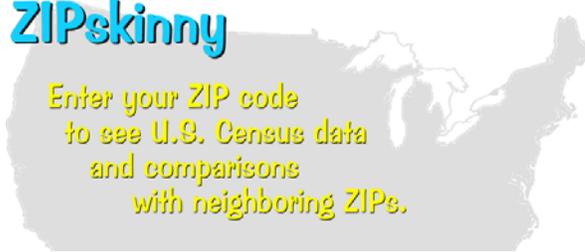
Featured Website—Census Data by Zip Code

<http://www.Zipskinny.com>

Looking for information about a specific town? Go to Zipskinny at the above Web site to get U.S. Census data in a quick and easy format. From the homepage, click on Indiana to bring up a list of towns linked to information including demographics, maps, economic and social indicators, and more! Or just type in the zip code on the ZIPskinny homepage where indicated. It's that easy!

ZIPskinny

Enter your ZIP code
to see U.S. Census data
and comparisons
with neighboring ZIPs.



Mark Your Calendar

April

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 04/16/08 | IFEC Meeting, Indianapolis State Office |
| 04/17/08 | FOTG Meeting, Indianapolis State Office |
| 04/27/08
to
05/04/08 | 2008 NACD Stewardship Week—Water of Life |
| 04/29/08 | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette |
| 04/30/08 | SW Area Meeting, Vincennes |

May

- 05/02/08 SWCS Meeting, Indianapolis State Office
- 05/06/08 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 05/14/08 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 05/26/08 MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY
- 05/27/08 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 05/28/08 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes

June

- 06/03/08 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 06/06/08 SWCS Meeting, Indianapolis State Office
- 06/10/08 State Soil Conservation Board Meeting, Indianapolis
- 06/24/08 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 06/25/08 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 06/26-27/08 Indiana Environmental Education Symposium, Indiana State Museum,
Contact: Warren Gartner, IDNR-Fish & Wildlife, 317-547-3104

July

- 07/04/08 INDEPENDENCE DAY HOLIDAY
- 07/26-30/08 Soil and Water Conservation Society 2008 Annual Conference, JW Marriott Starr
Pass, Tucson, AZ

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

Helping People Help the Land