



In This Issue

- Heart to Heart with Hardisty
- Employee Spotlight—Darrell Nicholson
- Hoosier Happenings
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Partners' Web Links
- Personnel Updates
- Featured Website—Central Indiana Watersheds Blog
- Mark Your Calendar

*Heart to Heart
... with Hardisty*

 With fiscal year 2008 completed, I reflect on all of our accomplishments with pride and appreciation. Indiana NRCS experienced many successes during the fiscal year, including ending with a balanced budget.

At this time, we need to proceed with technical assistance to carry out existing contracts. I anticipate FY-09 to be another successful year for conservation in Indiana!



 NRCS national headquarters set October 12, 2008 as the deadline for MLRA restructuring to be completed nationwide. I applaud our State Soil Scientist Travis Neely and his staff for meeting this deadline and for making this a smooth transition in Indiana.

 September 21-27, 2008 was observed in Indiana as RC&D Week. This week coincided with the anniversary of the designation of the first ten national RC&D areas, which included Lincoln Hills RC&D in southern Indiana.

Each year our RC&D Councils in Indiana complete over 100 projects which help address local conservation issues. Local involvement and leadership contribute to their success—local people creating solutions for local needs. I am proud to partner with our Indiana RC&D Councils in accomplishing our conservation goals.

Jane E. Hardisty

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

**Darrell Nicholson,
Southeast Area Conservationist,
North Vernon**

Q: Darrell, as our newest area conservationist many of us would like to get to know you better. Tell us about your background.

A: I grew up on a small farm in Wayne County and spent several years working on nearby farms doing everything from milking cows and baling hay to driving farm equipment. I began working for the agency (then the Soil Conservation Service) as a Student Trainee for two summers beginning in 1981. Upon graduation from Purdue in 1983, I accepted a soil conservationist position in Posey County. I worked my way up to be the district conservationist and remained there until 1991 until I took a lateral transfer to Greensburg as the DC. I held that position for 17 years until my selection as area conservationist for southeastern Indiana in September 2008. I am married to Laura, and we have three children—two boys and a girl; ages 22, 20 and 12.

Q: How did you become interested in conservation?

A: I was working for a local farmer when I met the local SCS technician who was on the farm surveying for a dairy waste handling system. I inquired about employment opportunities, and he referred me to Don Weaver. I was introduced to the Student Trainee Program and started work the next summer. There are some days I miss the hard labor of farm work, but not too often!

Q: What is your leadership style?

A: Over the years I have gained greater confidence in my leadership abilities. I am driven to be the best at what I do and am willing to put forth the effort to succeed. I guess you could say I expect a great deal from myself and those around me. Lazy and apathetic people are the most challenging group for me to deal with since they lack motivation and drive, and I cannot relate to those characteristics.

Q: It is rumored you know a little about a WASCORB. Care to elaborate?

A: For those of you who have worked in southwestern Indiana, you know the sloping loess soils and how erosive they can be. While I was in Posey County for over eight years, I was involved with all phases of planning, designing, and constructing over 600 (or more) WASCORBs. What makes it more of a feat is that it was all done without computers, laser levels, total stations, GPS or ATV's. We knew WASCORBs were not the total solution to the erosion problems, but they did stop a tremendous amount of soil from leaving the farms. Many of those practices are still functioning today.



(Above: Darrell, right, discusses mobile office technology with past NRCS Chief Bruce Knight.)

Q: Do you have any hobbies or special interests?

A: I collect miniature toy farm equipment. My brothers and I have over 400 pieces from the 1950's to today. We attend farm toy shows and auctions every year. My goal is to create a display area in my home for them someday, however, my wife is not so thrilled with that idea—at least not yet!

Q: Who has had the most influence on your career?

A: I don't think I could name only one person who has been the most influential to me. Folks like Jesse Wilcox, Harold Thompson, Jane Hardisty, Don Weaver, and Mike Warner all taught me many things about how to be successful. I have had a tremendously satisfying career with the agency, and for that I am very grateful.

Hoosier Happenings

A 75TH ANNIVERSARY TO REMEMBER

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) was created in the USDA by an act of Congress on April 27, 1935. However, an earlier date, September 19, 1933 should not be forgotten. That date marks the selection of Hugh Hammond Bennett



as director of the Soil Erosion Service, the first national agency created to address soil conservation and predecessor to SCS. Creation of the Soil Erosion Service was critical to the future of Federal soil conservation activities, the history of SCS, and Bennett's recognition as the "father of soil conservation." Bennett also helped in the formation of our nation's conservation districts.

LAST CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) Hoosier Chapter is seeking award nominations to recognize individuals or groups who promote wise land use and conservation. Awards are divided into three categories: Conservation Accomplishment Award (Group/Industry/Business), Conservation Accomplishment Award (Individual), and Outstanding Service to the Hoosier Chapter Award.

Nominations should be in letter form, addressing all the criteria for each award. Submit your nominations to Bev Stevenson at bev.stevenson@in.usda.gov or Fax to 574/533-4620 by October 24.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Like mother, like daughter, like son...members of the Grivas family of Greencastle have made an array of contributions to Indiana NRCS accomplishments. Mom, Susan Grivas, is a soil conservationist on the Greencastle Conservation Implementation Team. She got her feet wet with NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer (ETV) in 2004, and shortly thereafter became an NRCS employee. Being familiar with the ETV program, she saw an opportunity for her oldest daughter, Jamie, to add volunteer work to her high school resume for future college applications. Jamie became an ETV for Sycamore Trails RC&D and NRCS in Greencastle. Her ETV experience led to part-time employment with the RC&D, giving her exposure to information related to her university environmental studies, as well as some spending money.

In 2007, Susan was working on the Pathway to Water Quality exhibit at the Indiana State Fair and decided it was time to introduce, then, 15-year-old son Jonathon to the



program (she needed the extra muscle power!). Then in 2008, daughter Becky carried on the ETV tradition, volunteering a few afternoons and during the summer with Sycamore Trails RC&D.

What a great way to expose kids to the value of volunteering and "Helping People Help the Land."

—Submitted by Michelle Phillips, RC&D Assistant, Sycamore Trails RC&D

NO-TILL STILL HOT TOPIC

No-till continues to be a topic that farmers want to learn more about. The Orange County SWCD, Indiana Corn Council, Clean Water Indiana, and the Orange County Cattlemen Association recently sponsored a field day on this topic, as well as pasture/livestock management. This September NRCS State Agronomist Barry Fisher and Area Grazing Specialist Robert Zupancic teamed up to speak to a group of 50 attendees at Adam Hill's farm in Orleans, Indiana. The pair informed the group about grazing and pasture rotation, no-till drills and planters, and cover crops.



Six of the attendees were from the area's Amish community. The Amish farmers were particularly interested in the horse drawn no-till drill that was displayed, showing interest in building one of their own.

(more on page 4)

—Special Emphasis— Hispanic Heritage Month

The Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated each year from September 15 to October 15. This year's theme, "Hispanics Getting Involved: Our Families, Our Communities, and Our Country," recognizes the outstanding contributions that Hispanic Americans have made to our nation. President George Bush stated the following in his September 12th proclamation. "The rich cultural traditions of the Hispanic-American community have made a remarkable impact on American society. Their diverse backgrounds and dedication to family have become an integral part of America. With a deep commitment to faith and a strong desire to live the American dream, these citizens are realizing the full blessings of liberty. Educational opportunities are helping a new generation work toward success, and many Hispanic Americans operate thriving businesses. We also honor Hispanic Americans for their strong tradition of service in the Armed Forces. Their patriotism and valor have added to the character of our nation."



Artist Brenda Venable with NRCS Rhode Island won this year's poster contest (pictured above), illustrating various ways Hispanics provide services to the U.S.

— Contact Rafael Vega, IN NRCS Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager, at rafael.vega@in.usda.gov or 574/291-7444, ext. 3.

Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

SWCS SEEKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Soil and Water Conservation Society is seeking applicants for Executive Director, a person who is committed to the conservation mission and who will provide strong leadership to the organization. Go to <http://www.swcs.org/> for application information.

AFRICAN EXPERTS VISIT INDY FARM MARKET

On September 19, 2008 five men and women representing five African countries toured the Waterman's Farm Market in Indianapolis. Waterman's Farm Market, which opened in 1978, grows and sells a variety of fruits and vegetables, including pumpkins, corn, green beans, and strawberries.



The tour was arranged by the Rural Entrepreneur Network (REN) and the International Center of Indianapolis. The five experts were visiting several sites in the U.S. to learn more about sustainable development, how good governance can stimulate growth, and how partnerships between the private and public sectors can result in increased agricultural production at a lower cost to the environment.

NRCS Agronomist Tony Bailey accompanied tour host Carol Waterman and Jim Roudebush, REN Director. Bailey said he was happy to be a part of the tour to field questions about agriculture in general and conservation programs; expressing his thankfulness for American agriculture that we so easily take for granted.

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 - www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Selections:

John Young, District Conservationist, Logansport, effective 09/14/08
Wesley Slain, District Conservationist, New Castle, effective 09/14/08
Brandy Daggett, District Conservationist, Frankfort, effective 09/28/08
Darrell Nicholson, Area Conservationist, Southeast Area Office, effective 09/28/08
Eamonn Ertel, Soil Conservationist, Lebanon Tech Team, effective 09/28/08
Tandy Easler, Civil Engineering Technician, Albion Tech Team, effective 10/12/08

Featured Web Site—Central Indiana Watersheds Info & Blog

<http://www.indywatersheds.org/>

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District recently developed a new Web site about central Indiana watersheds. This site, provided by a Clean Water Indiana grant, is actually a Blog with attached Web pages. The Blog was designed for watershed coordinators and others interested in improving water quality and water quantity to share ideas and resources. Also, the site includes a calendar so upcoming meetings and events can be posted. As with most blogs, you can request to be notified when a new item is added to the site.

Mark Your Calendar

October

10/21/08	State Technical Committee Meeting, Indianapolis
10/22-25/08	National FFA Convention, Indianapolis
10/23-24/08	Hydraulics/Hydrology Course, Trinity Lutheran School, Indianapolis. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at 317/290-3250.
10/28/08	NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
10/28-30/08	CTIC Conservation Agriculture Carbon Offset Consultation, Purdue University's Agronomy Center for Research/Education, West Lafayette

November

- 11/05/08 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 11/06/08 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 11/11/08 VETERANS DAY
- 11/12/08 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 11/14/08 Hoosier Chapter SWCS Meeting, Nashville
- 11/27/08 THANKSGIVING DAY

December

- 12/02/08 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 12/03/08 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 12/04-06/08 Indiana Farm Bureau Convention, Evansville Auditorium Convention Centre, Evansville
- 12/09/08 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 12/10/08 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon

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

Helping People Help the Land