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*Heart to Heart
... with Hardisty*

 First, I want to express my sincere thanks to all of you who are working so diligently to complete the Financial Audit Review activities. As directed by Chief Arlen Lancaster, these activities rank as top priority. Our NRCS Indiana team have responded quickly and are working hard to meet the deadline. Thank you!



 The 2008 Farm Bill activities will kick into high gear in January 2009, now that the rulemaking process is underway. The process involves USDA NRCS writing interim rules for each program (regulations and standards to support the Farm Bill's policy mandates), asking for public comment, then writing the final rules. This complex process takes time, but ultimately gives us the opportunity to take the language Congress gave us and make it better—better for our employees, who have to implement the new legislation, and more importantly, better for our customers, who have asked us to make conservation easier. Let's all be ready as we promote and implement these Farm Bill programs in Indiana.

 With our calendar year coming to an end, and the holiday season here once again, let me encourage you to relax and spend some quality time sharing with families and friends. The holidays give us some time off to enjoy, but also provide us with an opportunity to reflect on the past year's activities and to set goals for the coming year. I look forward to working with you in 2009, with great expectations of accomplishing much for conservation in Indiana.

Jane E. Hardisty

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

**Travis Neely,
State Soil Scientist/MO Leader**

Q: Travis, many of us know you've been with the agency for a long time, 36 years to be exact. What does your career path look like?

A: I began working as a Soil Conservation Aid right out of high school in 1968. After college SCS Indiana recruited me as a Student Trainee Soil Scientist in Greencastle in 1972. In 1973 I became the Soil Scientist in Greencastle, then moved within the position to Vincennes and Brazil. In 1978 I moved up to Soil Survey Project Leader in Winchester and later in Tipton. Then in 1982 I was selected as Area Soil Scientist for Area IV in Muncie, with co-lateral duties. My first move out of Indiana was in 1990 when I was selected as Asst. State Soil Scientist at Harrisburg, PA. I then served during 1995 as the Acting State Soil Scientist for Pennsylvania before moving back to Indiana as the State Soil Scientist/MO Leader for MLRA Region 11, my present position.



Q: You serve the agency as State Soil Scientist and Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office Leader for a portion of seven states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin). Would you briefly describe your duties as MLRA region leader?

A: In addition to supervising the MLRA Region staff, I lead in the production and quality assurance of soil survey information; lead in classification, correlation, interpretations, and joining of spatial and attribute data within and between MLRA soil survey areas; provide quality assurance of maps, manuscripts, official series descriptions, and databases in the region; and coordinate with federal lands agencies to assure that both NCSS standards and partner needs are met.

Q: How did the MLRA reorganization, which you were involved with, affect Indiana?

A: With the reorganization, the number of our soil survey offices went from 3 to 2, and the staff size reduced from 13 to 10. It also changed the management of soil survey activities on an MLRA basis, versus the

old way on a statewide basis. The reorganization improved communication between the MLRA soil survey offices and the MO Region Office, the quality of soil survey activities and products across the region, and office space and equipment needs. It also allowed staff to be in the same office location to work as a team, under daily direction and supervision.

Q: Rumor is you have a large family with lots of grandchildren. Care to share?

A: My beautiful wife, Patricia, of 30 years and I have five wonderful daughters (one set of twins), two sons, and 21 grandchildren (12 boys and 9 girls). Patricia works in the home health care field in Indianapolis. Our oldest daughter lives in Detroit with her husband and three children; her oldest started his freshman year of college in northern Michigan. The remaining four daughters reside in

Indianapolis with their families; all five daughters are training in the nursing field. Our sons and their families live in Terre Haute; where one son is in medical supplies and equipment delivery, and the other is a self-employed stay at home father.

Q: What hobbies and special interests keep you busy during your non-duty hours?

A: I am a great fisherman as long as I fish from the river and lake banks, and enjoy telling tales about the one that got away! I also enjoy bowling, church activities, gardening and landscaping, visiting family, and watching the grandchildren grow into young men and women. I'm a want to be golfer (though my score seems to be more like an NBA basketball score), and I love to travel the U.S. and visit historical sites. So far I've visited 42 of the 50 states. I'm a life member of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees, and a member of the national and Hoosier Chapter of SWCS.

Q: Do you have any advice for newcomers to the NRCS team?

A: Set short and long term goals, then prioritize them. As you meet your goals, mark them off and re-establish new ones. Stay the course; continue to check where you are at all times; seek a mentor or mentors; and have **fun** while working towards your goals!

Hoosier Happenings

KUDOS to...

****Bruce Milligan** and **Bruce Nielsen** for working tirelessly to fulfill a grant that Indiana NRCS received from National Headquarters to complete 18 Rapid Watershed Assessments (RWA). Not only will the RWA products assist NRCS and our partners by providing preliminary watershed data, but the efficient processes they developed along the way will prove beneficial to completing additional watersheds. Indiana also received additional Technical Assistance funds to complete these assessments.

****Indiana NRCS** and to **Tony Bailey**, for representing NRCS at the first Spirit of the Land-Grant Mission Award ceremony at Purdue this fall. The award recipient, Dr. Al Sutton, is a professor in Purdue University's department of animal sciences and nutrient management and has conducted research for more than 35 years in livestock nutrient and waste management. During Dr. Sutton's presentation of his work, he acknowledged the assistance and great working relationship he has with NRCS, and the environmental benefits in Indiana overall because of NRCS.

NATURE PARK ENHANCED WITH 10,000 TREES

Visitors at McCloud Nature Park in Hendricks County will find ample shade in the future, complements of a reforestation by planting 10,000 trees. The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation was awarded a Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program grant of \$6,100 which covered about one-third of the tree planting project. The trees will help prepare for the opening of 110 acres on the north side of the park, which will give visitors access to all 232 acres of the nature park.

CONGRATS TO MARION COUNTY SWCD!

Congratulations to Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for being featured in the first edition of the National Association of Conservation Districts' new nationwide publication, *The Resource*. The publication highlighted Marion County SWCD's work to meet emerging urban/suburban natural resource needs in Indianapolis. It was noted that major land use changes have shifted workload priorities to homeowner and development erosion and sediment control, water quality and drainage issues, green space protection and enhancement, and invasive species control. All of this work is accomplished along with assisting farmers on 24,000 acres of farm land in the county.

GETTING THE JOB DONE

Our Indiana NRCS grazing land specialists are getting the job done! Their fiscal year 2008 Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Activities Report proves that they are

keeping busy providing training, demonstrating projects, and creating public awareness.

Besides training 150 NRCS employees and 101 partnering agencies and organization employees, they provided training to 884 grazing land owners and managers. The specialists were involved with 64 grazing land presentations, which included field days, tours, and workshops. They reached a vast number of 45,435 people through these activities during FY-08. This number included 43,000 visitors at the Indiana State Fair where Indiana GLCI sponsored an outdoor grazing site to demonstrate proper fencing, animal distribution, and other aspects of grazing lands conservation. In addition, they provided public awareness through 28 newspaper and magazine articles, reaching 17,000 readers.

CIVIL RIGHTS AWARD PRESENTED

Congratulations to the 2008 Group Civil Rights Achievement Award winners pictured below with presenter State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. This group won the award for their work at the Tippecanoe County Latino Festival, where they celebrated Soil and Water Stewardship Week with a bilingual display in Spanish and English.



Left to right: Jane Hardisty; Chris Remley, Tippecanoe County SWCD; Becky Ross, NRCS NW Area Conservationist; Don Emmert, Tippecanoe County SWCD; Megan Benage, Tippecanoe County SWCD; and Mark Eastman, NRCS District Conservationist.

EQIP SUCCESS—IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

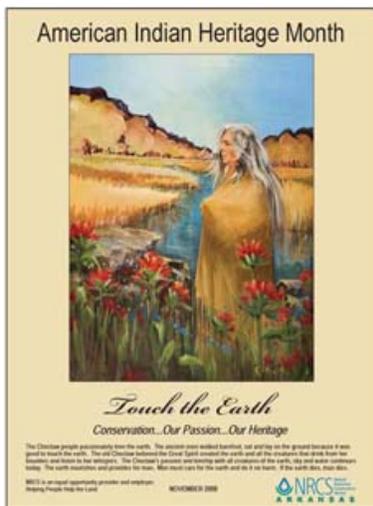
NRCS in Ripley County is improving water quality one operation at a time. One cattle operation in the county was contributing to many water quality degradation issues. The farm was located in a drinking water supply area and was in
(more on page 4)

—Special Emphasis—

November--American Indian Alaska Native Heritage Month

The American Indian Alaska Native Heritage Month is celebrated annually during November to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

This year's NRCS American Indian Alaska Native Heritage poster theme was *Conservation...Our Passion...Our Heritage*. The winning poster for 2008 was painted by Kathy Sturch, a member of the Choctaw Nation in Boswell, Oklahoma. Sturch titled her painting *Touch of Earth...Conservation...Our Passion...Our Heritage*. She illustrated the connection of the theme with the Choctaw's kinship with all creatures, sky, earth, and water. Sturch said, "The earth nourishes and provides for man. Man must care for the earth and do it no harm." The Indian Paintbrush in the foreground of the poster symbolizes the American Indian; natural, sturdy, proud, and beautiful.



Contact Kelley Barkell, American Indian Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program Manager at: kelly.barkell@in.usda.gov

Or visit the Web at: http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/about/Civil_Rights/AIAN_Program/AIAN_Homepage.html

Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

a watershed listed on the state's water quality impairment (303d) list. District Conservationist Tim Schwipps took the bull by the horns and met with the producer in February 2006 to look over his farm and discuss his cattle operation.

The producer had an 80 head feedlot and a 20 head cow calf operation. The farm included two pastures set up with continuous grazing. Schwipps noticed several degraded areas where cattle would feed on round bales in the winter. With only one water tank, the pastures were severely overgrazed in the close proximity to the tank, and the field was under-grazed in the remaining areas. The existing feedlot was about 50 feet by 100 feet, with one third of it devoted to storing the stacked manure. The manure was stored until there was suitable weather to spread it, and the storage was not large enough as manure would run over the existing containment walls before it could be spread on fields.

After the producer and Schwipps met several times, they discussed options and developed a plan to attack the primary resource concern of Water Quality—excessive nutrients and organics in surface and groundwater among others. The producer applied for funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help address the resource concerns through numerous conservation measures. NRCS selected his application for funding in May 2006, and the process began. A Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) was developed, designs were completed for a livestock watering system, and a concrete heavy use area was developed to allow for a winter feeding area and reduce the risk of nutrient loading in the watershed. In May 2008 a waste storage facility was completed, allowing for 90 days of animal waste storage, thus reducing the potential of nutrient and organics reaching the water system. This EQIP success story is a 'win win' for the producer and folks in the watershed, as well as down stream!

Submit your conservation success stories to share. Email them to pam.davidson@in.usda.gov to be considered for this newsletter.

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

DISTRICT SHOWCASE 2008

The Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) named four District Showcase winners for 2008. The SWCDs in Kosciusko and LaGrange counties were award winners in northern Indiana. A District Showcase tour was held on September 29, 2008 in these two counties.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) provided the backdrop for showcasing outstanding conservation partnerships for the **Kosciusko County SWCD**, representing a partnership between USDA and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. CREP fits into the District's business plan by helping meet its goals:

- By 2010, water quality will be protected with filter strips or riparian buffers along at least 30 percent of identified rivers, lakes and streams; and
- There will be an additional 500 acres of tree plantings.



(Above: Kosciusko County SWCD tour participants)

In Kosciusko County, this program promotes the installation of conservation buffers and wetland restoration within the Tippecanoe River Watershed. Eligible practices under Indiana's CREP are Native Grasses, Hardwood Trees, Wildlife Habitat, Grassed Filter Strip, Riparian Buffers, Wetland Restoration, and Bottomland Timber.

At the **LaGrange County SWCD**, great diversity is found in a number of key areas relating to natural resources conservation, including varied soil types, topography, land use and demographics. This provides the SWCD with a unique opportunity to serve its constituency in a variety of ways, utilizing a number of traditional and nontraditional partnerships to accomplish this task. The diverse county population consists of small town dwellers, lake residents, and large and small farmers, both Amish and English. Out of many programs designed to serve this diverse group, the District's current business plan identifies the exclusion of livestock from at least 50 percent of county water bodies as a number one work priority. The District encourages improved live-

stock management in the county by employing a number of strategies; including cooperating with NRCS in ensuring best management practices are designed, constructed, and maintained according to nationally recognized engineering quality and standards.

In the south, **Posey/Vanderburgh/Gibson/Warrick and Clark** counties received the honors. Clark County won largely because of their 'Plant a Tree for You and Me' project. Melanie Davis, Clark County SWCD Administrative Coordinator, suggested the SWCD model their tree program after Plant a Million Trees project of the Hoosier Heartland RC&D and central Indiana SWCDs. The recommendation was well received, and the project to plant 100,000 trees by 2012 was born. It first began as a Clark County project, but soon expanded to multiple counties. The ICP members in Floyd, Jefferson and Scott counties, as well as Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D joined the group out of a common concern with improving air quality, fighting forest degradation, and increasing carbon sequestration.

ICP members toured areas in Clark County on November 13, viewing firsthand the results of the tree project. One of the first agenda items that day was to plant a tree in memory of NACD's immediate past president, Olin Sims of Wyoming, who died last year in a farm accident. It was a great tribute to a great conservationist.

(Pictured below, front row: Amil Kleinert, Supervisor Clark County SWCD Board; Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist; Jennifer Boyle, IASWCD Executive Director; and Beth Mason, North Central Region Representative, NACD. Back row: Pat Larr, NRCS District Conservationist; Melanie Davis, Clark County SWCD Administrative Assistant; Sam Hagest, Clark County SWCD Supervisor Chair; Phil Collins, Clark County SWCD Urban Conservation Specialist; Tami Kruer, Clark County SWCD Executive Director; Dana Coots, Clark County SWCD Supervisor; and Sylvia Hottel, Watershed Coordinator, Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project.



PERSONNEL UPDATE

Retirements:

Bruce Milligan, Soil Conservationist, Technology Staff, state office, effective 01/03/09
Lowell Hunter, Engineering Technician, Albion Technical Service Team, effective 01/03/09

Selections:

Frank Hodges, Engineering Technician, Salem Technical Service Team, effective 12/07/08
Troy Manges, District Conservationist, Plymouth Field Office, effective 12/07/08
Adam Jones, Soil Conservationist, Huntington Technical Service Team, effective 12/22/08
Scott Wagner, Agricultural Engineer, Greencastle Technical Service Team, effective 01/04/09
Ruth Hackman, District Conservationist, Salem Field Office, effective 01/18/09
Robert Miller, Engineering Technician, Lebanon Technical Service Team, effective 02/01/09
Mike Hughes, District Conservationist, Greensburg Field Office, effective 02/01/09
Kristen Vance, RC&D Coordinator, White River and Lincoln Hills RC&D Offices, effective 02/01/09

Featured Web Site—Purdue CAFO



<http://www.ansc.purdue.edu/CAFO/>

Purdue University recognized the need and developed a new Web site featuring scientific information about concentrated animal feeding operations to help people who make decisions about CAFOs. The Web site covers environmental issues, public health issues, social and economic issues, and general information. Paul Ebner, Purdue Extension expert in animal science and Web site operator, stated, “It’s designed to be a clearinghouse of unbiased scientific information covering different issues related to modern animal agriculture.”

Mark Your Calendar

December

12/18/08	Indiana Livestock Forum, Indianapolis
12/25-26/08	HOLIDAY—CHRISTMAS

January

- 01/12-14/09 IASWCD Annual Meeting, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Indianapolis
- 01/14-17/09 Nation No-Tillage Conference, Westin, Indianapolis
- 01/19/09 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. OBSERVANCE
- 01/21-22/09 Heart of America Grazing Conference, Holiday Inn, Columbus, IN

February

- 02/03/09 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 02/05/09 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 02/11/09 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 02/24/09 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 02/25/09 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 02/23-27/09 National Civil Rights Review

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

Helping People Help the Land