



**Hoosier**



**Headlines**

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## Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty

 We live in uncertain times where change is inevitable. The settling in of our new administration and the concurrent implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill have presented some challenges for us. At this time we still await Farm Bill program details and await our official fiscal year 2009 allocations.

With that said, I want to encourage Indiana NRCS employees to keep your focus on the basics. First and foremost is the importance of conservation planning. We know that a conservation plan, a roadmap for better management of natural resources, is the first step to getting conservation on the ground. Secondly, we need to focus on the importance of getting conservation practices applied through our technical and financial assistance. NRCS has a rich history of providing customers quality, scientific expertise in technical assistance, which continues today. Regarding financial assistance, we must help participants understand their contract obligations, cost recovery impacts, explain and obtain needed documents, and provide them with timely follow up to stay on schedule.

NRCS is a service organization, and we need to remember the overall and all encompassing importance of our customer service. I continually hear comments on how our customers value our assistance. You obviously show you care about them and about conservation for customers to respond this way. I reiterate what our new NRCS Chief Dave White stated, "Though a lot has changed in the past 30 years, the quality, competence, and dedication of NRCS employees continue to be first-rate." You do make a difference in conservation.



*Jane E. Hardisty*

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

**Rob Miller, Lebanon Tech Team  
Civil Engineering Technician**

**Q:** Rob, as a new NRCS employee, please tell us a little about your background. We know you are originally from Hamilton County, so you can't be all bad!

**A:** I grew up in Hamilton County on a small hobby farm raising goats, chickens, ducks, rabbits, and other things that happened to show up. My family also ran a greenhouse raising wholesale herbs for a short while, so my parents and the farmers around me definitely instilled into me a good work ethic.

That good work ethic helped me get through Ball State University to earn a degree in Natural Resource Management. During my college years I worked for IDNR at Mounds State Park as a Seasonal Interpretive Naturalist. This helped me get over any fear of talking to people or saying, "Well I don't know; that's a good question." From there I worked for a year in Porter County doing K-12 environmental education for the Recycling and Waste Reduction District and found out that teachers have a very difficult job. Then I was lucky enough to land in southeast Indiana serving as the Central Muscatatuck Watershed Coordinator for Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D. During that time I learned how well the RC&D works to bring together NRCS, Districts, ISDA, DNR, local interest groups, and the community at large to create solutions for natural resource concerns. I greatly appreciate all of the mentoring that the southeast NRCS employees gave me, including Terry Stephenson, Casie Auxier, Kristen Vance, Pat Larr, Jenny Vogel, and many others.

**Q:** What led you to work for NRCS?

**A:** Since college, I knew that I wanted to work in the natural resources field. As far as I can remember I have understood things better when my work results in a true tangible product. So while working on the watershed project I saw that NRCS did just that, and talking to landowners is key. And, well, I guess I am good at talking if nothing else!



**Q:** We understand that District Conservationist Pat Larr is somewhat of a mentor. How is that?

**A:** I have known Pat since my cousin moved down to SE Indiana after working with her on a 319 watershed grant. Pat allowed me to fish, hunt, and of course work on her farm. She introduced me to NRCS and taught me more about goat farming than I ever thought I wanted to know. The watershed project that I worked on included parts of Scott County, so Pat introduced me to conservation practices there, as well as the Earth Team. So are you getting a picture of my background yet? Yep, pretty scary. Seriously, I've learned a lot from Pat.

**Q:** Tell us about your love for fishing.

**A:** My love of fishing started the first time that my grandfather took me out, though I was too young to remember. The story goes that we were out in the boat fishing, and I suddenly looked up at my grandpa and said, "I'm done." Then I threw his rod and reel overboard. He must have given me a good scolding, because since that day I have not wanted to set down my rod and reel. I did have a short stint on the collegiate bass tour with the Ball State Bass Club, winning two tournaments (both on Summitt Lake where I grew up fishing with my grandpa). I now prefer to fish at a more leisurely pace just about anywhere.

**Q:** Do you have any other special interests?

**A:** Working, Earth Team, Arrow Head hunting, running/jogging, hiking, basketball, reading, and working on goat farms

**Q:** As the recently appointed Indiana Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator, do you have any specific goals or plans for the ETVs?

**A:** First, I plan to pull as much knowledge as I can from the "well-seasoned" employees to help me get my feet beneath me. They have all been a great help so far. The big change for Earth Team this year will be to get the volunteers using the online database to log their hours. One thing that I would like to see happen is younger people recruited to work with experienced employees who can pass down their knowledge. This of course means recruiting retirees, too!

## **Hoosier Happenings**

### **KUDOS to...**

**\*\*Hoosier Heartland RC&D** for seeking and receiving funding to expand the Rural Entrepreneur Network to 70 counties. —Jill Reinhart

**\*\*Indiana NRCS** for a job well done. During testimonies at the March 25th House Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research Public Hearing, the House investigator who is looking into WRP stated, “A few states did an excellent job in documenting the files, most notably **Indiana**, Nebraska, and Louisiana.” —Patty Lawrence, Director, Strategic & Performance Planning, NRCS

### **BARRY FISHER, LIVE!**

Barry Fisher had an opportunity on February 20th to do exactly what he does best...discuss no-till! This hot topic takes Barry to various events and field days where he explains the value of no-till with farmers and partners; but this was a different venue. Barry traveled to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and was interviewed for their Market Journal.

In the interview, Barry discussed the many benefits of cover crops on no-till land. Viewers can go to <http://marketjournal.unl.edu/archive/090220.shtml> to see Barry in action. The program was also aired on the UNL educational network and Dish Network.

### **IASWCD REQUESTS RFF NOMINATIONS**

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is requesting nominations for this year’s River Friendly Farmer (RFF) Award. The state recognition honors farmers who, through good production management, help keep Indiana’s rivers, lakes, and streams environmentally healthy and clean. “This award is a great opportunity to recognize and reward farmers who do an excellent job of managing their farms in an economically and environmentally sound way,” said Paula Baldwin, IASWCD president.

Over 400 farmers from across the state have been honored with this award since its creation in 1999. NRCS has been proud to be one of the sponsors of this award and supports the recognition of farmers who implement conservation practices on their land to protect our water.

Visit the IASWCD’s Web site at [http://www.iaswcd.org/district\\_tools/RFF/rffpage.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/district_tools/RFF/rffpage.html) for

an online brochure and application. Applications are submitted through a local SWCD, then sent to the IASWCD office by June 16, 2009. RFF award winners will be honored at a ceremony on August 19 at the Indiana State Fair.

### **NRCS GRAZINGLAND SPECIALIST SPEAKS AT SHEEP SYMPOSIUM**

Nearly 200 sheep and goat producers attended this year’s Indiana Sheep Association Symposium and Annual Meeting. The Symposium/Trade Show was held at the Hamilton County Fairgrounds on February 28. Attendees were able to judge both live animals and carcasses, sample from cooking demonstrations, and attend technical sessions.



Indiana NRCS Grazingland Specialist Susannah Hinds (pictured above) spent an hour discussing grazing management and fielding questions from attendees. Other speakers included: Dr. Scott Greiner of Virginia Tech, who discussed parasite control and reducing stress at lambing; Indiana’s new Director of Agriculture Anne Hazlett, who discussed her vision for Indiana agriculture; and Gary Truitt, founder of Hoosier Ag Today, who talked about the importance of communicating about animal agriculture.

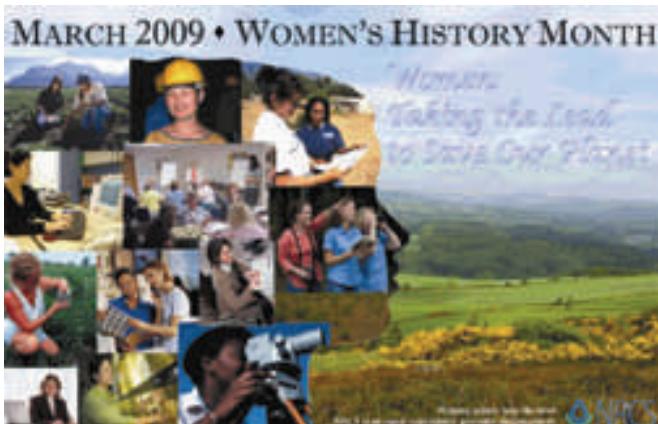
### **STEWARSHIP WEEK**

The 2009 National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship theme is: **“Dig It! The Secrets of Soil.”** (continued on page 4)

## —Special Emphasis— March—Women's History Month

March 2009 Women's History Month theme is "Women: Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet," which honors women who have shown leadership in preserving the natural environment and reversing ecological destruction. The spirit of the theme honors American women who are scientists, engineers, business leaders, writers, filmmakers, conservationists, teachers, community organizers, religious or workplace leaders, or others whose lives show exceptional vision and leadership to save our planet.

Christina Clark-Cuadrado, a soil conservationist from Pennsylvania, won the 2009 Women's History Month poster contest. Her poster portrays the importance of women in the research and application of practices that improve the condition, productivity, and sustainability of the world's resources. The woman's profile is composed of pictures of women from diverse backgrounds and occupations. The background landscape shows different land uses: urban, agricultural, and wildlife. It is intended to show how humans, animals, plants, and all life on Earth can have a better future thanks to the women who have devoted their lives to helping the environment.



Contact: Kamara Holmes, Indiana's Federal Women's Program Manager at [kamara.holmes@in.usda.gov](mailto:kamara.holmes@in.usda.gov)

## Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

Stewardship Week will be officially celebrated April 26 to May 3, 2009. This year, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) is challenging Districts to **dig a hole** and **plant a tree** during Stewardship Week in memory of NACD's past president Olin Sims. In his memory, the Indiana Conservation Partnership will plant a tree on the Indiana Farm Bureau grounds in Indianapolis.

### NEW WILDFLOWER PROJECT TAKES ROOT

Lincoln Hills RC&D wants to brighten up some areas this year through a wildflower planting program. Last summer the RC&D sponsored a wildflower pilot site along Interstate 64 at the Carefree exit. The success of the site has encouraged the RC&D to take on additional locations this year for wildflower plots and seek groups interested in planting and maintaining the sites. NRCS will provide the technical expertise. For more information, contact Betsy Wilkinson at the Lincoln Hills RC&D at [betsy.wilkinson@in.usda.gov](mailto:betsy.wilkinson@in.usda.gov) or 812/649-9316.

### POTAWATOMI WRP IN THE NEWS

Indiana's American Indian/Alaska Native Program Manager Kelley Barkell submitted an article that was printed in The Four Winds Newsletter, a national newsletter of the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANE). Her article featured the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians' work with NRCS and the St. Joseph County SWCD, and the subsequent Wetlands Reserve Program site on their land in northern Indiana. The Band is utilizing the NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program to help re-connect to its ancestral cultural uses and activities, restoring the land back to marsh areas and vegetation patterns that were formerly used to provide hunting, gathering, and fishing areas. Congratulations, Kelley, on telling this success story!

### **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](http://www.purdue.edu)

Indiana Conservation Partnership - [www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html)

## **Personnel Update**

### Reassignments

Lindsay Martinez, Soil Conservationist, from South Bend to Evansville Field Office, effective 03/15/09  
Rafael Vega, Soil Conservationist, from South Bend to Rockport Field Office, effective 03/15/09

### **Featured Web Site— Midwest Invasive Plant Network**

**<http://mipn.org/index.html>**



The Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN) was formed to help reduce the impact of invasive plant species in the Midwest. MIPN currently has five committees: Green Industry, Early Detection & Rapid Response, Education, Research, and Fundraising. Their Web site provides valuable information on invasive plants that includes downloadable publications and fact sheets.

## **Mark Your Calendar**

### April

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|----------------|--|
| 04/16/09       | Exploring Environmental Issues Workshop, Twin Lakes Lodge, Bloomington.<br>Contact: Hoosier Heartland RC&D at 317/290-3250 |
| 04/22/09       | EARTH DAY  |
| 04/23/09       | Pilot Forestry in the Farm Bill Workshop, NRCS State Office, Indianapolis  |
| 04/26-05/03/09 | 2009 NACD Stewardship Week, “Dig It! The Secrets of Soil”  |
| 04/28/09       | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette   |
| 04/29/09       | SW Area Meeting, Vincennes   |

**May**

- 05/04/09 Indiana NRCS All Employee Teleconference, 3:00 pm—4:00 pm
- 05/05/09 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 05/12/09 Backyard Conservation Workshop, Indiana Wildlife Federation, 4715 W 106th Street, Zionsville; 6:30 pm—8:30 pm. RSVP Hoosier Heartland RC&D at 317/290-3250 for free registration.
- 05/13/09 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 05/25/09 MEMORIAL DAY—HOLIDAY
- 05/26/09 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 05/27/09 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes

**June**

- 06/01/09 Indiana NRCS All Employee Teleconference, 3:00 pm—4:00 pm
- 06/02/09 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 06/10/09 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 06/24/09 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 06/30/09 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette

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