



Hoosier



Headlines

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Issue 22

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Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty

 Each August and September we find ourselves very busy with end of year activities. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have worked diligently this year in getting contracts written and the Farm Bill dollars obligated. These activities are critical to our mission.

 The first Conservation Stewardship Program sign-up has begun. With sign-up announced immediately after national training, we have faced many challenges in getting the program underway. I appreciate all the work you are doing and the extra efforts in getting producers signed up for this new program.

 The Indiana State Fair was extended this year to 17 days, which meant more shifts to cover at our exhibits. Our NRCS employees stepped up to get the job done. Thank you for volunteering to staff our booth in the Our Land Pavilion and for taking your time to work at the Pathway to Water Quality. Know that in doing so, you not only represented our agency, but you impacted the public with our conservation messages.

 Lastly, we are preparing to wrap up fiscal year 2009. We've certainly experienced a vast workload this year. Because of your conservation efforts, that workload equates to a lot of conservation on the ground!



Jane E. Hardisty

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

**Dave King,
Civil Engineering Technician**

Q: Dave, you've been around NRCS/SCS for quite some time. How did you get involved in conservation?

A: I grew up on a small piece of land in Vanderburgh County. My father operated a general/hardware store and rented our ground to a local farmer. I was always more interested in farming than the retail venture and remember riding with the equipment operator on a specific farming operation. Later, my parents "farmed me out" (excuse the pun) during summers to help with my uncle's 600-head dairy operation in Iowa. Working with the milk cows was a great experience and helped to relieve the overcrowding conditions at home with seven brothers and sisters and grandparents living with us from time to time.

I also had ambitions in forestry, but discarded them when a job as a district technician opened in Vanderburgh County. I jumped at the opportunity to work with a great SCS technician, Dave Stratman, and great soil conservationists, Darrell Rice and Leonard Jordan. Wow, it's really hard to believe 30 years has flashed by this fast!

I've had the pleasure of working with the most dedicated, professional, hard working conservationists in the nation. The ISDA and NRCS employees I work with have an urgent sense of drive to "geterdone," but at the same time have fun.

Q: We know you have another love, the Special Olympics (SO). Would you tell us how you and your wife are involved?

A: Connie and I are involved at several levels with SO but mostly at the area and state levels. Connie is the athletic director for Area 10 in SW Indiana, and we are co-directors for the track meet at Central High School in May. I assist her with other sports (e.g. bowling, basketball) throughout the year. We also serve as Area 10 directors, competition directors for the SO state basketball sectional, a venue captain for the state athletic games, and I am captain of the "Power Crew" at



the state games in Terre Haute. We are also very involved with SO fundraising and coordinate our local "Polar Plunge" in February. Yes, Connie and I plunge because we are "Freezin' for a Reason." We raised over \$23,000 this year just on the Area 10 plunge.

Q: Do you have a special SO moment to share?

A: All moments with SO are special. But the truly special ones are when you see an athlete with physical and intellectual impairments wholeheartedly try his/her best to run or walk 50 meters on a track with leg braces, arms and legs going everywhere, with mom and dad cheering them on. The look of determination (I can do this like any other regular athlete) they have on their face is indescribable. This usually triggers an involuntary response from my "water works department." Also, to see the intellectually challenged become fully independent, contributing members of society is an incredibly great feeling. Not long ago, this would

not have been the case because they were segregated and "locked away" from society.

Having the opportunity to be involved in SO with the love of my life, Connie, is special beyond belief.

Q: Conservation work and SO must take up most of your time, but do you have other interests or hobbies?

A: I love music and percussion. It started when I was five years old, beating my mom's pans with a wooden spoon. I have my mom to thank for renting my first snare drum and my dad for helping me buy my first set of drums. Over the years I have been in many types of music groups and bands, playing various styles: 50s-60s rock-n-roll, country, traditional Bavarian (umpa), to Celtic (bag pipes). I presently play in a local church group's big band, symphonic band, and in a local traditional British brass band that competes nationally. We will compete with other brass bands in the North American Brass Band competition next April. Also, Connie and I have traveled internationally with a musical mission group out of Atlanta, GA. The highlight of our first trip to Russia was a concert that was televised to the whole nation from the Russian International Hall of Music in Moscow. The Russian audience was great!

Hoosier Happenings

KUDOS to...

****Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D** for launching their new and improved Web site at <http://www.hhhills.org>.

****Kellee Barkell** for a great job of assisting us with WHIP enrollment. She matched us in her genuine interest and enthusiasm for the program and guided us through the application process. Her commitment to her job and its goals are to be commended.

— Landowner in Selma, IN

PHOTO CONTEST NEARS DEADLINE

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) invites you to submit photos for the 2009 Photo Contest. Contest winners will have their photographs framed and featured in the 2009 ISDA Photo Gallery Exhibit. All submitted photos will be considered for future ISDA publications, Web sites, and newsletters. Submit your photos by September 30, 2009. Go to <http://www.in.gov/isda/2497.htm> for information.

SWCS MEMBERS MEET ALONG WORLD FAMOUS DITCH

The banks of Shatto Ditch near Warsaw, Indiana provided the setting for the Hoosier Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society's summer meeting. Shatto Ditch, the most studied ditch in the world, is located in the watershed of the Tippecanoe River, which ranks in the top ten cleanest rivers in the U.S. Attendees learned that some areas in the watershed have ditches every 200 feet, because the river has one of the most significant populations of club shell mussels in the world.

Surveyors in Kosciusko County received a grant to develop the ditch into a two-stage ditch because it met certain criteria, such as year round access to the site made possible by grass strips on each side of the ditch. Since the ditch work began, researchers and The Nature Conservancy representatives have noted an increase in the wildlife population, including frogs and red-winged blackbirds.

SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION FIELD DAY HELD

Experts from NRCS, the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, and the University of Illinois participated at a Surface Mining Reclamation Field Day on June 25,

2009 in Cannelburg. The field day showcased how soil moved for mining then replaced after the coal is gone can return the site to productive farmland. A panel representing the mining industry, farm operators, and various agencies discussed problems facing mining reclamation activities. State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, Conservation Agronomist Barry Fisher, and District Conservationist Joe Williams participated on the panel. Field day participants took advantage of the opportunity to tour the Cannelburg Mine to observe its activities of mining coal and replacing soil.



Above: NRCS Cartographic Technician Alena Stephens and Engineering Intern Wes Bryan look out over the Cannelburg Mine

SUCCESSFUL IRM FIELD DAY

The Indiana Integrated Resource Management Program participants held their 7th annual field day this year at the Coon Farm in Tippecanoe County. A record breaking 65 individuals attended the session for information on what the Coon family has done to improve their grazing system. Margaret and Robert Coon gave an overview of their operation since they took over the family farm in 1988 and how they got involved in the IRM Program and have utilized EQIP funds to make improvements. Keith Johnson, Purdue Forage Specialist, discussed soil fertility issues and the importance of soil testing, as well as forage species selection. NRCS Grazingland Specialist Susannah Hinds discussed the use of Heavy Use Areas on the Coon's farm. This led to questions and discussions on other topics, including EQIP application, contracting and implementation process.

—Special Awards—

Congratulations to the **Hoosier Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society** for receiving an Outstanding Chapter Award at the International SWCS Conference in Dearborn, Michigan. The Hoosier Chapter strives for excellence in chapter governance and demonstrates a strong commitment to their strategic plan. Among their many activities in 2008, they hosted the East North Central Region Leadership Development Workshop at Pokagon State Park where five states sent attendees.

We also congratulate **NRCS Retiree Harold Thompson** for receiving the SWCS Fellow Award at the International SWCS Conference in Dearborn, Michigan. His 39 years with NRCS brought an understanding and appreciation of natural resources to an untold number of people through his devoted and enthusiastic service. A 19-year veteran on the NRCS Leadership Team, Harold accomplished much for Indiana agriculture, including helping recruit the best conservationists to the agency to further its goals.

NRCS Engineer Scott Wagner received the SWCS Conference Scholarship this year, offered by the Association of Retired Soil Conservation Service Employees. Scott, currently President-Elect of the Hoosier Chapter, had not attended the international conference before. He wanted to attend to learn more about conservation topics covered, network with other SWCS members, and improve his leadership skills.

Congratulations to **NRCS Soil Conservationist and Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager Rafael Vega**, recipient of the “Award of Excellence in Hispanic Community Outreach.” Rafael received the award at the 2009 NOPHNRCSE Annual Training Conference in Pennsylvania.

Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

NRCS PROVIDES BOOT CAMP

In July, 25 NRCS and partnership employees attended a week-long basic engineering training in Wabash. Twelve Indiana NRCS instructors, mainly engineers, trained participants on soils, hydrology, hydraulics, survey, layout, simple design, and other topics in the classroom and in the field. This class is a starting point for newer employees on the road to gaining engineering expertise. Engineering Boot Camp is free of charge to partnership employees and is organized and provided by the NRCS engineering staff every two to four years.

NRCS thanks the Wabash SWCD for their support and all the instructors who put a lot of effort into preparing and providing the training.



Above, left to right: Amanda Bough, Dubois Co. SWCD; Dan Davis, NRCS, Monticello; Megan Benage, Tippecanoe Co. SWCD; Rob Miller, NRCS, Lebanon.

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

Relocations and Reassignments:

Chad Schotter, Agricultural Engineer, from Greensburg to Huntington, effective 06/07/09
Mary Jane Deel, RC&D Assistant, Bedford to Salem, effective 06/07/09
Alyson Keaton, Agricultural Engineer, Rensselaer to Contract Specialist, State Office, effective 08/30/09

Retirements:

Dave Hague, District Conservationist, LaGrange, effective 06/30/09
Darrell Brown, District Conservationist, Bluffton/Decatur, effective 07/31/09
John Poenisch, Program Analyst, State Office, effective 09/03/09

PURDUE EXTENSION

Organic and Alternative
Livestock Production Systems
at Purdue University

The banner features four images: a cow grazing, a yellow chick, a group of sheep, and a pig.

Featured Web Site—<http://www.ansc.purdue.edu/poa>

Livestock producers who want to transition to organic production can get help from Purdue University's new Web site, *Organic and Alternative Livestock Production Systems*. The site provides a wealth of management and production tips for the livestock producer. At this site consumers can also learn about organic agriculture and find answers to various questions, such as "What does organic mean?" and "Where can I find locally produced meat?".

Mark Your Calendar

August

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| 08/25/09 | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette |
| 08/25/09 | Cover Crop Workshop/Field Day, Elwood. Contact Madison County SWCD at 765/644-4249 or CTIC at 765/494-1814. |
| 08/26/09 | SW Area Meeting, Vincennes |
| 08/26-27/09 | Water Quality Credit Trading Workshop, Crowne Plaza, Indianapolis Airport, Indianapolis. Contact CTIC at ctic@conservationinformation.org |

September

- 09/07/09 **LABOR DAY**
- 09/09/09 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 09/12/09 Nature Daze 2009 Field Day, Brown County. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at www.hhrbcd.org
- 09/14,21,28/09 Greening the City: Groundwater Issues in Urban Redevelopment Workshop, Marion County Public Library Services Center, Indianapolis. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at www.hhrbcd.org
- 09/15/09 Diversity Day, Prophetstown
- 09/15/09 Energy Conservation Workshop, Parke County Fairgrounds. Contact Sycamore Trails RC&D at 765/653-9785.
- 09/15-17/09 National Small Farm Conference, Hilton Springfield and Prairie Capital Convention Center, Springfield, Illinois. Contact conference chair Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at cvnghgrn@illinois.edu for more info.
- 09/29/09 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 09/30/09 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes

October

- 10/01/09 Exploring Environmental Issues: Places We Live Workshop, NREC at Ft Harrison, Indianapolis. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at www.hhrbcd.org
- 10/13-15/09 Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop, Santa Claus, Indiana. Contact Gary Struben or Ken Collins at the NRCS state office.
- 10/16/09 Home School Workshop, NREC at Ft Harrison, Indianapolis. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at www.hhrbcd.org
- 10/21-24/09 National FFA Convention, Indianapolis

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