



# Hoosier Headlines

A simple black outline map of the state of Indiana, centered on the page between the title and the subtitle.

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## In This Issue

- Heart to Heart with Hardisty
- Employee Spotlight—Keela Deaton
- Hoosier Happenings
- Partners' Web Links
- Cultural Diversity Day
- Personnel Update
- Featured Website—Healthy Watersheds
- Mark Your Calendar

## Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty

 Fiscal Year 2009 has been a very interesting year with many firsts including ARRA (Stimulus), the challenging budget, audits, a new Farm Bill, a new administration, and the new CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program). Even with the many changes and challenges, Indiana NRCS employees, along with our conservation partnership, still put more conservation on the ground than ever before. This result evidences the dedication to conservation ingrained in the Indiana NRCS employees and our conservation partners. **Thank you all for the great work you do.**



Fiscal Year 2010 already proves to be a year of opportunity. NRCS Chief Dave White is making significant changes with policies, tools, and technology that will benefit our field staff in doing the work, which ultimately will help us better serve our customers.

I will be reviewing these opportunities at the upcoming state office and area meetings. And, I look forward to visiting with you about 2010, which is already proving to be one of our best years yet!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane E. Hardisty".

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

**Keela Deaton,  
Soil Conservationist**

**Q:** Keela, would you tell us about yourself and your background?

**A:** I consider myself fortunate to be the fourth generation raised on the family farm. My family raises free range house veal and makes entirely way too much hay, and has recently incorporated an organic rotational dairy operation, which my brother took over. While at home my main responsibilities included feeding 350 head of veal calves and my 4-H livestock before going to school; and since my parent's motto was, "your livestock eat before you eat," I learned to eat a meal anywhere while doing anything. I was a 10-year member of 4-H and remain an advocate of it today. My life has always been intertwined with agriculture, and I can't imagine it any other way.

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

**A:** While at home, my neighbor down the road was Amy Lybarger, district conservationist in Whitley County. She played an instrumental part in introducing me to this agency while I was in high school. Terry Roser, CET on the Huntington Tech Team, allowed me to job shadow and survey with him for a day while on summer break. Let's just say for those who know Terry, I learned a lot that day. While in college, Amy emailed me the application for the SCEP program. I applied and spent two summers as a SCEP in Kosciusko County and came on full time with the agency in June of 2007, after graduating from Purdue.

**Q:** What has given you the most enjoyment in your NRCS work thus far?

**A:** Seeing the conservation on the land and knowing I played a role in getting it there. I enjoy meeting different producers and landowners, as each has taught me something different. The NRCS family in Indiana is absolutely great to work with, too. Everyone knows



how to have a good time while getting the job done at the same time, which makes a long day go pretty quick.

**Q:** We heard that you are part of a "royal" family. Would you tell us about it?

**A:** I've tried to keep this a secret for as long as possible! Using the term royal may be a little elaborate, too! I was the 2005 Miss Indiana State Fair Queen. During the summer of 2005 I traveled 8,500 miles going to 36 county fairs to promote the Indiana State Fair and was present for the duration of the State Fair which lasted 13 days. Let's just say I can smile and yawn at the same time and very few people know its happening simultaneously. I'm still not sure how I was selected for such an honorable roll. And everyone thinks I got a cool car to drive around all summer. I'm here to set the record straight. They gave me a mini van.

**Q:** What hobbies or special interests take up your spare time?

**A:** My horses are my life. You can usually find my husband and I on horse back somewhere accompanied by our dogs. My husband and I have traveled the country to buy horses, ride horses, or watch horse shows; and we are currently trying to establish a horse breeding operation. Since moving five hours from home, I enjoy spending time with my family as it is limited, but somehow I always end up helping with chores when I'm there!

**Q:** Lastly, have you set any goals for your career or otherwise that you can share?

**A:** I've always joked that someday I would be the state conservationist so I could tell someone to scrape the mud off their boots before getting in a government vehicle! I take things day by day, but I do know that I love my job and plan on making it a life long career. And when I have a family, I hope that I can instill in my children the same morals and values that were instilled in me through my family.

## **Hoosier Happenings**

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

**\*\*Neil Deckard and the NW Conservation Implementation Team** for the complicated engineering work installed on the land in Lake and Porter County. After I communicate a need with Neil, the surveys get done, perfect designs come in the mail, and farmers and contractors gladly accept the team's onsite help.  
—Bill Moran, Crown Point

**\*\*Josh Richardson** for his hard work in procuring the funding for the Greens Fork River Clean-up. He was so helpful and concerned with our town's needs, and handled this project with such professionalism. In May 2008, Greens Fork had serious flooding. Some residents were driven out of their homes. With the debris cleaned from the river and the banks stabilized, our residents won't worry about their homes flooding when serious rain storms are predicted. We appreciate the efforts of the USDA. Thanks to the engineering and to everyone who made this project happen.

—Buddy Strunk, Greens Fork Town Council President

**\*\*Bill Moran and his mobile office** for helping me, a licensed TSP, with my first nutrient and pest plan. I had a great experience working with Bill Moran and his mobile office. I can send an e-mail at 9 p.m. and have the information I need by 7 a.m. the next morning. I also met with Bill and my client. Bill was able to make copies right on sight and take care of the necessary paperwork. Having a mobile office for your DCs is a wonderful idea. It makes doing business with them much more efficient.—Brad Rocke, CCA/TSP

**\*\*Jerry Perkins, Vic Shelton, and Mike McGovern** for their work and commitment to the Pathway to Water Quality at the Indiana State Fair. They keep the area heading in the right direction and spend hours in preparation and planning; making it a "destination" stop for fair attendees year after year.—Susan Schultz

**\*\*Ignacio Avila** for help and expertise in planning and seeing through to completion my wetland restoration on my farm. It was well thought out and designed, and I am very happy with the results. I am confident it will be a permanent, successful wetland as it immediately started holding water without much rainfall. Your guidance and support throughout this

project exceeded all my expectations.

—Satisfied Customer in Marshall County

### **SE AREA PROVIDES PLANNING WORKSHOP**

This summer, southeast area NRCS and ISDA staff collaborated to provide a Partner Planning Workshop in Bartholomew County. Thirty 319 Watershed Project coordinators and technicians, SWCD technicians, area ISDA staff, and area IDEM watershed support staff gathered to discuss conservation planning concepts, resource concern delineation, and environmental compliance in technical assistance delivery. Participants completed classroom exercises and field based activities. The workshop successfully provided an overview of the tools and methods utilized to help planners ensure they are providing the highest level of service possible while meeting planning criteria. Several attendees have since begun formal work to attain conservation planning certification.

### **MANAGING MANURE**

The Multi-County Manure Management Field Day in Albion showed farmers how conservation and managing waste can help the land while making neighbors happy. Cooperative efforts from several northeastern Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D, NRCS, livestock groups and others gave field day participants the chance to hear speakers from Michigan State University and the livestock industry. Also, NRCS District Conservationist Russell Baker spoke on the process of enrolling in EQIP for waste application, and State Conservation Agronomist Barry Fisher (pictured below) discussed the benefits of no-till. Participants also watched demonstrations with two types of manure applicators.



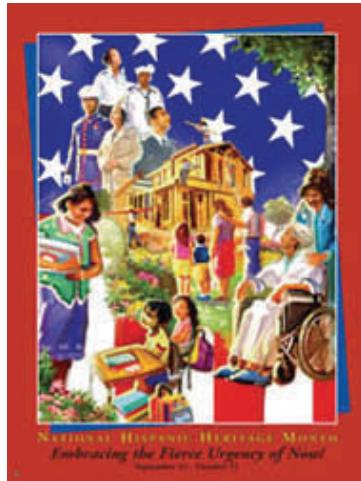
## —Special Emphasis— Hispanic Heritage Month

From September 15 to October 15, USDA observes National Hispanic Heritage Month; a time for us to reflect on and celebrate the contributions of people of Hispanic heritage to our country and the world. National Hispanic Heritage Month evolved from a congressional declaration of Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 and was originally celebrated during the week of September 15 to cover the dates of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico. In 1988, congress officially extended this observance to 31 days.

This year's theme, "Embracing the Fierce Urgency of Now," is consistent with USDA's diversity and inclusion mission to improve the representation of Hispanics at USDA and across the federal government. USDA is stronger because of the contributions of our Hispanic employees, customers and stakeholders whose individual achievements, insights, struggles and wisdom strengthen USDA's leadership on food, agriculture, and natural resources issues at home and abroad.

The NRCS 2009 Hispanic Heritage Month poster (above) was designed by Thomas Share, Watershed Planning Staff, Davis, California.

Contact: Rafael Vega, Indiana's Hispanic Program Manager, at rafael.vega@in.usda.gov



### **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)

## Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

### **FARMERS TAKE ON-LINE SURVEY**

Farmers are adopting best management practices in record numbers, according to a survey just released by the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) and The Fertilizer Institute. The survey was designed to gain a better understanding of environmental management measures on U.S. farms and barriers to adoption. Responses were received from nearly 2,000 farmers nationwide, representing 2.5 million acres of farmed cropland.

The survey results show that many farmers are actively engaged in conservation; in fact, conservation tillage was the most adopted practice among row crop producers. The top messages taken from the survey include:

- Having a conservation plan is a key predictor of additional conservation behavior. More than half of row crop producers who responded to the survey have fully adopted: Conservation Tillage, Nutrient Management, Grassed Waterways, and Integrated Pest, Disease and Weed Management.
- Farmers indicated that financial assistance is preferred over education and technical assistance, as related to best management practice adoption. The top four respected information sources cited are: Cooperative Extension, certified crop advisers, agribusiness, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- A positive correlation exists between large scale farms and adoption of conservation tillage and no-till; also showing that large landowners are more conservation-oriented than small landowners.
- About half of farmer-respondents conduct soil tests according to state recommendations.

**Based on this initial nationwide survey, CTIC will be conducting additional surveys that are state-specific, including one in Indiana.** The goal of the Indiana survey will be to measure adoption of conservation practices on Indiana farms and to better understand reasons for not adopting conservation. Please encourage farmers to take the on-line survey at:

[http://www.conservationinformation.org/?action=learningcenter\\_indianabmpsuey](http://www.conservationinformation.org/?action=learningcenter_indianabmpsuey)

## **—1st Annual Cultural Diversity Awareness Day—**

Indiana NRCS held its first annual Cultural Diversity Awareness Day in September at Prophetstown State Park and Historic Prophetstown. Over 100 Indiana NRCS employees from across the state joined in the celebration that the Indiana NRCS Civil Rights Committee sponsored.

Cultural Diversity Awareness Days highlight the history and culture of one of the special emphasis groups that make up the diverse heritage of our Indiana NRCS workforce. The focus of the annual event will rotate among the various groups, with the site locations being in areas with cultural significance to the specific group that is hosting the event.

This year, Indiana NRCS celebrated the American Indian. Prophetstown State Park and Historic Prophetstown was selected as the location because of its unique Indiana history in the Wabash River Valley Region. The park reflects the prairies of earlier times, American Indian settlements, and early farmsteads.

NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty kicked off the day with her opening remarks. Guest speaker Mark Parrish, tribal member and environmental coordinator for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, held the audience's attention with his presentation. Currently, the Pokagon Band is in its initial stages of rebuilding its nation. Parrish is working on improving water quality standards and fish and wildlife habitat on tribal lands, and he is also involved with land use planning. Parrish has worked with Indiana NRCS on a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) site for the Potawatomi. His detailed presentation provided data on the project's progress. Parrish said he looks forward to a continued partnership with NRCS.

NRCS District Conservationist Deb Knepp, of St. Joseph County, spoke briefly of the NRCS partnership with the tribe and of working with Parrish. Knepp agreed that the WRP project has been a successful learning experience and stated she looks forward to a continued relationship with the tribe, helping the tribe reach its environmental goals.

Jason Wesaw, a Potawatomi, Turtle Clan tribal member, gave a heartfelt presentation to the group. Wesaw worked as the Cultural Associate for the tribe until 2007, when he left to follow a new path. He spoke on the history and cultural significance of the

tribe, but emphasized the importance of his tribe moving forward in a respectful and thoughtful manner in its great time of change. He also took the time to thank all of the Indiana NRCS employees for their work to help the land. Wesaw then played a song on his hand drum that his grandfather had made and explained that the beat of the drum signifies the heartbeat. He then sang while playing the drum, entertaining the audience with a moving performance.

A brown bag lunch time provided the opportunity to network with employees from across the state; some meeting for the first time and other getting reacquainted.

The afternoon session started at Prophetstown's historic farmstead with a short walk to the Woodland Indian Settlement where Jessica Diemer-Eaton awaited the group. Ms. Diemer-Eaton, an historical interpreter, is currently an anthropology student at Indiana University where she studies Native women's status, gender roles, and family life. Through her presentation the group learned about the history of Prophetstown and what life was like for the Woodland Indians. She set up a great display of hunting and gathering tools, tools for everyday survival, and an assortment of different kinds of foods that were eaten by the Woodland Indians. She explained how the tools and food were made and used by the Indians.



*Above: IN Civil Rights Committee Member Brianne Lowe, Mark Parrish, Jane Hardisty, Jason Wesaw, and American Indian Special Emphasis Program Manager Kelley Barkell*

## **Personnel Update**

### Appointment Expiration:

Lisa Ledgerwood, Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D Assistant, effective 10/14/2009

## **Featured Web Site—Healthy Watersheds**

**<http://www.epa.gov/healthywatersheds>**



Interested in maintaining and improving water quality in your local community?

Visit the Environmental Protection Agency's Web site to learn about their new Healthy Watersheds Initiative. The site provides outreach tools; publications; examples of assessments; links to projects at the national, regional, state and local levels; approaches and benefits of conserving and protecting healthy watersheds; and much more.

## **Mark Your Calendar**

### October

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|-------------|---|
| 10/13-15/09 | Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop, Santa Claus, Indiana. Contact Gary Struben or Ken Collins at the NRCS state office.            |
| 10/14/09    | SE Area Meeting, North Vernon   |
| 10/16/09    | Home School Workshop, NREC at Ft Harrison, Indianapolis. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at <a href="http://www.hhrcd.org">www.hhrcd.org</a> |
| 10/21-24/09 | National FFA Convention, Indianapolis   |
| 10/26/09    | NE Area Meeting, Wabash   |
| 10/27/09    | SW Area Meeting, Vincennes  |
| 10/29/09    | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette  |

November

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|-------------|--|
| 11/05-06/09 | Regional Conservationist Tom Christensen's Indiana visit |
| 11/10/09    | Partnership Webinar                                      |
| 11/11/09    | VETERANS DAY   |
| 11/12/09    | SE Area Meeting, North Vernon                            |
| 11/17/09    | State Office Year-end Meeting, Indianapolis              |
| 11/26/09    | THANKSGIVING DAY   |

December

- |          |                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 12/01/09 | NE Area Meeting, Columbia City        |
| 12/03/09 | SW Area Meeting, Vincennes            |
| 12/08/09 | NW Area Meeting, Canal Center, Delphi |
| 12/09/09 | SE Area Meeting, North Vernon         |
| 12/25/09 | CHRISTMAS DAY                         |

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

*Helping People Help the Land*