



Hoosier



Headlines

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Indiana NRCS Newsletter

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Issue 24

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Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty



Fiscal year 2010 looks to be a great year for conservation. I am so pleased that we at NRCS have already received our initial 2010 budget and program dollars, which is much earlier than in past years. With our initial budget we can now make some decisions and start implementing our programs. Last year's financial audit and delay of budget caused us basically to cancel Christmas, so we are off to a much better start this year.



During this Christmas season, please contemplate the gifts and blessings you have received and be thankful for them. I hope you will consider giving something special to someone in need. You, our NRCS family and partners, give so much of your time and efforts daily in taking care of the land and our precious natural resources. I am thankful for you, and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Jane E. Hardisty

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

**Kris Vance,
RC&D Coordinator**

Q: To get to know our newest Resource Conservation & Development Coordinator, would you tell us about your background?

A: I grew up in South Jersey, about 10 miles east of Philadelphia. After high school I moved to Bloomington to attend Indiana University (Go Hoosiers!) and received a degree in Environmental Science and Management. I worked through college as a research assistant for a very small nonprofit organization and later served as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow for that same organization. After my AmeriCorps service, I worked on two watershed projects in Dearborn County, which is where I became familiar with and fell in love with the RC&D concept. In February 2009, I was lucky enough to join the RC&D family and have been having a great time ever since.

Q: Kris, how did an IU grad become interested in agriculture and NRCS?

A: This question, or at least a version of it, seems to be asked daily! My interest in agriculture was sparked by my general love for the environment. Growing up in New Jersey, people always assume that I grew up in a concrete jungle, which I would probably concede to today. But, I remember visiting our local farmers markets and peach orchards when I was younger. I was also really involved with our local parks system in high school which gave me firsthand knowledge of our natural resources and what needed to be done to protect them.

Q: You are currently coordinator for Lincoln Hills RC&D and White River RC&D. What do you find most interesting and challenging about your job?

A: It's definitely a unique situation. Many people may



not know this, but I'm working with the oldest RC&D in the nation and the youngest RC&D designated in Indiana, which means the Councils are in completely different stages. That, in itself, is one of the most challenging aspects of the position. I have to constantly stop and think how I'm going to approach these two separate Councils and help them accomplish their goals most effectively. Luckily, I have a great mentor that helps me through some of the more challenging aspects of this position and is a great ear when I have questions or concerns.

Q: Outside of the office, what activities or hobbies take up your spare time?

A: About four years ago, I started taking classes at a local martial arts academy. My husband thought it was another one of my many harebrained ideas and figured I would be moving on to my next venture in a few short months. It turns out that I really enjoyed it! I've not only been taking classes ever since, but have also been helping teach classes. I find it completely amazing and incredibly rewarding to see kids that are labeled as "troublemakers" come into this sport and leave as disciplined, mature young adults. When I'm not working or practicing martial arts, you can usually find me at home reading or painting. And, when I can tear my husband away from watching whatever sporting event is on, we enjoy hiking in our local state parks.

Q: Do you have any goals for 2010 that you would like to share?

A: Right now there seems to be a big movement towards locally grown/locally sold. White River RC&D has started working with four of our local markets and will continue that support in 2010. Likewise, we, as a nation, are becoming more concerned with energy resources. Lincoln Hills RC&D is really putting a lot of effort and emphasis on renewable energy sources and hopefully will be in the beginning stages of getting their "Energy Park" started—a sort of Children's Museum concept based around different energy sources.

Hoosier Happenings

KUDOS to...

****NRCS Indiana employees** for volunteering to staff the NRCS booth at the National FFA Convention. All who volunteered did an exceptional job of interacting and sharing their passion for the Agency's mission with the students and faculty. Their assistance was indispensable to the successful NRCS presence at this event. I appreciate their sacrifice of time and energy.
—Marvis Montesano, Human Resource Specialist, NRCS, Washington, DC

****NRCS SW staff** for partnering in the Camp Reveal project. The planning and preparation by Darrell Rice and Vic Shelton made the installation and training very efficient and professional. The service work that NRCS and SWCD did for Camp Reveal with the pipeline and pasture fence installation could ultimately affect thousands of people who attend Camp Reveal annually. Also, the safety and well being of the grazing animals will be much improved. Thank you for taking the time and effort and allowing NRCS to host Camp Reveal as a field training site for NRCS staff, thus resulting in another successful partnership with Vanderburgh County SWCD. —Davie Sue Wallace Litov, Vice Chair, Vanderburgh County SWCD

****Lisa Bolton** for her quick response on the 1006 packet (Farmland Policy Protection Act) for the City of Madison Water Project. The quick turnaround of the packet resulted in a thank you note to State Conservationist Hardisty from Daniel Wright, CEO of FPBH, Inc. He stated, "This project will be able to move much quicker as a result of your efforts."

ETV Student Embraces NRCS' Technology

Earth Team volunteers can often be found at making copies and folding brochures, but the Crown Point field office took utilizing the Earth Team program to a whole new level last year. District Conservationist Bill Moran hit the Earth Team jackpot when he brought on Purdue University student Nyssa Lilovich.

Lilovich contributed 129 skilled volunteer hours to the Crown Point field office, serving both Lake and Porter Counties last year. Lilovich contributed to core workload activities, such as Toolkit planning, including providing accurate maps and electronic documentation. Her attraction to Arc-Map and adaptation to Mobile Office technologies allowed her to contribute

to mission critical activities. Since April 2009 Lilovich has accomplished the following technical tasks:

- Created 10 new Toolkit folders and developed Arc-Map plan and soil maps for the Conservation Compliance status reviews.
- Processed and mailed the initial letters for the Conservation Compliance status reviews.
- Served as a team member on the conservation tillage transects in Lake and Porter Counties.
- Obtained needed forms with signature of participants in the development of the 2009 WHIP and EQIP Contracts.
- Used the Garmin GPS unit to field mark gullies, transferred data to Arc-Map and buffered the gully center lines to show the exact locations and acreages of planned grassed waterways under EQIP and CRP.
- Surveyed a grassed waterway with the district conservationist.
- Assisted with loading new CSP farmer application data into the Mobile Office computer while the district conservationist discussed the program with the farm operator in his kitchen.

In her own words, "the NRCS work is quite addicting." Lilovich is hoping to work towards a career with NRCS.



Above: Earth Team Volunteer Nyssa Lilovich with student trainee James Rodriguez embark on Lake and Porter County transects using the Pilot Mobile Office technologies to track their course and record data.

(more Hoosier Happenings on page 4)

—Special Emphasis— American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month

USDA and the Nation observes November as American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month. The month is celebrated to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of the American Indian and Alaska Native people. The heritage month enhances our efforts to honor tribal sovereignty by working on a Government-to-Government basis with American Indians and Alaska Natives. We honor the rights of Indian tribes and work to protect and enhance tribal resources.

NRCS created a poster to illustrate this year's theme, "Our Land, Our Animals, Our People, We are One." The 2009 NRCS American Indian Heritage poster was created by the artwork of Alaska Native Mr. Andrew Abyo. His artwork, "We Are All Connected," depicts the relationship between land, animals, and people.



Contact: Kelley Barkell, American Indian/Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program Manager on the Huntington Tech Team at kelley.barkell@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

Indiana Conservation Partnership:
www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html

Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

NRCS Assists Afghan Agriculture Team

The Indiana National Guard is working with the Afghan government to provide agricultural training. Thirty-five Indiana National Guard members, selected based on their personal and professional experience, trained for over a year in preparation of their deployment to Afghanistan. Purdue University provided a week-long formal course on various agricultural topics. During that week NRCS Northwest Grazingland Specialist Susannah Hinds taught a session on Range Management. "It was difficult to narrow the broad topic of Range Management to only two hours," said Hinds. "The main thing I wanted to point out was the vast difference they would encounter between life in Indiana and the norm of range country, and I wanted to provide them with a list of management tools that they could implement."

This agriculture development team is now in Afghanistan, and future teams will be deployed from around the United States. Each team will be filtered through Camp Atterbury, near Columbus, and will take the same week-long course provided by Purdue University. Hinds added, "I look forward to opportunities to help with this training in the future. It was humbling to be amongst these brave individuals who are willing to help in an area dealing with conflict."

Indiana Hosts Forest Soils Workshop

The 29th Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop was held in October in Santa Claus, Indiana. The 84 attendees from five states represented three federal agencies, three state agencies, three universities, two county departments, and many consulting foresters and soil scientists. Field visits included best management practice demonstrations, timber stand improvement, oak regeneration, control of invasive species, mulch production, carbon sequestration, WRP tree plantings, timber sales, pine harvest, private forest management, and examination of soils with fragipans and soils formed in interbedded shale and sandstone. The workshop also included tours of the Rickenbaugh House at Celina Lake and the St. Meinrad Archabbey. Sponsors included NRCS, U.S. Forest Service, IDNR, Purdue University, Lincoln Hills RC&D, Indiana Association of Professional Soil Classifiers, Hoosier Chapter of the SWCS, and Indiana Society of American Foresters. Next year's workshop will be held in London, Kentucky. Indiana will host the workshop again in 2015.

More Hoosier Happenings

Grazingland Specialists Take Opportunity to Help in Honduras

“Every once in a while an opportunity comes around that is really hard to say no to; and if it involves providing service with a little adventure, then everyone is blessed,” said Grazingland Specialist Victor Shelton. This was the case when Jerry Perkins and Victor Shelton were asked to develop a grazing system on a school farm in the Orlancho territory of Honduras.

The farm was operating a small, mainly confinement dairy; milking about 140 cows, running about 600 beef brood cows, experimenting with about 30 water buffalo, and running about 400 stockers. The dairy was not really making any money and the system was very ineffective. After Shelton and Perkins made three trips to this farm, the farm workers were understanding more and more about how to manage forages. Also, fences were built, waterlines laid (some by hand), and some improved forages were planted.

The dairy cows are now getting access to new pasture everyday, inputs have been lowered, and more of the manure is being direct deposited where it can be used very quickly.

The Honduras team faced several challenges, one being water source. The soils are very tight clay loams with shallow gravel in the creek and river bottoms. Drainage is a problem...not enough on top and too much underneath. The beef cows are now being rotated, and a watering system is slowly being developed. Water is pumped from two deep wells via power from a hydro-plant or generator to a water tower and gravity fed back to the school and farm.

Shelton and Perkins discovered that finding adapted legumes to use for a good nitrogen source is a problem. Nitrogen is very expensive in Honduras, and the tropical grasses are very competitive. Other challenges they faced were getting more energy into the sward for the lactating dairy, and sometimes just finding and getting parts needed to do the work.

Will Perkins and Shelton make another trip to Honduras? You’ll just have to ask them.

Farmland Protected by RC&D Conservation Easement

Billy and Diana Clingan have chosen to protect 27 acres of their farm from future development by placing the acreage in a conservation easement with the Wood-Land-Lakes Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D). A conservation easement is a voluntary, written agreement between the landowner and the RC&D in which the landowner has decided to restrict the use of the land. Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D is obligated to monitor the property to be sure that that land is not being developed or divided. The RC&D will ensure that the Clingan’s wishes are upheld indefinitely, even if the land is sold to someone else. This is the second of such easements the Clingans have donated to Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D; the first was several years ago when they chose to restrict development on 115 acres in Steuben County.

The Clingan’s property is currently being farmed and can continue to be farmed under the covenants of the conservation easement agreement. “What this means is, that long after we are all gone, the land will continue to be used for agricultural purposes and not have become a site for residential, commercial, or business development,” said Kathy Latz, Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D Coordinator.

Diana Clingan states, “Everybody wants a house in the country; but, if everybody puts a house in the country, you’re just in the suburbs. We need to preserve the rural nature of what we have.” The Clingans hope their example of permanently preserving their farm from development will be an inspiration to others to do the same.



Personnel Update

Retirement:

Pat Larr, District Conservationist, Clark and Scott Counties, effective 12/03/2009

Dave Fellows, Soil Conservationist, Salem Tech Team, effective 01/02/2010

Resignation:

Theresa Tuggle, RC&D Assistant, Four Rivers RC&D, effective 11/22/09

Jennifer Knable-Thompson, District Conservationist, Corydon, effective 01/01/10

Indiana NRCS Service Awards

35 Years

Todd Ames, Soil Conservationist, Rensselaer

Barry Bortner, Resource Management Specialist, Ft Wayne

Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist, Indianapolis

Jerry Lake, Engineering Technician, Albion

Patricia Larr, District Conservationist, Charlestown

Richard Lyles, Engineering Technician, Greensburg

Randall Moore, RC&D Coordinator, Winamac

Charles White, Engineering Technician, Princeton

30 Years

Jeffrey Coats, Area Program Specialist, Vincennes

David Hines, Area Program Specialist, Ft Wayne

Randy Maggart, District Conservationist, Winchester

Juliana McLemore, District Conservationist, Rensselaer

William Moran, District Conservationist, Crown Point

Darrell Rice, District Conservationist, Evansville

Albert Tinsley, Wetlands Coordinator, Rensselaer

Joe Updike, District Conservationist, Wabash

Gail Voiles, Accounting Technician, Indianapolis

25 Years

Tonie Endres, Soil Data Quality Specialist, Indianapolis

Karen Hauer, Wetlands Coordinator, Salem

Brenda McGovern, Field Office Assistant, North Vernon

20 Years

John Allen, Soil Scientist, Indianapolis

Karen Castle, Budget Analyst, Indianapolis,

Joe O'Donnell, District Conservationist, Delphi

Michael Wigginton, Soil Data Quality Specialist, Indianapolis

10 Years

Rita Becker, District Conservationist, Rockport

Michael Hughes, District Conservationist, Greensburg

Kimberly Megel, Soil Conservationist, Greensburg

Kevin Norwood, Soil Scientist, Indianapolis

Kenneth Streett, Cartographic Technician, Indianapolis

Gary Warring, Area Program Specialist, Lafayette

Cory Wolfe, Engineer, Vincennes

Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist, Indianapolis

5 Years

Justin Bender, Soil Scientist, Plymouth

Todd Bisner, Engineering Technician, Rensselaer

Zamir Libohova, Soil Scientist, Lafayette

Timothy Schwiipps, District Conservationist, Versailles

Trevor Shepard, Engineer, Princeton

Mark Your Calendar

December

12/25/09

CHRISTMAS DAY

January

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 01/01/10 | NEW YEAR'S DAY |
| 01/01-03/10 | Washington County Program Review |
| 01/08/10 | Soil and Water Conservation Society Council Meeting, Indianapolis |
| 01/11/10 | State Soil Conservation Board Meeting, Indianapolis |
| 01/11-13/10 | IASWCD Annual Conference, Hyatt Regency Downtown, Indianapolis |
| 01/18/10 | MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S BIRTHDAY |
| 01/26/10 | Conservation Day at the Statehouse, Indianapolis |
| 01/27/10 | SW Area Meeting, Vincennes |

February

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| 02/15/10 | PRESIDENTS' DAY |
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Note: For a listing of Natural Resources Education Center workshops, go to www.in.gov/dnr/nrec

Helping People Help the Land