



Hoosier



Headlines

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Issue 25

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Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty

 This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service. NRCS is gearing up for celebrations nationwide in honor of our 75 years of serving the nation. We should be very proud of our agency's accomplishments in conserving soil, protecting water quality, and enhancing wildlife habitat.



 After about ten years of planning and restoration, the Goose Pond WRP complex is completed. With a 7,200-acre easement, Goose Pond is the largest Indiana Wetlands Reserve Program project and one of the largest in the nation. I look forward to recognizing the hard work of our NRCS employees at the completion celebration and sharing with partners and the community the benefits of this impressive restoration.

 The program obligation date of April 1 has been set for many of our programs, and this means our Indiana NRCS employees are working diligently to meet this action date. I want to express my appreciation to you as you work with landowners regarding resource concerns and provide them with quality assistance. Thanks for all you do.

Jane E. Hardisty

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

**Duane Riethman,
NE Area Engineer**

Q: Duane, you are fairly new to Indiana NRCS. Would you mind sharing your background with us?

A: I have been in Indiana since August of 2008. I still reside in Van Wert, Ohio which is just across the state line. Previously in Van Wert I worked at NRCS as an Agricultural Engineer for the Northwest Ohio area and served as the Project Engineer for the Little Auglaize River PL-566 Watershed project. Prior to that, I held engineering positions at the London field office and Circleville area office in Ohio.

Q: You have a long history with NRCS. How did you get your start?

A: I started as a student trainee at the state office in Columbus, Ohio. I was a student at Ohio State in Agricultural Engineering and was looking for summer employment and saw the advertisement from the then Soil Conservation Service (SCS). I applied, got the job, and never thought at the time this would become my career. I went to college anticipating I would somehow be involved with farming, but not necessarily in the conservation area. My brothers took over the family farm, but I would say that is where I got my real start. I remember as a high school student working with our local SCS office on applying conservation practices on our farm. Drainage was big at that time, but we also were starting into no-till planting.

Q: How does your work in Indiana compare to Ohio? (It has to be more fun!)

A: The engineering work is very comparable, but meeting all the new people and learning the different state and local structures has added some excitement

and energy to the job. The potholes and very diverse soil structure of Northeast Indiana has presented some interesting challenges. Everybody in northeast Indiana has already learned my dislike for muck soils. Also, I have enjoyed poking fun at all the Boilermaker fans. Makes wearing my scarlet and gray all the more enjoyable.

Q: Oh, yes, I can relate to the poking fun part... Now tell us, do you have any hobbies or activities that take up your spare time?



A: Spare time? Does that luxury exist? In between work and family commitments, I do try to play some golf, run a few 5K and 10K races, and ride my bike to stay in shape. During the winter months, I officiate high school boys' and girls' basketball games. I also try to assist our high school athletic boosters and church on whatever committee or event that is needed.

Q: We've learned that your daughters run cross country and were competing for state title recently. What was the outcome?

A: My two oldest daughters (I have three daughters ages 18, 15, and 10) were both on the varsity squad this past fall. They did quite well, winning the conference title, winning district, and then coming in second at the regional meet to qualify for the state meet. The state meet did not turn out so well (finishing 12th out of 16 teams), but they had the opportunity to run in front of the big crowds and against the best in the state. It was enjoyable for my wife and I to cheer them on and see them receive the rewards for all their hard work and dedication.

Interview by Pam Davidson
Public Affairs Specialist

Hoosier Happenings

KUDOS to...

****Barry Fisher** as recipient of the 2009 No-Till Innovator Award for Research and Education. Barry does an excellent job educating farmers across the U.S. on no-till farming. People who work with no-till respect Barry and commend him on advancement of no-till farming. I have gotten a world of super information on No-Till from him and his presentations at workshops and other events. Indiana NRCS is fortunate to have a person of Barry's character. He not only has education and intelligence, but he has integrity, commitment, and he is caring. —Butch Fisher, RC, Douglas County SWCD, Tuscola, IL

First Minority Farmer Conservation Achievement Award Presented

NRCS Indiana has initiated the Indiana Minority Farmer Conservation Achievement Award, designed to give recognition to an individual for outstanding achievement in planning and implementing conservation practices on the land. The award is also given to increase awareness within the minority community of conservation efforts made by their peers and to encourage greater participation in conservation efforts.

The recipient of the first annual Minority Farmer Conservation Achievement Award was Erik Strass. Mr. Strass was presented the award to recognize his efforts to conserve soil, improve water quality, and provide habitat for wildlife by converting marginal cropland to 6.4 acres of riparian buffers and 2.4 acres of upland wildlife habitat. He was also proactive in using best management practices to manage 17.4 acres of woodland by applying timber stand improvements and harvesting crop trees to open up stand for regeneration of younger saplings. Congrats to Mr. Strass!

Grazing Conferences Held in Indiana

NORTH: The ninth annual Northern Indiana Grazing Conference was held at the Shipshewana Antique Auction Barn on February 5. The event featured speaker Gary Zimmer of Madison, WI. Zimmer is a farmer, agri-businessman, and educator dedicated to promoting biological, sustainable agriculture. He addressed the conference on "Balanced Soil Fertility" and "Building the Community with Family and Local Foods."

The conference included a local dairy farmer panel discussing aspects of management intensive rotational grazing, and another farmer panel speaking on the importance of good financial record keeping procedures on the family farm. Other sessions featured topics on grazing sheep, horses, and beef cattle. About 700 participants attended the event from all over the central United States. An evening session focused on direct marketing of products right off the family farm with about 250 attendees, many who were not involved in the daytime sessions.

The Northern Indiana Grazing Conference is organized and held each year by a local committee whose members are committed to promoting management intensive rotational grazing and strong family farms. NRCS, LaGrange County SWCD, and Purdue Cooperative Extension Service are involved in the conference each year.

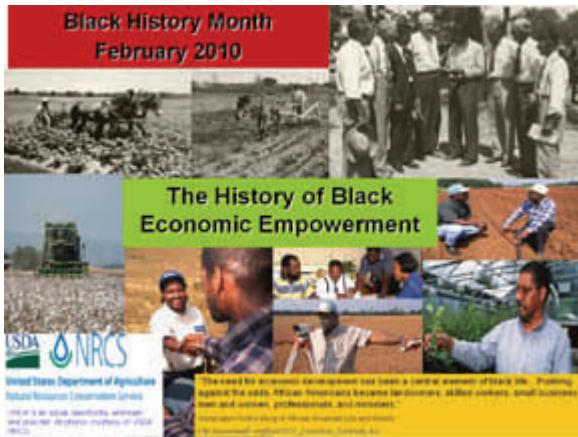
SOUTH: The first Southern Indiana Grazing Conference was held on February 11, 2010 near Odon, IN. The 180 farmers in attendance learned how and why grazing management is important to the family farm.



Samuel Fisher, organic farm operator of Marshall, IN, kicked off the day. Jerry Perkins, NRCS grazing land specialist, spoke from the heart about his family's transition from a conventional confinement dairy system to a grass-based dairy. Alan Yegerlehner, of Clay City, IN, spoke on his once a day milking dairy and how he markets products directly. Rich Hollinger, of Attica, IN, discussed his Hoosier Grassfed Beef operation. The last speaker was David Kline, an Amish farmer, naturalist, and writer from Mt. Hope, OH. Kline reflected on our roots and how we need to remember to help make our future better as the various cultures have similar values, hopes, and aspirations.

—Special Emphasis— Black History Month

February is recognized as Black History Month, celebrating the history and accomplishments of African American citizens. This year's theme, The History of Black Economic Empowerment, provides an opportunity to explore the history of Black Economic Empowerment in America from early in the 20th century to the present day. African Americans continue to open the doors of opportunity for successive generations and explore racial uplift and economic development for all races.



NRCS Chief Dave White said, "The NRCS employees are a very diverse group. In some respect, it is the agency's workforce diversity that is one of our strengths. It is imperative that we respect the heritage and culture of the people we work with daily. Through understanding the differences in each culture, we can work together to improve service to our customers and employees."

Contact: Benny Clark, Jr., Black Special Emphasis Program Manager at benny.clark@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.)

Black History Month Celebration

Black History Month was celebrated at the state office on February 22, beginning with a delicious luncheon provided by USDA employees and awards given to Black History Quiz winners Kris Vance and Stacy Shell. State Conservationist Jane Hardisty also received an award for her continued support of the Black Emphasis Program. Maxine Brown, of Leora Brown School in Corydon, IN, gave an update on the Indiana African American Heritage Trail. The event ended with a drama re-enactment of the case of Mary Bateman Clark vs. General Washington Johnston, a famous case in 1821 that established slavery and indentured servitude were against the law in Indiana. Ethel McCane, Mary Clark's descendent, delivered the historical re-enactment.



(Pictured left to right: State Conservationist Jane Hardisty; actress Ethel McCane; Black Special Emphasis Program Manager Benny Clark, Jr.; and Maxine Brown)

ETV Sets Lofty Goal

The Earth Team Volunteer (ETV) Program provides a chance for volunteers to help accomplish the NRCS mission of "helping people help the land." In Indiana, over 920 volunteers gave more than 17,300 hours last year. For fiscal year 2010, the ETV Program coordinators have set a goal for 100 percent field office participation, compared to 37 percent in 2009. These coordinators are responsible for processing applications, tracking volunteer hours, and awarding outstanding service. Area coordinators are: Michaela Stout, NW; Kevin Shide, NE; Michelle Phillips, SW; and Kris Vance, SE. Rob Miller is the Indiana Earth Team Coordinator. Contact your area coordinator or Rob Miller for more information.

Personnel Update

Transfer:

Steve Baldwin, Contract Officer at state office, transfer to Dept. of Defense, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, effective 02/27/2010

Featured Web Site—75th Anniversary

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/anniversaryccc/ccc.html>

This March NRCS will celebrate its 75th Anniversary. The featured Web site will take you to a page of history, remembering and honoring those who were conservation pioneers and who carved the way for the agency today. The Civilian Conservation Corps played a critical role in the history of the Soil Conservation Service, predecessor to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Hugh Hammond Bennett, first director of the Agency and remembered as Father of Soil Conservation



Mark Your Calendar

February

02/24/10 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes

02/25-26/10 Conservation Tillage and Technology Conference, Ohio Northern University, Ada, Ohio. Info at <http://fabe.osu.edu/ctc/>

March

- 03/02/10 NE Area Meeting, Wabash
- 03/02/10 Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting, Hamilton County 4-H Exhibition Center, Noblesville; 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. RSVP 317/773-2181, Ext. 101.
- 03/10/10 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 03/31/10 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes

April

- 04/06/10 NE Area Meeting, Columbia City
- 04/07/10 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 04/14/10 SE Area Meeting, North Vernon
- 04/25-05/02/10 NACD 2010 Stewardship Week, “Conservation Habits=Healthy Habitats”
- 04/27/10 NW Area Meeting, Lafayette
- 04/28/10 SW Area Meeting, Vincennes

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

Helping People Help the Land