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Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty

 It is good to be back home again in Indiana after my detail in our national headquarters in Washington, D.C. I had the privilege of working directly with Chief Dave White and other leaders in reviewing our allocation process; specifically, how headquarters receives our budget from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Then, I worked on developing a new process on how states will receive budgets from headquarters, which would be based on resource concerns rather than the quantity of natural resources. I look forward to this change taking place in the future that should be beneficial to Indiana.



 Recently, Indiana NRCS hosted two visitors from national headquarters. Amie Brown, a new employee on the Legislative Affairs staff, visited Indiana to learn about what we do in the field. Andy Ertel and Jeremy Ingmore made themselves available to provide this training. They did a great job, which Amie and I greatly appreciated.

Our second visitor was Joe Montoni, NRCS examiner with OMB. Joe toured Indiana for three days to become aware of how NRCS provides technical assistance and to better understand the value of funding for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). I thank Kerry Smith, Sam St. Clair, Kevin Shide, Matt Jarvis, William Elliott, and Tim Kiste for taking their time to clearly and successfully provide this information.

Jane E. Hardisty

****** Employee Spotlight ******
**Jennifer Chen,
Resource Conservationist**

Q: Being the ‘new kid on the block’ as resource conservationist at the state office, our readers would like to get to know you. Would you give us a little background?

A: I am originally from Indiana, but moved to Ohio in 2002 to work with the NRCS. I started as a soil conservationist and worked in the field for six years, where I was very committed to assisting our customers with conservation planning and implementation. I then worked in the state office in Columbus, Ohio for two years and served as the Ohio NRCS Toolkit Coordinator/Business Tools contact before making the move back home to Indiana.

Q: How did you become interested in working for NRCS?

A: I credit the fantastic agronomy department at Purdue, although my interest in natural resources goes back further than that. Growing up in northwestern Indiana, I was aware of the land use pressures that exist up there, and how the area’s industries can impact our resources—particularly related to Lake Michigan. I cared about these issues but didn’t think it was something I could consider for a career. Then I went to Purdue. Although majoring in a different field, I began taking courses in the department of environmental sciences, agronomy, forestry, etc. and became “hooked.” I switched majors my sophomore year and completed my B.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Science, then earned my masters in Soil Science in 2002.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: My husband is a Hoosier from Kokomo, Indiana. We have a three year old son, Isaac, and four month old twin boys—William and Henry.

Q: Other than your children, do you have any special hobbies or outside interests?

A: Ha! Do cooking and cleaning count? Seriously, my husband and I both enjoy camping, hiking, and fishing. When time allows again, I hope to get back to knitting—a hobby of mine I learned from my late grandmother and hope to pick up again.

Q: What has been your most enjoyable experience working for NRCS?



A: It is difficult to choose just one, so I will provide two. First, I worked with a beef producer extensively in my first field office. He attended a grazing school that I held and became interested in Management Intensive Grazing. Over the next couple of years we worked together to improve his pastures and set up a long-term plan for rotational grazing. I would visit the farm to discuss his progress, and he was comfortable coming in to the office to ask questions, etc. Not only did we do this together, but he also started to participate in other conservation programs we had to offer.

My second experience has to do with assisting my district conservationist at a conservation camp. This camp was held annually and provided a way to teach urban/suburban elementary school age children about the field of natural resources. I remember it fondly as a way to share my passion with these children and hopefully get them excited about our natural resources. Even if they don’t enter the field, they may consider planting native species, conserving water, recycling, etc.

Q: Would you share any future goals that you have set for yourself?

A: I take great pride in the fact that our agency’s mission includes high quality, productive resources. Although I am not out in the field working one on one with producers, I feel the field staff carry the most critical jobs. They represent our agency every day, and they ARE the folks that put the conservation on the ground. Although it may sound cliché, I hope to remain in Indiana and work to help our agency continue to deliver the best product (conservation) in the most efficient way possible!

Hoosier Happenings

KUDOS to...

****Elise Brown** for receiving a first place blue ribbon for the second consecutive year for the college open division in photography at the Indiana State Fair. Elise, a summer intern for Public Affairs in Indiana, also received a special judges recognition for this year's photo. Congratulations, Elise, and to proud dad, Andrew Brown, NRCS soil conservationist in Covington!



Farmer of the Year Applications Due

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts announced that **September 1, 2010** is the deadline for submitting applications for the Conservation Farmer of the Year award. New this year, applications can be obtained and filled online at http://www.iawcd.org/district_tools/pdfs/CFOYapplicationform_distributed.pdf. The award will be presented in January at the Indiana SWCD Annual Conference .

Conservation at Work in Montgomery County

Over two inches of rain fell on Montgomery County on June 9, 2010. According to Montgomery County SWCD Technician Greg Woods, this intense rain happened during a time in the growing season when the soil is most susceptible to erosion, having just been planted. However, conservation practices in the area are proving successful. A picture is better than a thousand words, and this one taken 12 hours after the storm shows nearly clear water cascading over an alu-

minum toewall structure. The drainage area upstream of this structure is 600 acres. Woods said the main



conservation practices in this watershed are no-till and grass waterways, resulting in no visible off-site siltation or non-point pollution.

Pasture Walk Held on Bison Ranch

A Pasture Walk was held this summer at Cook's Bison Ranch in LaGrange County. The pasture walk regulars and National Bison Producers Association members present totaled nearly 130 attendees. Grazing Specialist Jerry Perkins assisted with the event and answered questions during a discussion period. District Conservationist Rick Duff and student intern Kerry Nielsen were also in attendance, which was great training for Kerry. After the pasture walk, Martin Franke, conservation technician/educator with LaGrange County SWCD, commented on the good working relationship between SWCD and NRCS in northeast Indiana. This pasture walk exemplifies the conservation partnership at work.



(more Hoosier Happenings on page 4)

Special Award to Victor Shelton

This summer at the American Forage and Grassland Council Conference in Springfield, Missouri, an Indiana NRCS employee received top honors. Grazing Specialist/Agronomist Victor Shelton, from the Southwest Area Office in Vincennes, was awarded the honor of NRCS National Pastureland Conservationist of the Year. Dennis Thompson, NRCS National Range and Grazing Land Ecologist, presented the award and spoke of Victor's achievements.

Among his achievements, Victor has written numerous grazing articles for newspapers, publications, and magazines; has helped organize multiple grazing tours and conferences; and has been a guest speaker at many events. One of Victor's passions for the past 17 years has been a grazing display at the Pathway to Water Quality exhibit at the Indiana State Fair, which shows how properly managed grazing has positive effects on the environment.

Victor has conducted training sessions at national, state, and local levels on all aspects of grazing and has assisted on several national projects. He has developed several engineering programs for grazing practices, which have greatly improved the accuracy and appearance of agency designs, plus the efficiency with which the designs are completed and provided to the client.

Victor has been a strong advocate for grazing at all levels. He has been involved with grazing systems at a state correctional facility, has served on national and state committees over the past 15 years, and spent several weeks in New Zealand and Australia learning 'on farm' implemented grazing concepts. During the last three years he has traveled to Honduras to work with a Mission School, setting up a grazing plan for the large farm that not only supports the school, but trains the students on practical grazing techniques. Victor definitely walks the talk!

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.)

National Honor Given to Kelley Barkell

Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) in Indiana are doing a great job in their specific program and deserve recognition for their efforts. One such program manager was surprised this summer with an award presented to her at the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Employee Association Conference. Kelley Barkell, AI/AN SEPM for Indiana, was selected to receive the USDA Certificate of Appreciation for leadership, dedication, and hard work to the NRCS AI/AN Special Emphasis Program. Kelley, along with Stacy Kimble of Michigan, received this national honor, which was well deserved.

Food Drive Helping to Meet Needs

What was District Conservationist Tim Schwipps doing in his spare time on August 2nd? The answer is picking sweet corn from the People's Garden Plot at the Purdue Southeast Ag Center. Tim, along with Casie Auxier (Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D) and Barb Lucas (FSA), picked 140 dozen ears of corn for Ripley County's food drive as part of the F5 program (Fed, Farmers, and Friends Feed Families). The corn was then distributed to five local food banks. The People's Garden Plot has drawn attention from nine counties that have had representatives pick sweet corn to meet their local needs.

SWCS Seeks Award Applications

The Hoosier Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is accepting award applications until September 20, 2010. Award categories are: Individual Accomplishment, Group Accomplishment, Education and Information, and Outstanding Service to the Chapter. The current awards criteria can be found on the Hoosier Chapter's Web site at http://www.hoosierchapterswcs.org/committees_mgi.htm. Awards will be presented at their annual meeting on November 19, 2010. Send your applications to Kim Megel at 2155 W County Road 350 N, North Vernon, IN 47265. Applications can be submitted electronically to lampertk@yahoo.com with SWCS AWARDS in the subject line. Call 812-592-6971 with any questions.

Personnel Update

Selections:

Jennifer Kipper, District Conservationist, Scottsburg, 06/20/2010
Christopher Downing, TSTL, Salem Tech Team, 08/01/2010
Benjamin Zuercher, District Conservationist, Columbus, 08/01/2010
Daniel Lyczynski, Resource Management Specialist, SW Area Office, Vincennes, 08/15/2010
Tyler Staggs, District Conservationist, Muncie, 08/29/2010
Michael Wigginton, Resource Soil Scientist, NW Area Office, Lafayette, 08/29/2010
Christopher Morse, GIS Specialist, Technology Staff, Indianapolis, 09/12/2010
Daniel Davis, Resource Management Specialist, NE Area Office, Fort Wayne, 09/26/2010

Reassignment/Realignment:

Karen Hauer, Resource Conservationist, SE Area Office, North Vernon, 08/01/2010
William Harting, District Conservationist, realigned from Shelbyville to Manilla, 08/15/2010
Curtis Knueven, District Conservationist, realigned from Rushville to Manilla, 08/15/2010

Retirements:

Bennie Clark, Soil Scientist, Region 11 MLRA, Indianapolis, 07/02/2010

Featured Web Site —

<http://www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov/>



Food banks across the country are facing severe shortages of non-perishable items. Federal employees nationwide are stepping up to meet this challenge by gathering 1,200,000 pounds of food for families in need this year. NRCS Chief Dave White has asked NRCS employees to help reach the USDA goal of 50,000 pounds by August 31. Go to this featured Web site at <http://www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov/> to learn more, and donate at your office.

Mark Your Calendar

August

08/06-22/10 Indiana State Fair, Indianapolis

08/24/10 Joint NE Area Meeting, Wabash

September

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|----------|-------------------------------|
| 09/01/10 | SW Area Meeting, Washington |
| 09/06/10 | LABOR DAY |
| 09/07/10 | NE Area Meeting |
| 09/08/10 | SE Area Meeting, North Vernon |
| 09/16/10 | Diversity Day, Jeffersonville |
| 09/28/10 | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette |
| 09/29/10 | SW Area Meeting |
| 09/30/10 | NE Area WRP Field Day |

October

- | | |
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| 10/05/10 | NE Area Cover Crop Field Day, Kosciusko County |
| 10/11/10 | COLUMBUS DAY |
| 10/13/10 | SE Area Meeting, North Vernon |
| 10/26/10 | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette |
| 10/27/10 | SW Area Meeting |

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

Helping People Help the Land