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Issue 34

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## Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty

 The 2011 Indiana State Fair has come to an end, and I want to thank all of our volunteers who worked at Pathway to Water Quality and at the Pioneer Our Land Pavilion. With over 872,000 attending the Fair this year, many fairgoers walked through both areas and viewed our exhibits. This gave us a great opportunity to let them know what we do as an agency and conservation partnership, and to show some of the conservation practices that we help landowners implement.



 I want to thank all of the NRCS Indiana employees who helped us get the 2011 program dollars obligated. Now, I look forward to seeing conservation practices implemented as soon as possible.

 This year's students who were involved in the Student Career Experience Program have gone back to school, but will not be forgotten. We truly enjoyed working with them, appreciated their good work, and look forward to their return to help us again.

 In closing, I want to thank our field employees and partners for getting last minute agreements finalized to take advantage of additional dollars to address resource concerns. You and your work are invaluable.

*Jane E. Hardisty*

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

**Sharon Pace,  
State Office Assistant**

**Q:** As the newest State Office Assistant, please help us get to know you better. Are you a Hoosier native?

**A:** Yes, I grew up in Tipton County (Sharpsville, IN) and over the years I keep coming back home to Indiana!...I guess you might say, like a ‘bad penny’...!

**Q:** Is it true that you’ve lived in several countries?

**A:** Yes, because my husband was in the military, we had the opportunity to move often and live in various countries. I lived in Okinawa, Japan for one and a half years, in Scotland for one year, in England for one and a half years, and in the Panama Canal area for three years. My favorite place was Scotland!

**Q:** With all of your travels, you must have a varied work experience. Care to share?

**A:** Up until I lived in Panama, RP, I was a stay at home mom. In Panama, I went to work as a temp in Civil Service working at the naval station there. I worked in the Manpower and Evaluation (Internal Review) office, and as lateral duty, I was the Volunteer Coordinator for the Rodman Naval Family Service Center.

During our stay in Panama—we were there for Just Cause and since I was ‘essential personnel’—we had to be careful going between our housing area and the base. I learned a valuable lesson...if you can stand on your porch steps and hear artillery going off...you are TOO CLOSE!!!!

**Q:** How did your past work experience prepare you for your current position with NRCS?

**A:** I learned by having several ‘collateral duties’ (..other duties as assigned???) that keeping a daily ‘to do’ list and organization are the keys to getting things done. My job experience includes working as a Transportation Branch secretary and, for a short time, a dispatcher for straddle trucks and semis. I have worked as a liaison for Payroll and Personnel for

the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and as a secretary in several divisions for the Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS). I also worked as an Information Technology (IT) secretary for a private sector company. Each had a totally separate set of duties that have taught me how to be flexible and to remember to stretch my learning to get things done that I’ve never done before. Plus...I like people! Getting to know new people at each work location was an added benefit.



**Q:** Lastly, do you have any hobbies or special interests that you can tell us about?

**A:** I read a lot. Also, I sew, crochet, and do fabric art and needlework. I am currently trying to learn (?) acrylic painting. I like being outside and like to walk. And of course...I enjoy the ‘real’ challenge of being a grandma!!!

## **Hoosier Happenings**

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

**\*\*Scot Haley** for his assistance to a Randolph County landowner. A Final Wetland Determination was issued to the previous owner before the Estate property was transferred to this new owner. The new land-owner complimented Scot on explaining the appeal process and providing assistance to him, though he will not be appealing the decision. —MaryJo Woodruff, NRCS CSP/Appeals Program Manager, Indianapolis

**\*\*Seth Harden** for his much appreciated contributions at Conservation Boot Camp. —Seth Chick, Fort Worth, TX

**\*\*Jennifer Chen** for significant contributions to the development of the Financial Assistance Ranking Model Pilot. “Her knowledge and analytical skills enabled us to design, test and implement the pilot successfully.” —Kristie McKinley, FARM Team Leader

### **All Abuzz About Bees**

NRCS and The Xerces Society recently sponsored an Indiana Pollinator Conservation Workshop held at the Cardno JFNew Native Plant Nursery in Walkerton, Indiana. The Xerces Society’s Midwest Pollinator

ees and conservation partners—spent a day learning about bees and resources that are available to protect pollinators.

Attendees learned that about 75 percent of the flowering plants on earth rely to some extent on pollinators. Pollinated crops contribute an estimated \$18 to \$27 billion to the U.S. economy each year. Currently, there is a dramatic decline in bee population due to disease, habitat loss, pesticide use, and other factors.

The workshop included a tour of the nursery with a specific look at native plants, including a beautiful field of Echinacea (Indiana’s native purple cone flower). For further information, a helpful resource is *Attracting Native Pollinators*, by The Xerces Society at [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org). —Contributed by Diana J. Ensign, writer and Earth Team Volunteer

### **NRCS Partners with Living Lands and Water**

Since 1998 the **Living Lands and Water (LLW)** organization has worked with local volunteers to help clean-up Midwest streams and rivers. Chad Pregracke, LLW founder, shared his passion for the work at the 2010 IASWCD Annual Meeting. After the meeting, SW Area Conservationist Dan Hovland decided to partner with LLW and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to do a training and clean-up on the Ohio River in SW Indiana.

NRCS sponsored a clean-up event June 14, in partnership with the City of Newburgh, Peabody Coal, and Gibson, Warrick and Vanderburgh SWCDs. The event included an evening and morning training session for NRCS and SWCD employees and an afternoon clean-up in Evansville. A variety of speakers addressed the group, including NRCS State Archeologist Stephen Ball, who spoke of the unique SW Indiana native cultures.

Over 50 volunteers (NRCS, SWCD, Peabody Coal, and local citizens) donated over 150 hours to help clean-up the river bank in Newburgh. During the clean-up volunteers found various plastic items, styrofoam, barrels, tires, and netting. The most interesting item found was a message in a bottle from an elementary school in Louisville, KY. All the trash was taken to the river’s edge and then loaded onto LLW’s “super sized” john boats to transport garbage to the dumpsters. The trash filled a 40-yard dumpster and weighed 2.75 tons.

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Outreach Coordinator Jennifer Hopwood and NRCS State Biologist Dave Stratman led the training. Approximately 50 attendees—including NRCS employ-

## Special Highlights

### Featured Photo

Each issue of Hoosier Headlines will include a featured photo. Please submit your photos to [Becky Fletcher](#) at the state office for consideration in *Hoosier Headlines*. Our first featured photo from the field comes to us from Chris Torp in Montgomery County. Congrats, Chris!



### Back to the Basics—Healthy Soil

In July, the Indiana Conservation Partnership hosted three Soil Health and Productivity Workshops in Ferdinand, Mooresville, and Greensburg, Indiana. Guest speaker Ray Archuleta, who is on the USDA NRCS's Technology Team in Greensboro, North Carolina, spoke each day on improving soil health by mimicking nature. His informative and energizing presentation spurred all in attendance. NRCS State Agronomist Barry Fisher and Dr. Hans Kok, Coordinator for the Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative, also made daily presentations. NRCS Regional Conservationist Tom Christensen attended one of the workshops, accompanied by State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. Christensen shared his passion for conservation at a farmer roundtable discussion and ensured attendees that the NRCS staff is equipped to help farmers and other landowners make good decisions about their land.

### **PARTNERSHIP LINKS**

- IN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, *Weekly Updates*: [www.iaswcd.org/whatsnew/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/whatsnew/index.html)
- IN Conservation Partnership: [www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html)
- IN Dept. of Environmental Management: [www.in.gov/idem](http://www.in.gov/idem)
- IN Dept. of Natural Resources: [www.in.gov/dnr](http://www.in.gov/dnr)
- IN State Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation: <http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/>
- Purdue University: [www.purdue.edu](http://www.purdue.edu)
- USDA Farm Service Agency: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

## Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

A bottomland tree planting was also conducted at Burdette Park in Vanderburgh County with trees provided by LLW's Million Tree Project. The Vanderburgh SWCD, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and NRCS assisted with this event.

### Missouri Tour Stops in Indiana

A group of 20 students and five faculty members from the University of Missouri made their way to Indiana in July as part of an Ecology of Grazing Lands Systems course. Their two-day tour in Indiana included stops at the NRCS state office and three Hoosier farms. One of the purposes was to learn about the geology and formation of soils in Indiana. NRCS experts Travis Neely, Rick Neilson, Shannon Zezula, Robert Zupancic, Victor Shelton, and Barry Fisher (pictured below) addressed the group and answered questions pertaining to Indiana.



Touring through the upper Great-Lakes and central prairies of the United States, the group gleaned a better understanding of grassland ecosystems and their functions.

### Conservation Tour: Great Farms, Great Lake

State Conservationist Jane Hardisty and several Indiana NRCS employees joined over 200 state, local and national conservation leaders from across the country for the Conservation Technology Information Center's (CTIC) annual Conservation in Action Tour in Toledo, Ohio on August 8 and 9. The tour offered opportunities to interact with public and private sector professionals interested in conservation, and to learn how others are tackling conservation challenges. Participants visited The Andersons, a plant nutrient input company; several farms including a large family owned dairy and a long term continuous no-till operation; and the Blue Creek Conservation Area. Many topics were covered at stops throughout the day including soil health, partnership successes, dissolved phosphorus issues, and the On-Farm Network. The day ended with U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur congratulating the group on their work and their passion.

## **Personnel Update**

**Retirements:**

Terry Stephenson, RC&D Coordinator, Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D, effective 7/1/11

Joe Williams, District Conservationist, Washington, effective 7/1/11

Brenda McGovern, Field Operations Assistant, North Vernon, effective 7/15/11

Cathy Deal, RC&D Assistant, Hoosier Heartland RC&D, effective 7/30/11

Mary Jane Deel, RC&D Assistant, White River RC&D, effective 7/30/11

Jerry Perkins, Grazing Land Specialist, Fort Wayne, effective 7/30/11

Kathy Latz, RC&D Coordinator, Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D, effective 7/30/11

John Pepper, Human Resources Manager, Indianapolis, effective 7/30/11

Mary Lee Smith, Engineering Technician, Princeton, effective 7/30/11

**Reassignments/Selections:**

Travis Walters, District Conservationist, Sullivan, effective 6/5/11

## **Featured Web Site — Ray's Soil Health**

**<http://vimeo.com/channels/raythesoilguy>**

NRCS Agronomist Ray Archuleta, of North Carolina, is passionate about soil health. Archuleta travels the country, speaking and promoting soil health and the ways that NRCS can assist. His passion has been captured for viewing at the site listed above. Dr. Robin (Buz) Kloot, Associate Director of the University of South Carolina's Earth Sciences and Resources Institute, created the channel to display some of the video he shot of Archuleta when he was a guest speaker. Kloot stated he believed this should be mandatory viewing for anyone doing anything related to environmental sciences.

## **Mark Your Calendar**

### **August**

08/30/11            NW Area Meeting

08/31/11            SW Area Meeting

September

- 09/01/11 Civil Rights Committee Meeting, Indianapolis  
09/05/11 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY  
09/13/11 State Technical Committee Meeting, Indianapolis  
09/14/11 SE Area Meeting  
09/14/11 IFEC Meeting  
09/21/11 Leadership Team Meeting  
09/27/11 NW Area Meeting  
09/29/11 NE Area Meeting

October

- 10/10/11 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED  
10/12/11 SE Area Meeting  
10/25/11 NW Area Meeting

November

- 11/01/11 NE Area Meeting  
11/02/11 SW Area Meeting