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*Heart to Heart
... with Hardisty*

 The NRCS Efficiency Workshop was held July 17-19 in St. Louis, Missouri in an effort to update state conservationists, assistant state conservationists, program managers and others on recent advancements and planned efforts in the area of efficiency and streamlining, and to gain further input on efficiency needs and opportunities.



Indiana was well represented with Xavier Montoya, Elana Cass, Shannon Zezula, Kimberly Neumann, Barry Fisher and I attending. Barry gave an informative and impressive presentation on Marketing Energy Conservation, and we displayed a poster on the efficiency of Indiana's unique conservation delivery system. We returned with numerous ideas for opportunities in Indiana. I encourage you to view workshop information that national headquarters has posted on my.NRCS.

 In July, I attended the Soil and Water Conservation Society's international conference in Keystone, Colorado. The conference registered over 700 participants from nine countries and 45 states. The Colorado Chapter did an excellent job hosting the conference, which included an array of fun and educational events. Dana York, now Acting NRCS Chief, spoke during Plenary II about NRCS programs that will affect future conservation issues. She and SWCS Executive Director Craig Cox did a great job answering a host of questions from attendees.

Hoosier Happenings

This summer has provided our employees and our conservation partners with a smorgasbord of activities and events. Some of these are included below.

- About 35 conservation partners gathered on the front porch of the Maish residence in Howard County on August 15th to celebrate Myron and Paul Maish's participation in the Conservation Security Program with a signing ceremony. Myron was also recognized as a River Friendly Farmer.



(Left to right) Harold Thompson, ASTC Programs; Kerry Smith, DC; Michelle Gilbert, Howard Co. SWCD Board Chair; Myron Maish; and Paul Maish.

- Several members of the leadership team, along with Southwest Area and State Office employees, braved the hottest day of the year to tour the progress at Goose Pond in Greene County on August 1...and lived to tell about it!



(Left to right) Goose Pond Team: Dave Stratman, Chris Ritz, Denise Held, Mike Cox, Dan Luczynski, Jeff Coats, Jane Hardisty, and Steve Wade.

- NRCS was recognized for its participation in the Goose Pond project at an event honoring IDNR with the National Great Blue Heron Award for their purchase of the property. This is the top award from the North American Wetlands Conservation Association. Jane Hardisty was presented with a framed commemorative print at the ceremony on August 8. Look for it in the lobby the next time you visit the state office.
- Jane Hardisty was a featured speaker at the celebration of the Least Tern restoration at Cane Ridge, a WRP project, at Duke Energy in Gibson County on August 8. Senator Lugar's representative in Evansville, Larry Ordner, called the site, "One of the most notable conservation achievements, not only in Indiana, but in the nation."

(More Hoosier Happenings on page 6.)

Earth Team Volunteers – Essential to Indiana Conservation

Did you know that Earth Team Volunteers can perform any activity that NRCS employees would do? Some of these duties include:

- Conservation education
- Water quality testing/monitoring
- Planting of vegetative material
- Marketing, promotion and information
- Tours and demonstrations
- Technology transfer
- Administrative/ management functions
- RC&D and SWCD projects that carry out USDA programs
- Other activities in support of the NRCS mission.

For more information about Earth Team Volunteers, see the General Manual, 428.26.

“Many people die with their music still in them. Why is this so? Too often it is because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out.” —Oliver Wendell Holmes, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice

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

**Susannah Hole,
Grazing Land Specialist**

Q: Susannah, how long have you worked for the agency and in what positions and locations?

A: I started working for NRCS in Colorado as a Range Con in 1996, in an area at 6,200' elevation, considered high desert with only 12-18 inches of annual precipitation (mostly snow). In September of 2000, I transferred to Indiana as a Soil Con for the Lawrence-Orange-Washington Work Team, stationed in Bedford. This was a good transition from the mountains of Colorado to the hills of southern Indiana and the workload was still mainly livestock related. I saw more rain in the first month I was there than I had seen in nearly 5 years. In 2001, I started as the Grazing Land Specialist for the SE Area and spent 4 years there. And in March of this year I transferred in the same position to the NW Area.



Q: Do you find the northwest area in Indiana varies much in land resources for grazers compared to the southeast?

A: It depends on how you look at it. In the broad scale everyone is trying to manage the forage and water resources they have the best they can. It is just a matter of my adjusting to the differences. I lost the majority of my fescue belt so I see more diversity of forages. I have run into some new soil types (mucks for example) that create some different management techniques. And some new water sources to contend with such as the large ditches and different types of springs.

Q: What benefits do livestock producers gain that use grassed-based versus confined systems?

A: Oh, now you are hitting close to home. I could really bend your ear and bore you to death on this question. Instead I will relay to you some of the comments from grazers who have successfully implemented our suggestions. The first thing they typically notice is the amount of grass they have as a result of rotational grazing. It may be in total pro-

duction but usually they notice how much longer it lasts into the summer. Most notice a change in the composition of their pastures, for example one man had me out to identify orchardgrass, a species he had never planted but showed up as a result of the pasture management. After delivering water into pastures, versus having animals come to a barn lot, most notice less trailing and that the animals spend more time grazing rather than hovering near water or shade. The highly intensive dairymen that I have worked with have better stands of forage and higher producing cows with less work on their part. I think I have the best job in the agency to be able to hear such favorable comments as a direct result of our technical assistance.

Q: What enticed you to the field (so to speak) of grazing specialist?

A: For the most part I grew up out west. My step-dad worked as a ranch manger on large cattle operations (200+ head) in Nebraska, Washington and Idaho. Then we leased 500 acres and raised 50 head of our own. My

sisters and I were the crew and did the haying, branding, vaccinating, fencing, feeding, herding; the works. When I went to the University of Idaho I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up, but after taking a multitude of classes in various fields I settled on what I had grown up with and got a degree in Range Management. And then I have just been fortunate enough in my career to keep with it.

Q: Tell us, what outside interests occupy your spare time?

A: This summer I have gotten to play a lot more golf. I can't say I am any good, but I do have fun. I usually get my monies worth as I zigzag my way through woods, rocks, and water. Just this week I got 2 pars so that keeps you coming back! I also like to scrapbook and quilt. This summer it has been mainly about unpacking in the new house and planning the landscaping.

Q: Rumor has it that you will be getting married soon. Care to comment?

A: The rumors are true. We have been dating for 7 years so most of my moves have been an effort to get home. The big day is Sept 16 and it has been a long time coming. All the details are falling into place and we are looking forward to it. It will be an informal affair with lots of straw bales and grasses as decorations. What else would you expect from a Grazing Specialist?

FOCUS ON THE FIELD

Surveying Simplified with GPS

Not rain, snow, or very tall corn can keep these Conservation Implementation Team (CIT) members from getting survey work done in Posey



County. Gary Seibert and Rob Brown of ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation are pictured above using a Leica 1200 GPS survey instrument to survey an erosion project for Woody McFaddin. They chose to use this instrument because the corn had grown too tall to use conventional equipment.

This instrument allows the surveyor to receive information from satellites and record the precise location on the ground. GPS surveying gives CIT members the freedom of having one or two people surveying within a few miles of the base station. With the GPS system the surveyor can enter the field with little or no damage to crops and still gather the information needed to design the project. There is a point when corn does get too tall for any type of surveying. You do still need to see the soil in order to gather the correct information. NRCS purchased this equipment in 2006, and it is just part of the equipment available to the CIT members.

Legislators Listen to Farmers

On July 24th, the Full Committee on Agriculture of the U.S. House of Representatives conducted a

public field hearing in Scottsburg, Indiana for public review of federal farm policy. Eight farmers from Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Michigan testified before the committee. The committee members were very interested in EQIP and asked several questions about its effectiveness. The farmers agreed that EQIP was a good program, but was under funded. They also stated that more technical assistance was needed to assist farmers in utilizing programs, adding that NRCS and FSA offices needed more personnel to service interested landowners who want to take full advantage of Farm Bill programs.

Indiana Receives Additional Funds for Conservation

The Indiana Conservation Partnership celebrated additional conservation money by presenting Lt. Governor Becky Skillman with a check for \$1.3 million to Indiana landowners August 17th at the Indiana State Fair's Pathway to Water Quality. Indiana was one of only four states to be awarded additional federal funds from NRCS headquarters. The check represents an additional \$820,000 in federal EQIP money, and \$500,000 in state Clean Water Indiana funds made available by the State Soil Conservation Board.



(Left to right) Beth Bechdol, ISDA; Tammy Lawson, ISDA; Lt Gov. Becky Skillman; Jane Hardisty, NRCS; Bob Eddleman, State Soil Conservation Board.

—Special Emphasis—

The National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employee's annual training was held in Orlando, Florida the last week of July. Xavier Montoya and Ignacio Avila attended from Indiana. The conference provided information on training, employment, and educational opportunities to all individuals, and to ensure that Hispanic Americans are valued and represented in the workforce at all levels.

“The conference was first rate because it provided information and tools necessary for the Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) to do our jobs,” said Ignacio Avila. Ignacio works on the Albion Tech Team as Team Leader and serves Indiana as Hispanic SEPM. “The conference helped us understand how the SEPM can assist management in identifying employment issues and solutions with respect to underrepresented groups in their areas.”

SEPMs also conduct outreach activities by working with underserved customers to create an awareness and understanding of all programs, benefits, and services available through NRCS. In addition, they serve as liaisons when working with other agency staff to more fully incorporate underserved communities into mainstream agriculture.

ATTENTION

Soil and Water Conservation Districts employees are valuable members of our conservation team. Each year at the IASWCD Annual Conference, district employees are recognized for their outstanding work. The District Employee Recognition at the conference honors four people for their outstanding service in the following categories:

- Administrative/Secretarial
- Technical
- Educational
- Multi-task (offices with one person fulfilling all the duties).

This is our chance to nominate a district employee to be recognized. Contact Nadean Eldien at nadean.eldien@in.nacdnet.net to register or go to <http://www.iaswcd.org/PDFs/Updates/7-21-06update.htm> for information.

Deadline is Friday, September 1, 2006.

**Hispanic Awareness Month
September 15-October 15**

**LINKS FOR
PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTERS**

Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, *Weekly Updates*:
<http://www.iaswcd.org/WeeklyUpdates06.htm>

ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation, *Cultivating Connections*:
<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/news/index/html>

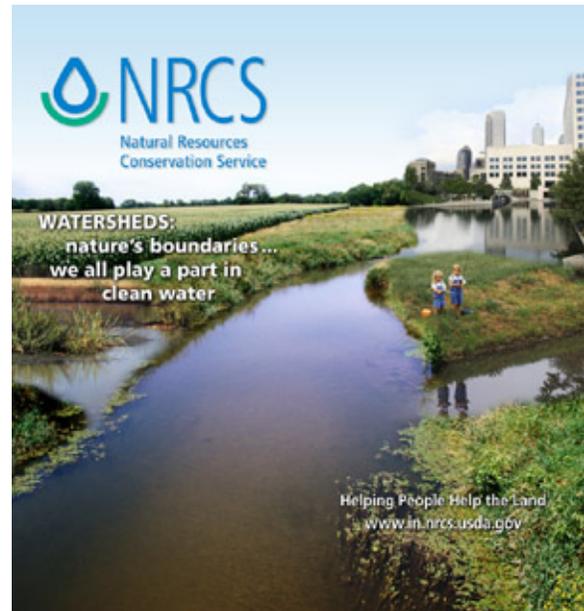
Purdue University - www.purdue.edu

Indiana Conservation Partnership Strategic Plan Information
<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/icp/index.html>

Hoosier Happenings (continued)

The Indiana State Fair celebrated its 150th anniversary this year and recorded more than 870,000 folks attending the 12-day event. NRCS employees were actively involved in two areas of the Fair; namely, Pathway to Water Quality (PWQ) and Our Land Pavilion (OLP).

NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Mike McGovern and Mark McCauley of Hamilton County SWCD co-chaired the PWQ Steering Committee this year. They and a group of conservation partnership volunteers put together the “best ever PWQ” according to the majority of visitors. If you did not have a chance to work or visit PWQ, you missed it!



In the Our Land Pavilion, NRCS showcased the Indiana watershed model and complemented it with a new watershed banner stand display (pictured above). Fairgoers were drawn to the NRCS table to receive a free water bottle if they knew in which watershed they lived. This created a wonderful opportunity to define a watershed for most of the booth attendees and to discuss what we can do to keep the water clean in our watershed and for people who live downstream. Adults and children alike walked away with a smile because they not only had a free water bottle, but they also had learned something!

PERSONNEL UPDATES

Selections and Re-assignments:

William Lambert, District Conservationist, Auburn, 8-20-06

Brook Rieman, District Conservationist, Plymouth, 8-20-06

Gary Maners, Asst. State Conservationist (Quality Assurance & Evaluation), State Office, Indianapolis, 8-20-06

Adam Heichelbech, District Conservationist, Columbus, 9-3-06

Kimberly Megel, Soil Conservationist, Greensburg Technical Service Team, 9-3-06

John Young, Soil Conservationist, Huntington Technical Service Team, 9-3-06

Susan Grivas, Soil Conservationist, Greencastle Technical Service Team, 9-3-06

Harold Thompson, Asst. State Conservationist (Programs), State Office, Indianapolis, 9-3-06

Byron Nagel, Resource Soil Scientist, Southwest Area Office, North Vernon, 10-1-06

Featured Website—Conservation Effects Assessment Project

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/ceap/index.html#>

The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is a national, multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation practices. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) held a field day July 26 highlighting the work in the St. Joseph watershed here in Indiana. CEAP consists of three components:

- A national assessment of conservation practice benefits and an assessment of the potential for USDA conservation programs to meet the nation's environmental and conservation goals.
- Watershed Assessment Studies conducting research on conservation practices to evaluate and improve performance of national assessment models.
- Bibliographies and literature reviews of conservation programs.

For more information on CEAP, visit the website noted above. For specific information on Indiana's Watershed Assessment Study (an ARS Benchmark Study) in the St. Joseph watershed, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/ceap/ars.html>.

Mark Your Calendar

August

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|----------|---|
| 08/29/06 | NW Area Meeting, Lafayette |
| 08/30/06 | Indiana Grazing Lands Tour, Shelbyville (Contact: Hoosier Heartland RC&D) |
| 08/31/06 | SW Area Meeting, Switz City |
| 08/31/06 | No-Till Meeting, Alan Stahl Farm, I-164 and Olmstead Road (Register by August 28 with Vanderburgh County SWCD) |

September

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|-------------|--|
| 09/04/06 | LABOR DAY |
| 09/12/06 | NE Area Meeting, Columbia City |
| 09/13/06 | SE Area Meeting, North Vernon |
| 09/13-14/06 | Grassland Management Workshop, IDNR Reclamation Office, Jasonville (Register by 9/1/06 at http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/fnr/itws/news.html) |
| 09/15/06 | Professional Soil Classifiers Fall Tour, South Bend |

September

- 09/24-28/06 National Nonpoint Source Workshop, Minneapolis, MN
(Register at <http://www.conservationinformation.org>)
- 09/27/06 State Technical Committee Meeting, State Office, Indianapolis

October

- 10/09/06 COLUMBUS DAY
- 10/23-24/06 IDEA Fall Workshop, Indianapolis Marriot East, Indianapolis
Go to <http://in.ncdea.org/FallConf.htm> for info.

November

- 11/07-09/06 CNMP Training, Lima, OH
- 11/07-10/06 North American Lake Management Society International Symposium, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis
- 11/28-30/06 Innovations in Reducing Nonpoint Source Pollution, Radisson Hotel City Centre, Indianapolis

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

Helping People Help the Land