



In This Issue

- Heart to Heart with Hardisty
- ETV—Essential to Conservation
- SWCS in the News
- Employee Spotlight—Barry Fisher
- Focus on the Field
- Disability Employment Awareness Month
- Partners' Web Links
- Hoosier Happenings
- Personnel Updates
- Featured Website—Geospatial Data Gateway
- Mark Your Calendar

Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty



 With fiscal year 2006 completed, I reflect on all of our accomplishments with pride and appreciation. Thank you for your tremendous efforts this past year to make it the best ever for conservation in Indiana.

Fiscal year 2007 gives us new opportunities for conservation and a chance to reach toward the goals of our 2007 business plan. Again this year we will focus on implementing conservation practices relating to Farm Bill contracts. Also, we want to re-emphasize the importance of the district conservationists' role in conservation planning. Additionally, we will focus on conservation results, customer service, partners, training, RC&Ds, and quality assurance.

I look forward to this new year with great anticipation of the conservation that will be on the ground because of your hard work and commitment to our mission.

 This year we are emphasizing the importance of conservation planning to our Hoosier farmers. With that in mind, we are beginning a campaign to help farmers understand the need to have their plan in place, which becomes their roadmap to better natural resources management. The Public Affairs staff is developing tools to promote 'planning first' and assist the field offices in getting the word out.

Earth Team Volunteers – Essential to Indiana Conservation

Earth Team Impacts Coast with Dune Fence

If you want a job done quickly and efficiently, call on the Earth Team. It took only 10 minutes for 26 Earth Team volunteers to build a 500-foot sand fence this summer on a beach on Sullivan’s Island, South Carolina.

NRCS Earth Team state volunteer coordinators were in the Charleston, South Carolina area for their East Region conference in August 2006. While there, an Earth Team crew threw their energy into the Build-a-Dune Project sponsored by Charleston County’s Project Impact. Indiana’s Pat Larr and Nancy Manion were among the crew.



The amazing story was reported in Charleston’s *Post and Courier* newspaper, describing the coastal conservation work as follows.

“The fence, comprised of posts and netting, traps sand that builds up over time into a dune system. The fencing is installed in a pattern that is conducive to sea turtle nesting. Sea oat, a plant that stabilizes the dunes, will be planted in the spring.”

Project Impact Coordinator Joni Rennhack was quoted saying, “The enhanced dune system provides protection for barrier islands and inland areas against coastal storm-related flood losses.”

Earth Team volunteers logged more than one million hours last year helping landowners protect land and water resources. They continue to do great work helping us achieve our conservation goals.

SWCS in the News

Local The Hoosier Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) partnered with the Indiana Water Resources Association this past June to hold a spring symposium, "Energizing Indiana's Water Community," on the Purdue University campus. Approximately 100 people attended portions of this three-day event, which included technical presentations as well as tours.

A variety of topics were discussed, ranging from dam removal to water quality to education to drainage water management and beyond. Copies of the proceedings from this meeting are on the internet via the following link:

http://pasture.ecn.purdue.edu/%7Efrandenb/iwra2006/IWRA_Proceedings.pdf

National The national SWCS is now accepting proposals for symposia sessions, oral and poster presentations for the 2007 annual conference in Tampa, Florida. SWCS encourages authors to submit abstracts that report the results of research and evaluation projects, and/or lessons learned from professional experience working with conservation and environmental management technologies, programs, and policies.

The Call for Papers with all instructions for participating in the conference can be found online at www.swcs.org. The deadline for abstracts is **December 1, 2006**.

“I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific.” —Lily Tomlin

“Poor planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.” —Jerome Daugherty

*** Employee Spotlight ***

**Barry Fisher,
Conservation Tillage Coordinator**

Who makes the news more often than Peyton Manning? Yep, our very own Conservation Tillage Coordinator, Barry Fisher. Let's see if Barry will share his secret to success.

Q: Barry, please tell us where you were born and raised, and how you became interested in agriculture.

A: I grew up on a small grain and live-stock farm near French Lick, where the soils were thin, steep and eroded. We spent a lot of time fighting erosion, even planting thousands of pine trees on what SCS had mapped as *gullied land*. My ag and conservation interests were further reinforced through 10 years of 4-H and the encouragement of an outstanding FFA advisor.

Q: Can you give us a little history of your 'tour' with NRCS?

A: Everyone should have the privilege of spending their first summer tour (as I did in Martin County) under the mentorship of Fred Woods, whose commitment to conservation was as contagious as the flu. My second year as a summer trainee took me north to Miami County, where I encountered one of most dynamic personalities ever to be a district conservationist...Jane Hardisty. She got me involved with SWCS and introduced a much broader approach to conservation. As a full time soil conservationist, I spent a short time in Shelby County with Bill Clifton and Jim Dunaway, before heading to Wayne County as a Target Area Planner. Some of my most enjoyable times were as a conservation planner, learning from and collaborating with, Don Weaver-DC, Norm Mull-SCT, Quentin Williamson-District Technician, and Pat Koons-Dist Secretary. There was never a dull moment and did we ever crank out the conservation! My first DC post was in Union County with Roger Williams-SCT, who was the master of conservation by demonstration. Whether you were a student in a high school ag class or a new DC, you'd better have your boots on because you were going in! I thought my career goals had been met when I became the Area 3 (West Central) conservation agronomist at Greencastle. But the agronomist duties shifted to more of a program administrator with the 1985 Food Security Act, so I seized an opportunity to return to working lands as the DC for Putnam County. There, we were among the highest HEL acreage counties in the state.



With the staff of Bob Wehrman-SCT, Bill Bollman-RS, Saraellen Peters-SWCD, and Sue Crafton-SWCD, and some passing through, like Carol Theile, Doris Scully, David Stanley and Scott Wagner, we were able to actually measure improvements in most of the county's soil and water resources as we applied as many as 300 practices per year. And we had fun doing it!

I mention a lot of names during my tour because I think it's not where you've been or what you've done, but who you've met along the way that makes you who you are.

Q: As Conservation Tillage Coordinator you are continually making presentations to a variety of audiences. Briefly, what are your primary messages?

A: Expect success and expect high yields, but to get there, one must understand the system and constantly pursue higher soil quality. There is no silver bullet, but there also are no minor details. Technology has advanced so rapidly in the last 5-7 years that No-Till can be adapted successfully on nearly every soil type in Indiana.

Q: How do farmers in Indiana compare with other states in practicing no-till?

A: Some of the nation's top no-tillers are Indiana farmers. We are among the highest in no-till adoption of the Corn Belt states, with an increasingly greater potential. In the 26 counties conducting tillage transect this year, 22 had increases in no-till corn and 24 had increases in no-till soybeans. No-till corn increased by more than 25% in 14 of the 26 counties (4 counties had over a 100% increase). Much of the increases can be tied directly to extra efforts in information, education and direct technical assistance.

Q: What hobbies and interests occupy your non-duty time?

A: My wife (Michael) and I spend a lot of time coaching and attending our two children's (Ben and Grace) sports and school activities. My small farm, just north of Greencastle, takes up much of the rest. I do, however, make time to enjoy the natural resources, being an avid hunter and fisherman and taking the family boating at the lake.

Q: You do make the news often. What's your secret?

A: Believe in what you say and say it often. And, be able to recognize a slow news day when you see one!

FOCUS ON THE FIELD

2006 Grazing Lands Tour

Grazing systems are catching on in Indiana, and on August 30, over 75 farmers, legislators, Partnership employees and media learned more about them at the 2006 Indiana Grazing Lands Tour.

Participants started the day by visiting a new dairy operation run by Kerry and Christiana Estes, and enjoyed by their two young children. Each day the couple and their children drive to the farm and operate the 100-cow seasonal intensive-grazing dairy in northwest Shelby County. New to farming, this family proves that with a little help, beginning farmers can be successful. Susannah Hole, Grazing Land Specialist, and Bill Harting, District Conservationist, have provided assistance to this new operation.



Pictured above: Kerry Estes shares his story.

The tour then moved on to Langeland Farms, Inc. in central Decatur County, where Gary and Patty Reding hosted the group for lunch on their front lawn. The Redings raise traditional row crops, organic crops, and pasture for their 30 head of Angus cows. They also take care of other farmer's cattle during parts of the year, who graze on the Reding's pasture on contract. The Redings have grass buffer strips along most fields, which facilitate moving cattle from one location to another. Two huge black and white Lead Steer named Sammy and Teddy stole the show, re-

sponding to Gary's calls to move a herd from one pasture to another.



Pictured above: Lead steer at Langeland Farms, Inc.

Both farms showcased highly successful rotational grazing operations, and utilized NRCS technical assistance to implement best management practices, including prescribed grazing, watering systems, heavy use area protection, pasture renovation, lanes, filter strips, use exclusion, and fencing.

The Indiana Grazing Land Conservation Initiative, NRCS, Hoosier Heartland RC&D, Indiana Forage Council, Indiana Beef Cattle Association, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and Purdue University Extension sponsored the informative tour.

Conservation Expo...State-of-the-Art

Each year the Putnam County Expo is a huge success and this year was no different! The Expo was held August 24, 2006 at Cedar View Farms. The farm gave attendees a state-of-the-art look at long term no-till, buffers, manure and nitrogen management, soil quality, cover crop management, and pest management; making up all the components of an energy conservation and soil quality improvement system (a new 2007 EQIP practice in Indiana). Barry Fisher, Indiana Conservation (continued on page 5)

—Special Emphasis—

October—Disability Employment Awareness Month

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we pay tribute to the accomplishments of the men and women with disabilities whose work helps keep America's economy strong, and we underscore our commitment to ensuring equal employment opportunity for all citizens.

Our country has made great progress to ensure that opportunities are accessible to everyone who is willing and able to work. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, New Freedom Initiative of 2001, Ticket to Work program, and One-Stop Career Centers have expanded access to technology, training, and education for citizens with disabilities. By visiting <http://DisabilityInfo.gov> individuals and employers can learn more about the Federal Government's disability-related programs and receive information and resources they need to help achieve their personal and professional ambitions.

—Taken from the October 3, 2007 proclamation by President George W. Bush



Focus on the Field (cont.)

Tillage Coordinator discussed the cost saving strategies for energy management.

Cedar View Farms gave attendees a new look at crop rotation with utilization of narrow row corn. Several acres of continuous no-till were set aside for conservation demonstrations. Key-note Paul Cummings, Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Biomass Project Coordinator, gave a brief presentation during the complimentary dinner.

This year the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) partnered with Putnam County SWCD for the first time for this annual Conservation Expo. Other partners were FSA, NRCS, Sycamore Trails RC&D, and the Indiana Conservation Tillage Initiative.

REMINDER

The Disability/Veterans Employment Program Manager position is open for application. This is a collateral duty position.

Submit your interest statement to State Conservationist Jane Hardisty by November 16, 2006. Your statement should include any special talents you would bring to the position and your ideas of accomplishments that can be made by serving in the position.

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—Hardisty Honored

Nurturing parents, Laurel and Marjorie Hardisty, while raising their daughters on their family farm in Hancock County, taught a young “tomboy” how to appreciate people, livestock, and the land as she grew up in rural central Indiana. Today, Jane Hardisty, a 1974 graduate from Ball State University, with a bachelor’s degree in natural resources, biology, and geology, is our Indiana State Conservationist, heading Indiana’s NRCS for the past six years.

Thus begins the recognition for our state conservationist as Jane receives this year’s Distinguished Alumni Award from Ball State University. She is the first natural resources graduate to be given this honor.

“This Distinguished Alumni Award means a lot to me personally,” explains Hardisty. “As a public servant working for our country’s federal government, ‘pats on the back’ are rare. To have your Alma Mater give you a diploma in 1974 and then 32 years later still care about you by recognizing you for outstanding accomplishments speaks well of the BSU Alumni Association.”

Hardisty reflects, “Being raised on a farm is the best avenue to learn on one’s own. I drove a tractor before I could reach the pedals. My dad was molding my management and supervisory styles each day as he taught me about life or let me discover it. My parents taught by example. When a task was started, it had to be finished, and it was important to treat everyone kindly.”

Those values are reflected in the NRCS mission statement: *Helping People Help the Land*. Hardisty’s

first love is of the land, yet she realizes how important it is to provide her customers with the best service NRCS can give. “To be the very best conservationists we can expect, we must provide our employees with the very best knowledge and tools to teach those who use the land,” said Hardisty. “Then we let our employees have the authority to do their jobs—it is participative management.”

Hardisty was the first female to serve as acting director of the NRCS National Employee Development Center in Fort Worth, first female state conservationist in Indiana, and first female to receive the Ball State Natural Resources and Environmental Management Alumni Society’s Award of Achievements in 2002. She also was recognized for Distinction in Natural Resources Conservation at the 2005 Indiana Women of Achievement Awards by the Task Force on the Status of Women of the College of Sciences and Humanities.

Edwin Shipley, Executive Director of Ball State Alumni Association, said, “It is with pride that we honor one of our graduates, Jane Hardisty, this year as Distinguished Alumni. Her outstanding accomplishments exemplify not only her personal success, but also the diverse quality of individuals Ball State is very proud to claim. The profile of Jane Hardisty is only a capsule of the breadth and depth of her service to her respective community, her profession, and her alma mater.”

—*Courtesy, Ball State Alumnus Magazine, Sept 2006*

PERSONNEL UPDATES

Selections:

Jeremy Palmer, Civil Engineering Technician, Albion Technical Service Team, 10-29-06
Adam Jones, Civil Engineering Technician, Huntington Technical Service Team, 10-29-06
Travis Walters, Civil Engineering Technician, Greencastle Technical Service Team, 11-12-06
Timothy Kiste, Civil Engineering Technician, Greencastle Technical Service Team, 11-12-06
Charles Selfe, Civil Engineering Technician, Greencastle Technical Service Team, 11-12-06
Becky Ross, Area Conservationist, Northwest Area Office, Lafayette, 11-26-06
Teresah Caire, Area Conservationist, Southeast Area Office, North Vernon, 11-26-06

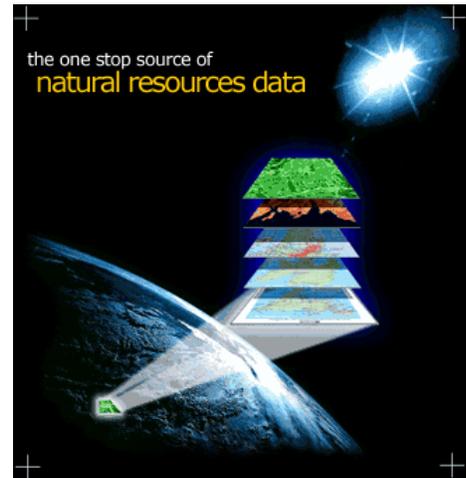
Retirements:

William Beard, RC&D Coordinator, Sycamore Trails RC&D, 9-30-06
Phyllis May, RC&D Assistant, Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D, 9-30-06

Featured Website—Geospatial Data Gateway

<http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov>

The Geospatial Data Gateway is a USDA Service Center initiative that provides ‘one stop shopping’ for creating maps from natural resources and environmental data. The [Gateway](#) allows users to zoom in on an area of interest anywhere in the country, browse and select data layers, customize the format, and have a customized map downloaded or shipped on CD.



Mark Your Calendar

October

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|-------------|---|
| 10/16/06 | NW ABC Training, Lafayette |
| 10/17/06 | NE ABC Training, Ft. Wayne |
| 10/17/06 | SWCD Boot Camp, Vincennes |
| 10/23-24/06 | IDEA Fall Workshop, Indianapolis Marriot East, Indianapolis
Go to http://in.ncdea.org/FallConf.htm for info. |
| 10/23-28/06 | FFA Convention, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis |
| 10/25/06 | Soil Scientists Meeting, State Office, Indianapolis |
| 10/31/06 | Indiana Land Use Consortium’s “Communities at the Crossroads IX: Land Use Conference, Indiana Government Center, South Bldg, 402 W Washington Street, Indianapolis. Register at www.indianalanduse.org by October 20. |

November

- 11/07-09/06 CNMP Training, Lima, OH
- 11/07-10/06 North American Lake Management Society International Symposium, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis
- 11/16-17/06 Hoosier Chapter SWCS Annual Meeting, Fourwinds Resort, Bloomington. Register by November 8 at www.hoosierchapterswcs.org
- 11/28/06 NW Area Meeting, Tippecanoe County Extension Office, Lafayette
- 11/28-30/06 Innovations in Reducing Nonpoint Source Pollution, Radisson Hotel City Centre, Indianapolis

January

- 01/16-18/07 IASWCD Annual Conference

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

Helping People Help the Land