

FY2007 NATIONAL EARTH TEAM AWARD WINNERS - CONGRATULATIONS!!

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD - CHIEF'S CUP	Nebraska
NACD/NRCS EARTH TEAM AWARD	Tulsa County Conservation District - Tulsa, Oklahoma
RC&D/NRCS EARTH TEAM AWARD	Sunflower RC&D - Harper, Kansas
INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER AWARD	Kayla Higgins - Jordan, Montana
GROUP VOLUNTEER AWARD	W.A.C.K.Y. Day Group - Phillipsburg, Kansas
CHIEF'S FIELD AWARD	Franklin County NRCS/SWCD - Farmington, Maine
NRCS EMPLOYEE AWARD	Kristi Gay - Flagler, Colorado
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR AWARD	Patricia H. Hoeffken - Little Rock, Arkansas

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Earth Team Volunteers Create USDA Software

By Mary Giles, Earth Team Coordinator, Missouri

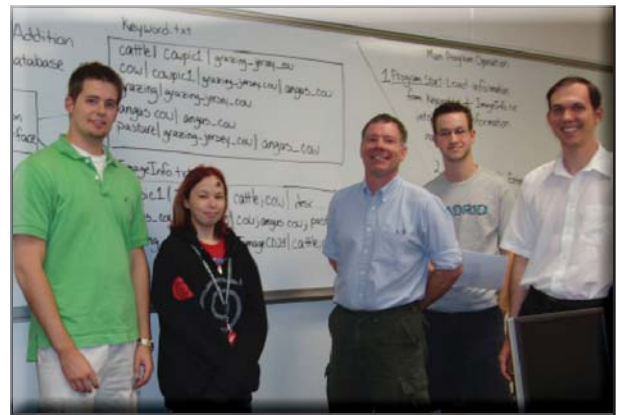
Dr. Ken Vollmar and five students from an Introduction to Software Engineering class at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri partnered with the NRCS South Missouri Water Quality Project to seek solutions for photo storage organization needs. Digital images are used by the water quality staff in communicating with the public about conservation practices. The large volume of photographs used by staff in visual communication created a need for a simple method of organizing, storing, and transferring the digital media.

The students became Earth Team volunteers and dually enrolled in a Service-Learning in Computer Science class at the university. After interviewing staff to determine which features were needed, the team developed a computer software product they named PhotoStore. PhotoStore will enable users to add or delete images, provide unique file names, and create key words and descriptions for each image. In addition, the software will also include a search feature that will produce thumbnail images based on the search criteria entered by the user.

The software development required the student team to write and de-bug large amounts of code, develop a user-guide, and submit the software product to the National USDA Interoperability Lab for certification. PhotoStore was nationally certified and approved in June 2007. It has been released nationally for NRCS offices and field use.

Frank Hoeppel, End User Computing CM Team of the Interoperability Lab, said,

“I would like to thank the PhotoStore Team for their efforts in bringing this project to fruition. The motivation and dedication required to create a new application is significant. The modifications required to comply with USDA/ITS standards present an extra level of effort. Many vendors do not meet the standards of customer service demonstrated by the PhotoStore Team. That this project was a volunteer effort makes the level of performance even more impressive. Congratulations on a job well done.”



Left to right: Steven Lewis, Lyn Kuda, Dr. Ken Vollmar, Luke Mayes, Ben Paasch. Not pictured: Derek Ross

Another GREAT Example of a Retired NRCS Employee Serving as an Earth Team Volunteer



Harold Bryant right and David Elliott

Harold Bryant, retired Public Affairs Specialist in Texas, was presented the Outstanding Member Award from American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association 2007 President, David Elliott. Harold donated a number of Earth Team volunteer hours to assist the planning committee in development and coordination of a successful training conference held in Texas. His duties included making local contacts and arrangements, acquiring speakers, making all arrangements with the hotel and constant communications with the other conference planning committee members. Harold is a loyal supporter of AIANEA and NRCS. Harold also won this award in 2001 while he was the Texas State Public Affairs Specialist. Congratulations Harold!

Retired Research Scientist Continues Scientific Pursuits

By Dr. Mike Wilson, Research Soil Scientist and Judy Kisch, Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator, Nebraska

Dr. Robert B. Grossman, retired NRCS Research Soil Scientist, has been a volunteer for the past year at the National Soil Survey Center (NSSC). Bob worked at the NSSC prior to his retirement.

Dr. Grossman has been active in several volunteer projects. One of the projects he has worked on has been to modify a procedure to separate and quantify soft rock from both soil and hard rock. He has developed procedures to determine both water retention and bulk density, and has explored measurements to determine relative hardness of these materials. The inability to properly separate and characterize these materials in certain soils has been an ongoing problem in soil survey for numerous years. This work has been in cooperation with other scientists in the NSSC and various states. The result of Grossman's efforts will have a national impact on soil survey upon completion because the problem affects every state in the nation.



Dr. Rebecca Burt, a colleague from the National Soil Survey Center who is on detail in Iraq, requested Dr. Grossman to review the 120 plus page manual she is writing and compiling. The manual will be used by Iraqi scientists in describing and characterizing soils with both field and laboratory procedures. Dr. Grossman reviewed the sections, made important technical suggestions and wrote several procedures to be added to the manual.

Dr. Grossman has also been working on a book detailing the production of important agricultural crops and conservation practices in the state of Nebraska. The intended use is for high school students so they can better visualize and understand crop production. The manual is illustrated by numerous photographs that he has taken of these crops in various growth stages from planting to harvesting.

While the body of work the scientist created during his career built a lasting legacy, Dr. Grossman's efforts as an Earth Team volunteer have increased the admiration of his colleagues relative to the meaning of "volunteerism" and what an individual can contribute.

Volunteer Wears Many Hats

By Roy Diver, District Conservationist, Wisconsin

Earth Team volunteer Becky Diver grew up in central Wisconsin. After high school, she graduated from Mid-State Technical College (MSTC) with a degree in cosmetology. She worked for a number of salons in the Stevens Point and Plover area, and she currently works for the Seventh Heaven Salon. Because of her interest in protecting the environment, she returned to MSTC and graduated with an Associate Degree in Urban Forestry in 2006. Becky became an Earth Team volunteer in February 2005 at the Wisconsin Rapids Service Center, where she continues to volunteer several hours each month. Much of her volunteer time is spent on educational activities, assisting with EQIP contract development, and other program activities as needed in the office. As a result of her continued volunteer service, the Wisconsin Rapids NRCS office received the Earth Team Area 2 Quarterly Performance Award at the NRCS Area 2 meeting. Becky may continue her education at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point this fall to pursue a Bachelors degree in Wildlife or Natural Resources.



Becky Diver

Citigroup Volunteer Day

By Venessa Alvarado, Office Assistant, National Earth Team Office

Citigroup offers one paid day a year to its employees to use for volunteer work wherever they choose. It's one of the many ways Citi helps give back to the communities they serve. The employees may choose the day and the organization where they would like to volunteer. In November, George Ingham, Chet Eginore and Brett McCormick chose to help out at the National LANDCARE/Earth Team Office in Des Moines. Citigroup has thousands of employees across the globe so the one paid day of volunteer work makes a big difference in many communities. Employees are allowed to take additional days; however, they must use vacation time or voluntary time off.



Citigroup Employees

The Citigroup employees rolled posters and placed them in shipping tubes to be mailed to customers and assisted with collating inserts and labels for DVD cases. "We really enjoyed our time volunteering for the NRCS and look forward to doing it again soon," commented Chet Eginore.

Student From Mexico's BIG Adventure!

By Carol Donzella, State Volunteer Coordinator, Connecticut

Resource Conservationist Narcizo Guerrero-Murillo was thrilled to learn that a student from his home town in Mexico was coming for a visit.

Martin Rosas, a student at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo received a scholarship for his scholastic achievements and was granted a visit to a land of his choice to expand his knowledge. Without hesitation, he chose Connecticut and signed up as an Earth Team volunteer so he could work alongside Narcizo and other NRCS staff.

Martin visited a number of farms throughout New London County and was very impressed with the assistance that farmers receive from NRCS. He met a number of producers and learned about the conservation practices being installed on their farms. He especially liked visiting a Christmas tree farm and meeting with a retired state forester, as he is a Forestry major. He also learned about aerial photo interpretation and how to build a waste storage structure.

Martin is from the Indigena Comunidad of Nuevo San Juan Parangaricutiro from the state of Michoacán in Mexico. The Purepecha Native American community is famous worldwide for its excellent model in managing forests in a sustainable way. Martin is part of the forestry group that helps manage the forests. In addition to working full time, Martin is also pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry. This is his last semester in school before he graduates as an *Ingeniero Forestal*.

Martin really enjoyed his visit to Connecticut and working with his new NRCS friends. NRCS staff and Martin learned a lot from each other, making it a great experience for all. We wish Martin well with his studies and future endeavors and look forward to a continuing friendship.



Retired NRCS Forester C. Pete Merrill left and Martin Rosas

Sharing the Passion of Conservation

By David Williams, District Conservationist, Louisiana

Chances are that Bobby Carter, Soil Conservation Technician at the Alexandria Field Office, would agree that there is no greater joy than sharing a sincere passion with someone you love and having that person embrace the same passion. This past summer B. Ray Carter, Earth Team Volunteer, assisted his dad with boring a site. He was able to visualize and learn first hand the concepts of conserving our natural resources about which he had heard his father speak. The high point for Bobby was when he heard his son explain to his mother how and why certain soil holds water. Unknown to Bobby, B. Ray had carried home a plug of soil as a souvenir in his pocket. That was when Bobby realized the impact that sharing his interest in conservation had upon his son.



B. Ray Carter left and Bobby Carter, Soil Conservation Technician

Wetlands Festival Draws Statewide Crowd

By Sandra Plunkett, State Volunteer Coordinator, Louisiana



Ellen Hebert, District Secretary, providing conservation education

NRCS Thibodaux Field Office, Golden Meadows Plant Material Center, Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD, and NRCS Earth Team volunteers in Louisiana participated in the Voice of the Wetlands (VOW) Festival October 12-14, 2007. The VOW festival drew in more than 3,000 people from all over.

Local singer and guitarist Tab Benoit who founded the festival four years ago, hopes to bring national attention to the vanishing wetlands. The festival provides Mr. Benoit with an opportunity to “get people down here to see it.” Mr. Benoit feels that the federal government has to make the restoration of the coast a national priority.



Earth Team Volunteer Shanell Hebert right and Ellen Hebert

New this year at the festival was the offer by local Hammond Air Station in Houma to air lift the public allowing them to see the eroding coast line. Ellen Hebert, District Secretary, and Garret Thomassie, Soil Conservationist, along with Earth Team volunteers provided conservation information and educational material from NRCS and the SWCD.



Earth Team Volunteer Adam Hebert left and Ellen Hebert

Mrs. Hebert was interviewed by the local television station on the different vegetative projects that DNR/SWCD/NRCS has done in the past. Mrs. Hebert and Mr. Thomassie have been participating in this event for the last three years. The Voice of the Wetlands Festival is an opportunity to educate the general public about what NRCS and the SWCD have to offer the local parishes throughout Louisiana.

Iowa's Talking Earth Team!



Earth Team Coordinator Sarah Anderson pitched Earth Team to a group of 140 Iowa NRCS employees and partners at an area wide meeting.

Volunteers Assist in Celebrating Agriculture

By Carol Donzella, State Volunteer Coordinator, Connecticut

Nancy Ferlow, District Conservationist, stood out in a crowd with her very fashionable hat during the annual “Celebrating Agriculture” event held in Woodstock in September 2007. Nancy supervised a group of Earth Team volunteers who helped keep the event running smoothly by overseeing children’s activities, cleaning up, and helping out wherever needed.

Visitors began their day with a hearty breakfast of farm fresh eggs, bacon and hot cakes cooked and served by Earth Team volunteers. Then it was off to explore the many agricultural displays, demonstrations, games, crafts, farmer’s market, barnyard animals, cooking contest finals, farm tour, equine extravaganza, and a forestry exposition. They also enjoyed entertainment provided by local talent and sampled a variety of foods like bison burgers, chowder and apple crisps. For the grand finale, everyone joined together and paraded around the grounds to celebrate the day.



Nancy Ferlow

“Celebrating Agriculture” is an educational event which began in 2001 showcasing the benefits agriculture provides to the region as well as the challenges farmers face today. The goal of the celebration is to teach community members about bee keeping, forestry, farming, and all the other important faces of agriculture, while enjoying a day of good wholesome food, entertainment and fun.

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, which stretches from Northeastern Connecticut into South Central Massachusetts, is considered “The Last Green Valley” because of the significant amount of open space in the region, much of which is agricultural land. This farmland provides the area with a sustainable food supply and products necessary for basic everyday needs. The farms contribute to open space, wildlife, and the economic viability of the region.

May I Sign This Individual/Group Up As Member(s) of the Earth Team?

By, Michele Eginoire, National Volunteer Coordinator

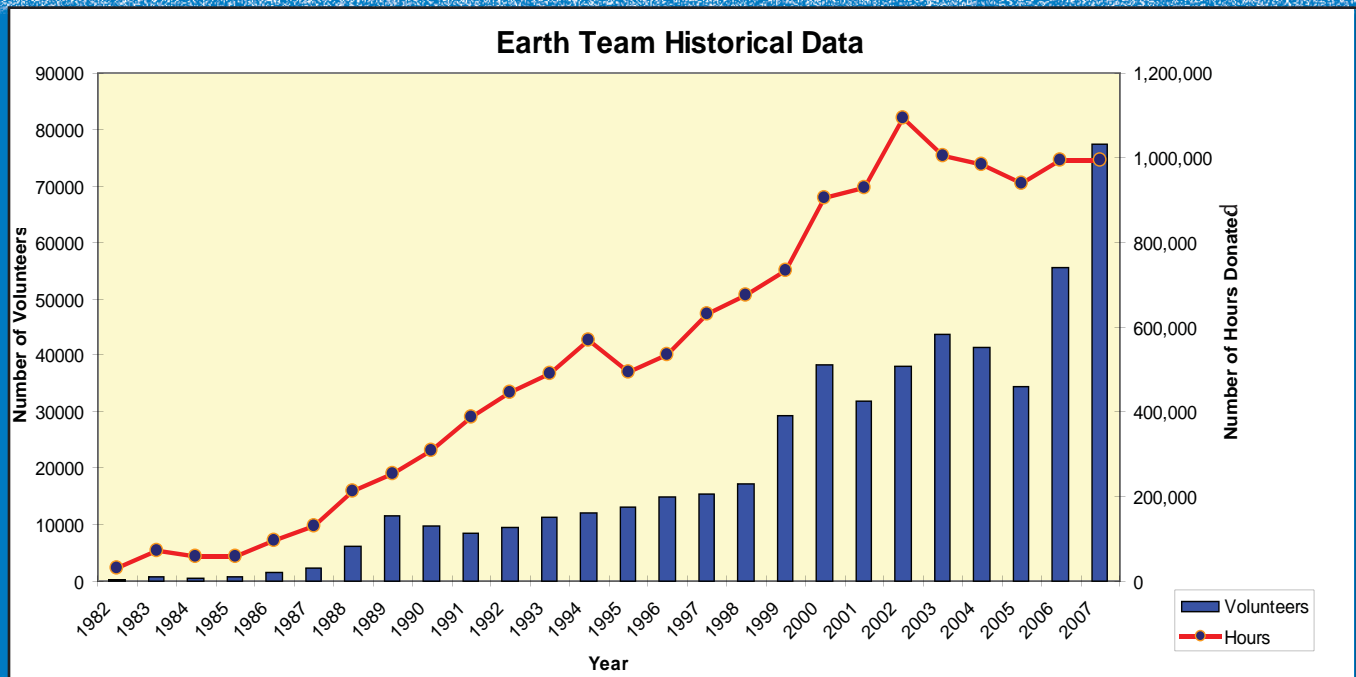
The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offers outstanding benefits to our volunteers. We provide work experience and an opportunity to be a part of the NRCS family. Earth Team members may be covered by worker's compensation or tort (claim) coverage if injured. Many non-profit groups ask to join our team due to these benefits.



We must always remember that the purpose of the Earth Team is to expand the services offered by NRCS. Although the national office collects statistics on the number of volunteers and the number of hours, we know that the success of the Earth Team is represented in the success stories of each volunteer and employee.

To answer the question of, "May I sign this individual or group up as part of the Earth Team?" Just answer the four questions below:

1. Is the individual at least 14 years old? If yes, move on to the next question.
2. If the individual is an NRCS employee, RC&D board member or employee, or district employee or council member is the job/tasks that they will be performing as an Earth Team volunteer outside of the scope of their paid or elected position? If yes, move on to the next question.
3. Is the job/tasks the individual will be performing something that an NRCS employee would or could perform? If yes, move on to the next question.
4. Is your state conservationist willing to extend worker's compensation and tort coverage for the individual/group if injured while performing the job/task? If yes, you may sign the individual/group up as member(s) of the Earth Team.



A Volunteer Coordinator - Success Story

By Sandra Plunkett, State Volunteer Coordinator, Louisiana

Vickie Fontenot, Area 2 Office Assistant and former State Volunteer Coordinator for Louisiana, was recently recognized by Kevin Norton, State Conservationist, for the work and enthusiasm she gave to the Earth Team.

Each project Vickie was involved with was made special because of her love for the Earth Team. Her originality and ability to see “outside the box” was evident when she was able to get the United States flag flown over the nation’s capitol to honor the volunteers in Louisiana. She also recruited Michael Doucet, a local Cajun artist to record an Earth Team public service announcement that was distributed to all offices in Louisiana. These were activities that most would not think of, let alone accomplish.

Vickie understood that Louisiana has many unique cultures, but most of all she recognized the unique resource of volunteers. Congratulations Vickie!



Vickie Fontenot left and Kevin Norton, Louisiana State Conservationist

Young Upstate New Yorker Enjoys Summer Volunteering for Colorado NRCS

By Mary Miller, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Colorado

“I’ve had a fun summer,” said Phillip Bolen, Earth Team Volunteer from New York who volunteered in La Junta, Colo. After doing well in the SAT tests a year ago, Bolen received a letter from the Colorado School of Mines inviting him to visit the campus during his 2007 spring break. Bolen and his dad, who lives in La Junta, were telling Mike Taylor, NRCS Area Engineer about their campus visit. Taylor mentioned that he could use a student volunteer to help with survey work during the summer, so Bolen signed up.



Phillip Bolen left and Mike Taylor, NRCS Area Engineer

Most of his 100 hours of volunteer time were spent assisting Taylor with survey work in the field. “We covered a lot of ground between the two of us,” said Taylor. “It makes it tremendously more efficient when there are two of us surveying.”

Bolen also did some drafting and had training on how to run a survey circuit with turns and cross sections. “Having helped with the survey work this summer will help me when I take a class in principles of engineering this coming school year,” said Bolen, who is now a junior at Oswego High School in upstate New York. He has already taken a computerized designing and drafting class.

Bolen’s goal is to become a civil engineer and since he feels the School of Mines is the premiere civil engineering institution, he hopes to return to the Colorado school once he graduates. He likes the diversity of NRCS engineer work but has always liked the idea of designing bridges.

Volunteers Assist With Eagle Scout Project

By Sandra Plunkett, State Volunteer Coordinator, Louisiana

Earth Team member Matthew Bumgardner, is an avid boy scout. In August 2006, Matthew conquered his plans of becoming an Eagle Scout. In order to develop into an Eagle Scout, one must finalize a mission to help enhance the district. Matthew, working with the NRCS and Dorcheat Soil & Water Conservation District on frequent occasions, recognizes that conservation is the key to improving the environment. With conservation in mind, Matthew approached the NRCS office with his strategy, and opened the door to the restoration of Hinton Park. Matthew gathered a team of five Earth Team volunteers and numerous other individual volunteers.



Hinton Park, once a handsome setting, had become disordered and ineffectual. Matthew, in conjunction with NRCS and Dorcheat District, designed tactics to clean up the park. It was determined that bridges should be rebuilt, with handrails added for safety. A total of six bridges were reconstructed. The group also marked all trees with accurate naming for visitors. All of the supplies used were donated by local establishments around the city, or bought personally by Matthew.



The crew begins construction of handrails for visitors' safety

Matthew Bumgardner left and volunteers who assisted with the Eagle Scout Project

Spreading the Word About Volunteering

By Sandra Plunkett, State Volunteer Coordinator, Louisiana

Cassie Doiron was a member in the Central Lafourche High Future Farmers of America (FFA) in high school and a member of the Nichols State University (NSU) Ag Club in college. Cassie now serves as the Crescent Soil and Water Conservation District Secretary in the Boutte Field Office and continues to work with the FFA and the Ag Club.

Cassie volunteered to attend the NSU Annual FFA Soils Judging Contest on October 3, 2007. She provided information to the students on NRCS and the Earth Team. Cassie described the process for becoming an Earth Team volunteer and listed the benefits. She provided each student with a Louisiana map highlighting the NRCS office locations, name, and phone numbers. Cassie provided this information to nine high school FFA groups with 85 students and 20 adults. In addition to the map, she provided them copies of the VolunteerVoice newsletter, Water Marks magazines, a general Louisiana soils map, and Crescent SWCD pencils.



Cassie also talked about the great opportunity of working for the NRCS as a soil conservationist. She emphasized the importance of taking soils classes in college if they wanted to have a career working with soil.



Cassie speaking to a group of students about the Earth Team and various NRCS programs

Cassie distributing information on NRCS programs and the Earth Team

Volunteer Learns About Careers in NRCS

By Carol Rickless, State Volunteer Coordinator, Massachusetts

A local high school junior, Evan Sullivan, interested in pursuing a career in environmental protection became a Massachusetts Earth Team volunteer in August 2007. Evan, a very bright, affable and mature young man, became a favorite of the Massachusetts NRCS staff.

Evan was given an overview of the agency through outings and meetings with staff members representing a variety of disciplines.

Dwane Coffey, District Conservationist with the Hadley NRCS Field Office, showed Evan how a fish passage was created with funding through the WHIP Program. Evan learned about the importance of obtaining proper permits, was shown erosion control practices and was given a quick lesson in tree and plant identification, including categorizing weeds as invasive or non-invasive. Evan learned that being a district conservationist is a multi-faceted job that includes working with landowners, sharing agricultural knowledge and administering NRCS programs.

Nancy Sheard, Civil Engineering Technician, and Dennis Verdi, Planning Engineer, met with Evan about an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) project. Evan was given some background on the EWP project and shown the construction plans for the project, the topographic survey that was done using AutoCAD software, and also an aerial view of the site using ARC GIS software. At the site, they conducted an update of the topographic cross section survey of the stream bank, with Evan assisting as a rod person and he was shown where the erosion occurred and how much land had been swept away.

“Evan was an excellent rod person, very attentive, interested, and even going back and forth across the river when needed,” said Nancy. “He was very enthusiastic about the work and willing to learn about surveying and engineering.”

Tom Akin, Agronomist, gave Evan the opportunity to see the process of creating viable partnerships for landowners across the New England States. Evan attended a meeting with a group of farmers and landowners interested in forming a consortium for the common purpose of helping grazing landowners.

John Kick, Natural Resource Specialist, showed Evan the administrative side to working at NRCS. He explained the function of NRCS databases and how they help manage workload and create transparency across the levels of government.

“Through my experiences in and out of the office, I came to understand how important collaboration is within the agency,” said Evan, “and how work is monitored in order to be efficient.”

Diane Petit, Public Affairs Specialist, illustrated to Evan her role in educating and informing the public about NRCS and its mission. Diane and Evan visited the Greenfield Field Office and met Rita Thibodeau, District Conservationist, Lisa Hall, Soil Conservationist and fellow Earth Team volunteer, Jennifer Cranshaw. Evan traveled with Diane to interview Carolyn and John Wheeler for an article that will be part of a new NRCS national campaign called “Conservation: Our Purpose. Our Passion.”

“I had a great experience working as a volunteer with NRCS employees,” said Evan. “The people I met and helped last August were very knowledgeable, motivated and fun to be with. I know a lot more about what NRCS really does in Massachusetts and how NRCS is such a big resource, especially to farmers.”

“My volunteer work with NRCS has also made me a lot less anxious about my chosen major in college, environmental engineering,” noted Evan. “I know for a fact it will be something I’ll be genuinely interested in not only as a student but also as an employed engineer. I have just started my senior year in high school, but looking back on my volunteer experience, I would rather be outdoors and surveying any day!”



Evan assisting as a rod person at the Ashfield site

Seeing the Importance of Agriculture

By Patty Shumway, State Volunteer Coordinator, Oregon



Catie Owens presenting the "Soil: More than Just Dirt" breakout session

Baker County, Oregon, fifth-graders can probably hand-thrash wheat with the best of them. But even with more than two dozen slashing palms and the advantage of youthful exuberance, they learned they were no match for a modern combine. They proved that fact last October during the first-ever "Field to Fork" outdoor education event, sponsored by the Baker County Farm Bureau and the Baker County Association of Conservation Districts, with help from the OSU (Oregon State University) Extension Service, the Baker County CattleWomen, and volunteers working through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team Volunteer Program.



Jim Colton shares why it is important to keep water clean

The two-day hands-on teaching symposium drew almost 400 students from Baker City, Haines, Huntington, and North Powder schools. More than 40 Earth Team volunteers, consisting of presenters, FFA (Future Farmers of America) student volunteers, parents, cooks, and SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District) directors put in many hours in order to achieve a successful event.



Ladies from the Baker County CattleWomen cooked up a lunch of locally grown products

Volunteer Dan Weitz, who presented the "Harvesting a Crop: Feeding the World" sessions gave students stalks of wheat and asked them to use their palms to thrash the wheat. After about 10 minutes, students pooled their work into one container and realized they only had enough to make one slice of bread. Worse, the grain wasn't even ready to be made into bread and needed to be milled into flour first.

Baker County OSU Extension Agent Cory Parsons, who taught a class on agricultural commodities, tried to get students to imagine a day without agriculture: no cotton for clothing, not much to eat, and no biodiesel or seat cushions for their yellow school bus.

"When I first asked them how many could make it for a day without agriculture, they all raised their hands," Parsons said. "But after we talked about it for a while, they weren't so sure."

Dan Weitz instructing students how to hand-thrash wheat

The former director of Baker Valley Irrigation District and Earth Team Volunteer Jim Colton, got kids to think about water as an "invisible resource" by distributing jars of water sullied with different impurities, including dirt and vinegar.

Volunteer Jay Carr doing a hands-on activity about imports and exports



Catie Owens, an economist with NRCS, helped design the event to be both fun and thought-provoking. "I think it's critical for kids to understand that farmers are good stewards of the land and for them to know where their food comes from. Agriculture education is one of my passions," she said. "Kids learn that the things farmers do to the land are bad from the media." Our goal was to make this first event really fun, because if they're having fun, they'll learn something."

Catie said the sponsoring organizations plan to offer the event again next year. "This all started when Travis Bloomer, (NRCS District Conservationist), and I did a project with high school forestry students," she said. "We were both amazed with their lack of knowledge about agricultural practices. This education event was made possible by the sponsors, our many partners, and the NRCS Earth Team volunteers. We look for another successful event next year."



FFA volunteers are getting everything set up

An Ending Note From Bonnie...



Bonnie Allely, National Volunteer Liaison

It's that time of year, when we all need to take a moment and reflect back on the events of the past year both professionally and personally. Professionally the Earth Team did an outstanding job with approximately 78,000 volunteers who donated over a million hours for our agency in 2007. WOW!!

The success stories are numerous and I just want to take a moment and say "Thanks" to all of you who are a part of the Earth Team family!

Personally, I made it through my first year of marriage and raising a teenager – WHEW!! It was interesting, frustrating - yes - even fun!

But as we reflect on this past year, let us learn from our successes and perhaps a few failures along the way and look forward to another year of work with the Earth Team. There are a number of special days for service throughout the year and some of them in 2008 are:

- National Mentoring Month – January
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – January 21
- Random Acts of Kindness Week – February 11-17
- National Earth Day – April 22
- National Youth Service Days – April 25-27
- National Volunteer Week – April 27 – May 3
- Join Hands Day – May 3

Take a moment to reflect but then let's join forces and Light the Way for 2008!!

Best Wishes for a GREAT New Year!!!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie".

Submissions to VolunteerVoice

Articles and photos for publication should be e-mailed, via your State Volunteer Coordinator, to venessa.alvarado@ia.usda.gov. Submissions may also be mailed or faxed to NRCS at 5140 Park Ave, Suite C, Des Moines, IA 50321, fax (515)-289-4561. Please include photographs to illustrate the article. JPEG images are preferred; prints are accepted. If you are using a digital camera, remember to set the camera to the highest quality resolution. Please submit stories as Word files and limit to one page in length. Submission deadlines for 2008 Fiscal Year VolunteerVoice are:

- * Second Quarter 2008 - Distribution March 2008. Deadline to submit: 02/15/08
- * Third Quarter 2008 - Distribution June 2008. Deadline to submit: 05/15/08
- * Fourth Quarter 2008 - Distribution September 2008. Deadline to submit: 08/15/08

For more information on the Earth Team and the VolunteerVoice, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov or call 1-888-LANDCARE.

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