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# West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
August 2007

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Cabell Midland FFA team won the Mid America Grassland Contest. Summer Agricultural Institute

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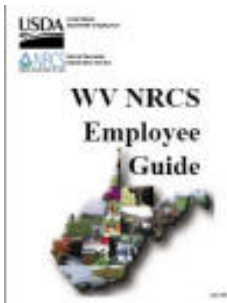
## Useful Web Links

Web mail, Detail Opportunities Bulletin Board, Forms Website, How to Compose your KSA's, Do you have lost money? EPA Regulations, Copyright FAQ.

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## Civil Rights



Penny Sheeler Recognized, West Virginia NRCS Employee Guide, Disability Etiquette, Diversity Day Luncheon

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## Meet



### **Eileen O'Neill Soil Scientist**

Major Land Resource Area # 127 South Soil Survey Project Office

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## Personnel News



Updates, details, eOPF, and Gary Milliman Retires

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To submit news items for the November *News and Views*, please send an e-mail message to [Carol Lagodich](#).

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS West Virginia State Office

75 High Street Room 301, Morgantown, WV 26505

304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839

<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Kevin Wickey, West Virginia State Conservationist

NRCS field offices are located throughout West Virginia

Visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/> for addresses and phone numbers.

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## Message from Kevin Wickey

Last month, I attended the National Leadership Team meeting in D.C. The Chief emphasized three key messages:

- We must make conservation easier.
- We must remain focused on our core missions—collecting natural resources data, developing sound practice standards, conservation planning and providing technical assistance—to meet the needs of our customers.
- We must engage in cooperative conservation—no single individual or agency can do this job alone.

Placement of roller compacted concrete was completed last week on the Elkwater Fork Dam. I've had the opportunity to see this dam three times now and each time I am amazed at how big this dam is. But more importantly I'm amazed at the ability we have within NRCS in West Virginia to plan, design, and build such projects. This is an enormous accomplishment. It is even more amazing when one considers that it is only one of three active watershed projects under construction this year in West Virginia including Little Whitestick and Decker's Creek.

The middle of August is here and it is as busy as we expected for this time period and even more. I mentioned earlier this year that we would be given opportunities to work our way out of the deficit situation. The good news is that we we are seeing more opportunities in EQIP and WHIP for our customers in West Virginia than we have ever seen and now we have a balanced budget. However, this is creating lots of additional work for field offices in addition to the construction season, reporting progress, closing out legacy programs at the end of the farm bill and generally preparing for the end of the fiscal year now just 1.5 months away.

It is important during this busy time not to lose sight of the bigger picture. I've had the opportunity recently to be on several farms. It struck me again how much of a

difference our technical assistance as well as our financial assistance makes for our customers. It is easy to see evidence of our work on the landscape. Work that will be present for many years to come. Thank you for your continued dedication to getting conservation on the ground - Helping People Help the Land.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Wickey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kevin Wickey

State Conservationist

West Virginia

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## From the Field

### Mountain RC&D Resource Conservation and Development

The Mountain Resource Conservation & Development has had a long term working relationship with the McDowell County Wastewater Coalition. This year the RC&D has assisted the Coalition with financial support for its VISTA position that coordinates the water monitoring program, project planning, and education outreach. The Council has also assisted with funding to update and reprint the Coalition's county wide wastewater plan, and is currently administering the 2006-7 WV Stream Partners grant to monitor the environmental condition of streams in McDowell County. This partnership will become even more valuable as WV NRCS has been funded for its first Raid Watershed Assessment which will address environmental concerns on the Big Sandy Watershed.

The RC&D Council recognized the magnitude of the environmental problems in the Elkhorn Creek watershed and has stepped forward by providing funding along with local suppliers to help with the installation of a new wastewater treatment system for the Children's Advocacy Center in McDowell County.



The Children's Advocacy Center, represented by Sharon Walden, Carmela Fredricks, and Candice Keasler, with funding check to help with the installation of a new wastewater treatment system.

The Mountain RC&D has partnered with the Mercer NAACP in providing a matching \$500 Leadership Development Scholarship for continuing education. The RC&D recognizes that regions of our state need assistance in developing future leaders for communities to improve.

The RC&D Council has been very interested in outdoor education so it was no surprise when the Education Committee awarded Brittany Bauer with the Rural Appalachian



Improvement League a \$500 check to help with the development of the Mullens Outdoor learning Center. This facility will be accessible to young and old and provide environmental educational opportunities for all.



Mike Gasper presented Project Coordinator Brittany Bauer with a check for the Mullens Outdoor Learning Center.

Mountain RC&D partnering with Little Kanawha RC&D has been able to provide refurbished Xerox copiers to area non-profits. At this time in the Mountain Area the copier project has benefits organizations in Braxton, Fayette, and Pocahontas Counties.

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### Little Kanawha RC&D Resource Conservation and Development

The Little Kanawha RC&D Council is moving forward, assisting non-profits, schools and churches through its Project Sharing program. The council plans to provide nearly \$1 million in donated goods this year, with items such as food, school/office supplies, computer printers, stuffed animals and items for hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and child-care organizations, soft drinks to summer work programs, Bible schools and church camps, and a variety of other supplies. Recently, the council began distributing Xerox copiers as a part of the project.



The spring Lawn, Garden & Forestry Expo saw 2,000 people in attendance, with 64 vendors. The two-day event featured unique exhibits with everything from equipment used in farming and gardening, to log home furnishings, outdoor landscaping and water gardens, to blends of seasonings made in-state. Also enjoyed were the wood-carving and food demonstrations by talented professionals, timbers ports competition, and guest speakers who provided an abundance of information. Plan on attending next year with fun for all ages.



Jim Ash was recently honored for his dedication and service to the Little Kanawha RC&D Council. He is active with several projects and serves as the council Vice-Chairman.

For more information, contact [Kurt Simon](#) at the [Little Kanawha RC&D Office](#)

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## Dry Fire Hydrants Help Local Rural Community

The rural community of Clintonville, West Virginia has had very limited access to public water to assist with fire protection. With the cooperation of the members of the Clintonville Volunteer Fire Department and the Greenbrier Valley Conservation District, the NRCS Lewisburg Field Office staff assisted with the installation of a dry fire hydrant. Dry fire hydrants are non pressurized fire hydrants permanently installed in water sources such as ponds, streams, and cisterns.

The newly installed dry fire hydrant was designed by the local NRCS office.



The Greenbrier Valley Conservation District provided funding for the installation of this dry fire hydrant in Clintonville and has also agreed to fund another dry fire hydrant project for the Clintonville Volunteer Fire Department.

A dry hydrant provides a convenient hook-up and a supply of untreated water. In West Virginia where fire departments often have difficulty finding adequate water supplies, dry hydrants can be a tremendous help. Not only will the installation of the new dry fire hydrant assist the Clintonville Volunteer Fire Department, it may also help decrease the fire insurance for local landowners.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#) at the [Lewisburg Service Center](#)



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## Bits and Pieces



### New Species of North American Bamboo

Submitted by Robert Pate

*Arundinaria  
appalachiana*

A new species of North American bamboo was discovered in the hills of Appalachia. It is the third known native species of the hardy grass. The other two were discovered more than 200 years ago. Although the plant was known to the people in the area, its distinctiveness was not recognized. Hill cane differs from the other two native North American bamboo species — commonly known as switch cane and river cane — in an important way: It drops its leaves in the fall.

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2007-03/isu-isu031207.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-03/isu-isu031207.php)

### 2007 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government

Of 19 agencies and executive offices NRCS placed second among USDA agencies in the 2007 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government report. Out of all agencies, NRCS ranked 44.

The 2007 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings include 283 federal organizations and are based on the responses of more than 221,000 employees. See

<http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/index.php?>

[t=scores\\_subcomponent&c=index](http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/index.php?t=scores_subcomponent&c=index) for the complete report.

General NRCS information and demographics are at: [http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/agency.php?code=AG16&q=scores\\_subcomponent](http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/agency.php?code=AG16&q=scores_subcomponent)

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## DigiTop

DigiTop is a service from the National Agricultural Library for USDA employees worldwide. DigiTop brings you access to the full text of more than 4,000 scientific journals, nearly 1,500 news sources (including 600 U.S. newspapers and magazines), and 14 key databases.

Get new journal tables of contents as they come out, receive the latest published in a specific subject or by a specific author, or be notified when a particular article is cited.

Then, daily, weekly or monthly - your choice - the alerts you create will deposit the latest results in your inbox. To conserve space, only the first 25 matches will appear, but your full results are just a click away, as is the full text of each article cited (if available via DigiTop).

Building an alert is simple, but if you'd like a little guidance, check out our tutorial on "Building a Table of Contents Alert in Scopus" (<[http://www.nal.usda.gov/digitop/training/ScopusTOC\\_viewlet\\_swf.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/digitop/training/ScopusTOC_viewlet_swf.html)>). Or select from a range of additional tutorials on the Scopus site (<<http://digitop.nal.usda.gov/scopustutor.htm>>) and become an expert in no time.

With Scopus' rich database and sophisticated search features, you can craft searches to pinpoint just the information you need, combining ease, precision and customization to deliver what you need when you need it.

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## USDA Announces Colony Collapse Disorder Research Action Plan

Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics Gale Buchanan announced (July 13) that USDA researchers have finalized an action plan for dealing with colony

collapse disorder (CCD) of honey bees. Buchanan said, "There were enough honey bees to provide pollination for U.S. agriculture this year, but beekeepers could face a serious problem next year and beyond. This action plan provides a coordinated framework to ensure that all of the research that needs to be done is covered in order to get to the bottom of the CCD problem." The plan is available at [www.ars.usda.gov/is/br/ccd/ccd\\_actionplan.pdf](http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/br/ccd/ccd_actionplan.pdf)

Contact: Jennifer Martin

(202) 720-8188.

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## WV NRCS Projects Showcased

West Virginia welcomed Richard Coombe (Regional Assistant Chief – East) and Bruce Julian (Chief of Staff) during a tour of several projects on July 24-25, 2007. Kevin Wickey, Louis Aspey, and Dick Judy hosted the visit, which showcased the diverse ways NRCS in West Virginia is helping people help the land.

After speaking at the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts quarterly meeting, Mr. Coombe began the tour with a visit to the Little Whitestick Creek construction site in Raleigh County. The channel modification project will lessen flood damages for several commercial structures when completed in 2008. The group was met on site by local sponsors and lead through the work area during a presentation by Loren Rice, who is overseeing construction.

The group proceeded north to Clay County, where District Conservationist John Cox guided a farm visit to discuss some of the Farm Bill programs active in the state. A local cooperator participating in EQIP, AMA, and CSP discussed contract-based assistance from a customer perspective.

The Elkwater Fork Water Supply Dam was the final stop on the tour. When completed in 2008, the 54-acre reservoir retained by the 123-foot tall roller-compacted concrete dam will be the dedicated water supply source for approximately 22,000 Randolph County residents. The project is one of the largest contracts ever administered by NRCS.



This is a view of the top of the dam from the left abutment. Construction crews work two shifts per day to prepare and place roller-compacted concrete.



Richard Coombe and Bruce Julian observed the evening concrete placement and returned the next morning to see the upstream side of the dam.



Richard Coombe watches construction from the downstream right abutment.

Go to <http://www.wboy.com/story.cfm?func=viewstory&storyid=27589> for WBOY TV story and video of the dam.

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## New Name for Alderson Plant Materials Center

The Alderson Plant Materials Center is now called the Appalachian Plant Materials Center. The name has been changed to represent the area served.

The cultivar 'Panbowl', a river alder, was released by the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in 2007. As an item of interest, this is the Appalachian PMC's first plant release from its Alderson, WV location. Foundation plants are available to commercial and government nurseries to establish seed orchards. More information on 'Panbowl' is available at <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/pmc/07aprAlder.html>

The Appalachian Plant Materials Center (PMC) serves a wide variety of land users in the Appalachian Region by evaluating plants for their ability to solve specific conservation problems related to:

- climate
- rugged topography
- soil limitations
- various land uses
- fish and wildlife needs
- desires of the landowners

The PMC assembles plants from the entire service area with similar soils and climate, evaluates the plants, develops management techniques, and provides seed and plants for planting to test performance throughout the area.

The PMC provides a place for conducting systematic observations and evaluations of plants needed to protect our natural resources. New techniques are developed for the propagation, establishment, management, and use for new or improved species of grasses, legumes, shrubs and trees.



Plants are an important tool for conservation. The PMC program is devoted to promoting and providing plant materials and technology for conservation.

For more information on the Appalachian Plant Materials Center, go to <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/wvpmc.html>

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# WV Voluntary Farmland Protection Program Growing

Submitted by Patrick Bowen, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

The WV Voluntary Farmland Protection Program in the state is growing and conserving more and more farms as time rolls on.



Supported by Conservation Districts and their representative supervisors, 19 county farmland protection boards have been established and 16 boards are fully operational. Passed in 2000, the WV Voluntary Farmland Protection Act empowered county commissions to appoint a farmland protection board and charge it with developing a program to voluntarily protect farmlands in their county.

In 2002, the legislature passed an amendment which allowed the county commissions to enact a transfer tax upon real estate exchanges to fund the county programs. The funds collected can only be used to carry out a farmland protection program in the respective county.

County farmland protection boards are funded through the county commission. Once a board develops a program which is approved by the county commission, it can publicize its program and begin taking applications for farmland protection easements. On the basis of a ranking criteria system, farms are scored and ranked according to the locally developed criteria and selected for funding to the limits of funds available in the county program. Typically, the county programs begin with one or two projects per year and as funding and interest grows, more farmland agricultural conservation easements are developed.

The land is protected by a deed of agricultural conservation easement which is developed with the current farm landowner and is recorded in the county court house

attached to the deed for the farm. The agricultural conservation easements prevent any further subdivision or development of the tract except for agricultural activities. Farmed woodlots and wetlands are eligible lands and timber may be harvested under a board approved timber management plan developed by a state licensed forester and approved by the board. The WV Farmland Protection Authority has been appointed and has been working at the state level on issues related to training and education and support to the county boards and is working with others to seek state funding of the program and may seek a bonding authority to provide more funds to the effort but that will require legislature action and public support. The boards may apply to the NRCS for Farm and Ranchland Protection Program funds to cost share on purchasing easements in their county. To date, deals have been developed in the following counties using local transfer tax, federal funds, and other funds:

### West Virginia Voluntary Farmland Protection

Year	Number of Farms	Acres	Federal FRPP \$ (Millions)	Easement Value (Millions)
2007	13	1310	\$2.14	\$4.47
2006	8	1035	\$1.87	\$3.77
2005	10	1428	\$2.00	\$5.82
2004	14	1782	\$1.60	\$5.42
2003	12	920	\$0.98	\$2.75
2002	4	550	\$0.40	\$1.30
Total	61	7025	\$8.98	\$23.53

Total Federal FRPP funding: \$8.98 million

Total local/county funding: \$14.55 million

- Average Easement Value = \$3,349 per Acre
- Average Farm Size = 115 Acres
- Range of Farm Sizes = 6 up to 265 Acres
- Range of Easement Values = \$250 up to \$16,000 per acre
- Highest Offered Easement Value = \$35,000 /ac (Not Selected/Withdrawn)

The success of this program was greatly enhanced by the support of WVU Extension,

Conservation Districts, and NRCS employees.

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### Farmland Preservation the topic at Dinner Meetings



Submitted by Peg Reese

Pat Bowen, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in the East Area (left in photo) , and Lavonne Paden, Executive Director for the Farmland Protection Authority (right in photo), hit the road for a series of dinner meetings this year. Audiences in Berkeley, Fayette, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Grant, Jackson, Keyser, Marshall, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Preston, and Summers Counties now have a better understanding of farmland protection goals.

Harold Kessel, retired SCS Area Conservationist (center in photo), was the MC at the Grant County meeting. Harold is serving as the President of the Grant County Farmland Protection Board. At the meeting, they proudly distributed their newly developed Farmland Protection Plan.

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## Club uses WHIP to Improve Former Mine

The Clearco Sportsman's Club of Charmco, WV signed up to participate in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) in 2005. They are using WHIP to improve habitat for turkey and other wildlife. Turkeys need vegetative growth for food, shelter, and nesting sites. The club's president, Bud Whitlow, works with Tom Vance (District Conservationist) and Katy McBride, (Soil Conservationist) at the Lewisburg Service Center.



The Clearco Sportsman's Club leases approximately 3,695 acres from MeadWestvaco. The area is a reclaimed mine site with forest land.

The Club has been working on improving the land for turkeys by:

- taking soil samples and applying lime and fertilizer according to the West Virginia University (WVU) soil test recommendations to improve the forage quality,
- creating 60 acres of food plots that consist of cool season grasses/legume mix•increasing the plant diversity and helping improve the wildlife habitat, and
- purchasing a tractor, spreader, and other farm equipment to manage the crops on a continuing basis.

Fertilizer and lime are most effective when used in the proper amounts. That is the reason for soil testing•to determine the amount of lime and the proper fertilizers for the crop or plants to be grown. The tests indicated lime was needed. The club brought lime trucks in during the fall. Pellet lime will be used in some spots where trucks can't go.



The club created 60 acres of food plots which increase the plant diversity and improve wildlife habitat. The openings are up to 3 acres in size. The openings allow sunshine to reach the low-growing vegetation and are areas where turkeys can obtain insects.

Food plots provide seeds and insects for turkeys. Taller grasses provide cover.

MeadWestvaco provides a seed mixture including rye, tall fescue, timothy, trefoil, millet, and clovers. The club adds additional clover to the mix. Clover is a nitrogen fixer and turkeys feed on the leaves, flower heads, and insects that live on the plants.

"There was just black coal dirt up here. We plowed it, limed it, and fertilized it. We didn't haul in any soil. We just did what was said on the soil plan. Its changed the soil—its much better." said Bud Whitlow, club president.



Millet is a quick growing plant that produces abundant seed and is an excellent food for turkeys.



"This used to be a gravel parking lot (left photo). I disked it all up one day and took the spreader and fertilized it, and planted it last year" said Bud. "You can see what it did. It's done well, hasn't it?" The photo on the right shows the result.



"One of the guys with a tractor thought he had a 5 gallon bucket of diesel fuel but it was a 5 gallon bucket of corn seed. He said, 'I'm not taking it back' and I said I'm planting it." said Bud. Corn fields attract turkeys during periods of severe weather in late winter and early spring when food supplies are short.

"This has done better than I ever thought. This is our second year doing this. This has been a learning experience. I knew nothing about farming before," said Bud. Fall planting was tried but it wasn't as successful as spring planting. It gets dry in September and it was damaged more by the freezing and heaving. We now sow in March." They also improved their plowing. Chemical herbicides and pesticides have not been used.

The food plots benefit other wild birds. The tall crops such as millet and corn can supply cover as well as grain for quail and ruff grouse. Wood cock are also seen in the

woodlands and thickets near the food plots. Clover may maintain population of rabbits.



Bear and bear scat (left photo) have been seen in the food plots.



The club has logged 242 tractor hours and 35 hand labor hours so far in 2007. In September, some of the plots will be mowed again with the brush hog set on high for better clover. Some plots will be mowed every other year. Three tractors were used this year. Several members brought their own.



The plots are at about 4,000 feet in elevation. The growing season is 90-100 days. Plowing starts the end of April or first of May.

Thirty new plots are planned for next year.

The WHIP program provides lime, fertilizer, perennial seed, and payments for labor costs and equipment. "The club members are out talking to other landowners about the WHIP program," said Katy.

"Bud Whitlow and the Clearco Sportsman Club have followed through with their plans. We need more groups like them," said Tom Vance. "This former strip mine has benefited from WHIP and the results are obvious."

The Clearco Sportsman's Club is limited to 30 members from around West Virginia. There is a waiting list to join the club. Bud got the idea to try food plots from an elk magazine. The Clearco Sportsman's Club was recognized by MeadWestvaco as the West Virginia Club of the Year in 2005.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP, NRCS provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and

the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed. For more information on WHIP in West Virginia go to [http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/07\\_whip/07\\_whip.html](http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/07_whip/07_whip.html)

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## The Dirt on Worms

S.K. Worm, (the S.K. stands for "Scientific Knowledge") is the mascot for NRCS conservation education. He says to get in the know about natural resources, you've got to get smart about the soil.

The NRCS website (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FEATURE/backyard/wonworm.htm>) explains the wonders of worms. Worms can be beneficial to agricultural and garden soil. But worms in the woods may have a dark side because they are just too good at what they do.

Non-native earthworms were brought to America by the first colonists. Some probably arrived with mud-packed root-balls of transported plants brought from Europe. Ships traveling to North America used rocks and soil as ballast which was dumped on shore.

The effects of this earthworm invasion have been slow to show because the segmented worms don't spread rapidly on their own. The widespread use of earthworms as fishing bait has spread them to more remote areas. All common bait worms are non-native species.

There is growing concern about invasions of European and Asian earthworm species, especially in northern temperate forests of the United States and Canada. These hardwood forests have developed without earthworms. Around 18,000 years ago, thick ice sheets killed all the native earthworms in the glaciated areas of North America. Because earthworms are extremely slow moving, recolonization by native worms is slow. Non native earthworms seem more adaptable to a wide range of environmental conditions. Native North American species are less cold and dehydration resistant. Native earthworms are still confined mostly to the Southeast and Pacific Northwest.

Forests ecosystems that evolved without earthworms depend upon fungi and

invertebrate detritivores to slowly break down organic matter and gradually release nutrients back to the plants. These hardwood forests have thick forest floor layers that serve as rooting medium for many species of forest herbs and tree seedlings. Earthworm activities that create healthy conditions for farms and gardens may cause unhealthy conditions for forests. Earthworms have voracious appetites. In the most heavily affected areas, the invading worms have devastated plants and turned forest floors once covered with leaf litter into bare soil.

The West Virginia Native Plants Society has a web posting called *The Trouble with Worms*.

The leaf litter in a forest is comparable to the skin on an animal. It retains moisture, protects the organs (roots), breathes, prevents erosion, deters pathogens (non-native plants), and promotes seed germination. A nutrient balance has evolved in this stable system between the vegetation above ground and the enormous biosphere in and below the leaf litter. When that system loses its leaf litter it is like puncturing your skin. Erosion follows and nutrients bleed quickly from the soil. Such disturbance soon exposes the soil, making it available to non-native, invasive plant species, compaction, and run-off of rainwater, which would normally keep the soil moist. The disturbed soil and invasive plants soon alter the stable system, causing a decrease in the diversity of plant/animal relationships, which in turn begins a cycle of non-native invasions that tend toward monocultures. When worms devour the duff, they aren't just harming the flora-- the habitat for ground nesting birds, salamanders ... everything is also affected.

Given the slow migration of earthworms in soil, most experts agree that containing them is of lower priority than preventing new introductions. Without humans moving them around, earthworms move slowly, less than a half mile over 100 years. If we stop introducing them forest can be earthworm free areas for a long time. Help by getting the word out to the public.

- If you fish, do not dump your extra worms out on the ground in forested areas.

- Some of the traits that make worms ideal for vermicomposting—such as high reproductive rate and adaptability—may also make them potentially successful invaders. If you have a compost pile in a forested area, do not introduce additional non-native earthworms.

For additional information, go to:

*The Trouble with Worms*

By Dennis Burton, Director of Land Restoration, The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, West Virginia Native Plant Society Website.

<http://www.wvnps.org/earthworms.html>

*Invasive Earthworms—A Threat to North American Forests*

Plants & Gardens News | Volume 19, Number 1 | Spring 2004

Brooklyn Botanic Garden website

[http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/essays/2004su\\_worms.html](http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/essays/2004su_worms.html)

*Exotic Worms Killing Off. American Plants*

John Pickrell for National Geographic News

[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/01/0102\\_030102\\_earthworms.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/01/0102_030102_earthworms.html)

*America, Found and Lost*

Charles C. Mann, National Geographic

<http://www7.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0705/feature1/index.html>

*Great Lakes Worm Watch*

<http://www.nrri.umn.edu/worms/default.htm>



*Contain those Crawlers*

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FEATURE/backyard/wonworm.htm>

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## LANDCARE office offers free on-line shopping for NRCS publications

Looking for a national NRCS brochure? Would you like to borrow a national NRCS display? The NRCS LANDCARE office can help. Located in Des Moines, Iowa, the LANDCARE office warehouses and processes orders for NRCS publications, forms and displays for NRCS employees and the general public.

Anyone can order single copies of publications or by the box. Orders may be placed by phone or on-line. And best of all, there is no charge.

Orders may be placed by calling 1-888-LANDCARE (1-888-526-3227), or by visiting <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov/>

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### Ordering National Publications and Forms Online

Visit our web page at <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov> where you can "View" all forms or publications, "Browse All" or "Search" for a specific item. If you are looking for a specific item or material on a specific topic, use the "Search" field.

Hint: To minimize your search results DO NOT type in the complete title, type in only one word in the title (i.e. "Water Cycle Poster" – when searching use "cycle" for "What is a Watershed?" – when searching use "what." You can also use the form number which works best (i.e. PA-1621)

It is recommended that you read the item descriptions carefully because several of our items are available:

- Only to NRCS Employees (can only be ordered by NRCS Offices).
- Only as "print on demand" ([customers must e-mail landcare@usda.gov](mailto:customers must e-mail landcare@usda.gov)).

- Only as a PDF (can only be downloaded).
- May be restricted to limited quantities.

Enter the quantity that you wish to order in the “Copies Requested” field which represents “individual copies” unless noted in the item description.

Hint: if an item has 500 copies per box and you wish to receive the entire box place “500” in the “Copies Requested” field.

You MUST select the “Update Basket” button each time you add an item to your basket or adjust the quantity. If you fail to “Update Basket” the “Copies Requested” field will default back to one copy. When your order is complete – select the “Checkout” button.

Once you have selected the “Checkout” button, you will be asked to enter your shipping information. Please provide a complete mailing address including Suite #'s, Room #'s and Apartment #'s (PO Boxes are not allowed). Select the “Next” button when you have entered your shipping information.

When you have successfully placed an order you will get a confirmation that reads “Your order has been received.”

Hint: If you see an error screen that reads “Page Cannot Be Displayed” you may have tried to order a PDF ONLY or a Print on Demand item. Just select the “Back” button on your browser and review your order for any of these items – adjust your order accordingly and select “Place Order” again.

All orders are shipped within 3-5 business days and NRCS material is provided to you at no charge!

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## Conservation Education

### Cabell Midland FFA team won the Mid America Grassland Contest

(Submitted by Gary Redden).



The Cabell Midland FFA team won the 8th Annual Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest June 5-6, 2007 at Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

The members of the team are Allison Robinson, Steven Clagg, Cassandra Morgan, Leesha Campbell. Allison was also High Point individual in the contest.

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!!**

The goal of the contest is to educate students in the benefits, use and management of grasslands for livestock production and wildlife habitat. The Grassland Evaluation program consists of four sections: 1) Grassland Condition, 2) Soil Interpretation, 3) Wildlife Habitat, and 4) Plant Identification. Each of these factors must be considered in evaluating pastures to best utilize the resource and to help make useful management decisions. A contest team consists of 3 or 4 FFA or 4-H members who are currently enrolled at the high school level.

This is the second overall championship that WV has had in this contest in 7 years. Monroe 4H won its division in 2004. Allison is the 1st Overall high Point Champion to come from WV.

For more information go to <http://boe.cabe.k12.wv.us/newsdetail.php?article=363>

## Summer Agricultural Institute

The annual Summer Agricultural Institute was attended by over 70 teachers from across West Virginia. NRCS was invited by the West Virginia Farm Bureau, WVU Extension Service, and the WVU Davis College of Agriculture and Forestry to share information the teachers could take back to their classroom.



Henry Ferguson, Soil Scientist - Data Management Specialist at the National Geospatial Development Center, demonstrated some of the many soil education activities he compiled on a website at <http://www.ngdc.wvu.edu/~hferguson/educationNGDC/>



Carol Lagodich, Public Affairs Specialist, provided publications and posters.

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## Chief Arlen L. Lancaster Speaks to NRCS Employees at SWCS Conference

Submitted by Peg Reese

While in Florida attending the International Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference, LaRae Baker and I were able to meet the NRCS Chief, Arlen L. Lancaster, and hear him speak twice.

During the Opening Session, Lancaster shared three priorities:

- Continue to prepare ourselves as an Agency and as a conservation community to meet new challenges. Details maybe found in the NRCS Strategic Plan, Human Capital Strategic Plan, the five-year investment plan for technology, Conservation Innovation Grants, and the five-year vision for CEAP. NRCS is also expanding "partnerships as a force multiplier."
- Make conservation easier for landowners. Ensure that landowners have timely and authoritative information about our programs, that eligibility and requirements are easily understood, and that the application process is as user-friendly as possible. The Chief has asked for an adaptive management approach to our standards wherein we continue to recognize that while NRCS must have quality criteria, we are designing for our customers. We need to find more standards that are affordable and more easily implemented.
- Demonstrate the benefits of conservation through accountability, transparency, and good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Chief Lancaster reported that the Secretary's Farm Bill proposals would increase conservation funding by \$7.8 billion over 10 years, simplify and consolidate programs, support emerging priorities, and direct benefits to beginning farmers and ranchers and socially disadvantaged producers. The proposal suggests that 10% of Farm Bill



conservation funding be dedicated to beginning producers.

During the SWCS meeting, he agreed to address all the NRCS employees at an early morning meeting. While his carefully constructed opening session speech gave a good overview of the direction he is steering the agency, his unscripted presentation resonated with me more. I came away with an increased appreciation of his understanding and respect for NRCS's mission and employees.

Chief Lancaster began by telling us that during the past year he has had many conversations with farmers and partners who tell him that NRCS has a tremendous reputation. "All I hear are complements about the dedication and knowledge of NRCS employees," Lancaster said. "Farmers trust us. They have confidence in our data because it is backed by science. But also, because of the relationship we have with them."

The Chief has seen data that shows how effective conservation technical assistance is and how important it is to landowners. He recognizes that much of the conservation is done on private lands without Farm Bill dollars.

Professional development is important. Lancaster encouraged us to continue participating in professional organizations such as SWCS and to take advantage of details to broaden knowledge and experience.

Our workload is heavy and we can't do it alone. Chief Lancaster encourages NRCS employees to recruit and use Earth Team Volunteers. "Earth Team is part of our delivery system."

Thanking us for our service and dedication, Lancaster said "No other agency has done more to make real change on the ground." He reminded us that "Going out to the farm is the most important part of your job. Go do good things."

Shaking Chief Lancaster's hand and hearing his extemporaneous presentation are only two of the things that made attending the SWCS meeting rewarding. I like to go to the meetings because they are always a broadening experience and sometimes influential to my career. Attending the international SWCS conference enables me to hear interesting ideas, meet new people, and catch up with old friends. This year I had an opportunity to reconnect with Ed Wright, a former Soil Scientist and District

Conservationist in West Virginia. Currently, Ed works with water boards in Florida. He just bought a new house and is considering retirement.

I encourage my NRCS colleagues to consider attending an international SWCS meeting. The 2008 conference is scheduled for July 26-30, 2008 in Tucson, AZ. In 2009, the conference will be held in Dearborn, MI.

In closing, I'd like to thank State Conservationists Kevin Wickey for granting approval to LaRae Baker and me to attend the International Soil and Water Conservation Society meeting.

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## All Hands-On Deckers Creek Camp

Submitted by Peg Reese, Earth Team Coordinator

Punishment usually awaits children who spend a day digging in wet dirt and spoiling their dinners with refined sugars. However, the All Hands-On Deckers Creek camp accepts and encourages this rowdy behavior.

The camp is run by Friends of Deckers Creek, in conjunction with other youth groups, and teaches the importance of water quality and other conservation efforts in an entertaining manner. Peg Reese, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Resource Conservationist, and Earth Team volunteer Sherry Finkel attended the camp on June 28th as educators.

As hard rains plagued the beginning of the session, Peg and Sherry reviewed the water cycle with the campers. They participated in a survey to calculate the amount of water their families use during a typical week and learned helpful hints to reduce their water usage.

Skies cleared and the children stepped outside with augers to sample different soils.

The nine girls and one boy showed no aversion to sifting through clay, silt, and sandy loams. The campers especially enjoyed building their own miniature soil profiles, despite the mess of glue and dirt.

Peg tied the water and soil lessons together with a runoff demonstration. The campers were surprised to find a difference in water quality between runoff from barren soil and runoff from soil with vegetation. Peg explained to the campers that vegetation helped to prevent severe runoff as well as enhance water quality.

Finally, the children cleaned up to create their pre-dinner snacks, the edible watersheds. The campers topped graham crackers with icing, chocolate chips, and other sweets to model Peg's real-life description of a watershed.

The NRCS educators left their sugar high campers with bright smiles and a better understanding of their surrounding environment. The All Hands-on Deckers camp will continue to creatively fuse education with youthful outdoor play in exchange for a more energetic, environmentally conscious youth.



Earth Team Volunteer Sherry Finkel (in pink shirt) reviews water usage with campers.



A camper shows off the miniature monolith that she made.



Fun with clay.



Campers make an edible watershed.

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## Useful Links

### Using Outlook Web Access

Access your email account through the internet by typing or clicking on <https://webmail-east.one.usda.gov>

Click on the "Login" button. A "Login" screen will appear requesting your Login credentials. You must type in the domain name before your username: **Ageast**

#### \Username

The domain name is the name of the domain you use to logon to your workstation/laptop at work. The username is the login ID you use to logon to your workstation/laptop at work.

### Detail Opportunities Bulletin Board



NRCS established a centralized site for posting detail opportunities. The bulletin board tab on My.NRCS now includes a details bulletin board. Discuss detail interest with your supervisor.

### Forms Website

Submitted by Kathy Allen

The Montana NRCS website has an extensive forms website at <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/forms/>. Links to WV forms may be found at <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/wvinfo.html>

## How to Compose Your KSA's

Submitted by Rex Gardner WV-HEPM

Below I have enclosed a link to a Department of Labor website that provided some very good information on how to compose your KSA's to have an updated resume/job information for that promotion or new position.

[http://www.doleta.gov/jobs/Federal\\_Application\\_Process/Knowledge\\_Skills\\_Abilities/](http://www.doleta.gov/jobs/Federal_Application_Process/Knowledge_Skills_Abilities/)

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## Unclaimed Property

### Do you have lost money?

The WV Treasurer is the custodian of all unclaimed property in the state. Unclaimed property includes items such as bank accounts, matured insurance policies, stocks, bonds, safe deposit box contents, weapons, and a wide variety of other items abandoned by their original owners. The property is collected, processed, and kept or auctioned under the Treasurer's authority. The state holds approximately 400,000 accounts worth \$100,000,000. Since 1997, the Unclaimed Property Division has returned approximately \$60 million to rightful owners and collected over \$92 million from businesses. Go to:

<http://www.wvsto.com/Unclaimed+Property/DefaultUP.htm>

You may want to check the other states you lived in.

<http://www.missingmoney.com/>

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## EPA Announces New Web Site Listing Regulations With Potential Impact on Agriculture

Submitted by Rick Heaslip and Barbara Broxterman

A new Web site containing an easy and succinct look-up tool listing federal environmental regulations that could potentially apply to agriculture. Knowing the

regulations beforehand will allow farmers to address these issues before they become problems. <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/llaw.html>

EPA has created a regulatory matrix titled, "[Major Existing EPA Laws and Programs That Could Affect Agricultural Producers](#)" (PDF, 23 pages, 887KB) that provides a succinct, general description of EPA's requirements for both regulatory and voluntary programs. This compliance assistance tool should be used by agricultural producers, federal and state regulators, and third party information providers who provide information and services to agricultural producers.

The Ag Center was created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with the support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

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## **Frequently Asked Questions About Copyright Issues Affecting the U.S. Government**

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (Title 17 of the United States Code) to the authors of original works of authorship.

- Facts cannot be copyrighted. However, the creative selection, coordination and arrangement of information and materials forming a database or compilation may be protected by copyright.
- A fair use of a copyrighted work may include the practice of any of the exclusive rights provided by copyright, for example, reproduction for purposes such as criticism comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research.
- Public domain refers to works that are not protected by copyright and are publicly available. They may be used by anyone, anywhere, anytime without permission, license or royalty payment.
- Internet is another form of publishing or disseminating information; therefore, copyright applies to Web sites, e-mail messages, Web-based music, etc. Simply because the Internet provides easy access to the information does not mean that the information is in the public domain or is available without limitations.

Copyrighted works found on the Internet should be treated the same as copyrighted works found in other media. Hyperlinking does not itself involve a violation of the Copyright Act (whatever it may do for other claims) since no copying is involved.

<http://www.cendi.gov/publications/04-8copyright.html#211>

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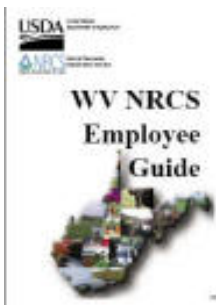
## West Virginia's Civil Rights

### Penny Sheeler Recognized

The West Virginia Civil Rights Advisory Committee recognized Penny Sheeler for her efforts in compiling an updated civil rights poster list and presented her with a non-monetary award.

During recent civil rights field office reviews the committee noted discrepancies in the required civil rights posters from office to office. The committees decided to research and compile an updated and accurate list of required posters. The task was not as simple as anticipated.

Penny located the correct and current posters and provided well-organized materials, kept the committee members and various Special Emphasis Program Managers informed to the status of the updates and reorganization of the State Office posters.



### West Virginia NRCS Employee Guide

Whether you're a new employee, a transferring employee, or experienced employee this guide will provide you with virtually everything you need to know as a federal employee working for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in West Virginia. From pay and benefits to administrative policies and common acronyms, you'll find a wealth of resources in the following link.

This document requires [Adobe Acrobat](#)

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## Disability Etiquette

Submitted by Marvin Kerr, West Virginia Disability Emphasis Program (DEP) Manager

People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases. They are individual human beings. For example, a person is not an epileptic but rather a person who has epilepsy.

First and foremost they are people. Only secondarily do they have one or more disabling conditions. Hence, they prefer to be referred to in print or broadcast media as people with disabilities.

### Tips

1. Many people do not know what to say or how to act when they meet someone with a disability. People with disabilities have the same feelings as you. Treat someone with a disability as you would like to be treated and you can't go wrong.  
  
Do not park in a disabled parking space unless you have the proper identification and have a disability that warrants you to park there. People need the bigger area to get out wheelchairs etc.
2. Speak to the person who has the disability and not just someone with them. Be patient and ask questions if you can't understand them. Never pretend you can understand someone if you do not. Simply say what you think the person said and they will correct it if necessary. Be patient if someone uses a device to communicate with.
3. Do not talk down to the person or like they are a child (unless they really are a child.)
4. If you want to ask someone about their disability, then ask. Be polite and respectful.
5. If it looks like someone with a disability might need some help, just ask them. The worst they can do is say "No, Thank You."

Speaking and writing:

1. Please avoid these words/terms when referring to a person with a disability.  
Cripple, victim, defect, and invalid, sick, diseased, wheelchair bound.
  2. Please use terms such as physically disabled or "He/she uses a wheelchair..."  
Remember they are people first and disabled second.
- 

## Diversity Day Luncheon

Submitted by Barbara Broxterman

The Civil Rights Advisory Committee and the State Office Employee Association supported this years Diversity Day Luncheon by celebrating our Appalachian History and Heritage on Aug 8, 2007. We explored the diverse cultural history of the Appalachian region and shared each other's family heritage stories with the group as well. The State Office Employee Association provided the main course and salads and desserts were brought by others. Barbara organized the speakers and luncheon along with Skip, Mike, Jeff and Roseanne pitching in and then Peg and her guests staying to help clean-up. We had two speakers, (Jeff really helped on this) in addition to our own. We had two wonderful guest speakers and they were given a plant in appreciation of their efforts to share with us.

Barbara started the program with music from Copeland's "Appalachian Spring" and a general power point of the region showing the various cultures and group that founded our beautiful area.



he first speaker was Karen Hudkins Morgan. Ms. Morgan is Education Director at Pricketts' Fort with the Teaching History Through the Arts program. She is also Coordinator of Undergraduate Education and Field Placements at Salem International University. She is a retired public school teacher and has taught English classes for Fairmont State University.

In the venue of a "storyteller" she spoke about "Appalachia, A Separate Place, The Unique People of "West Virginia" and it's heritage and cultural diversity. In a humorous

and spellbinding way, she traced a brief oral history and culture of early settlers, American Indians, and immigrants who have made the state the best example of a 'melted pot' society. The topic focused on the diverse culture and the contributions of early settlers that have made the Appalachian culture of West Virginia unique.



Mike did a section on WV, and it's American Indian Heritage, Rex spoke about the Hispanic Culture in WV and Herb told us about growing up his farm in WV which goes back many generations.



Sherell Wigal (poet and writer) then read a number of her published and unpublished poems. She is a well know WV poet and writer originally from Roane County, West Virginia.

She was the director of the West Virginia Writer's annual writer conference for many years, she coordinator of the literary events at the West Virginia State Folk Festival. She has conducted numerous writing workshops throughout the area, and has performed her poetry throughout West Virginia and surrounding states. Her works appear most recently in the anthology Wild Sweet Notes. She mesmerized us and takes us to a place back in time, while she read some of her moving and poetry. One of the poems was about looking remembering our grandmother's hands and how they now and then seem to show up on our mother's or sisters. Her poem about Pokeberries and Chicken Feathers was read to us and she also has a poetry collection by the same name.

The program closed with a list of interesting historical facts or information from the attendees and we were to guess whom it was about.



Whose great, great grandfather, traveled from Switzerland (Canton of Lucerne) to a farm in Indiana in the mid 1800's as a young boy? Answer Kevin Wickey.

Lunch followed.



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## Meet . . .



### **Eileen O'Neill Soil Scientist**

Major Land Resource Area # 127 South Soil Survey Project Office

Graduating from the University of Maine in 2001, I worked at many different jobs and moved often before settling down with NRCS in West Virginia. I was working for a small consulting company in Richmond, VA doing soils investigations for drainfield permits when I spent a weekend whitewater rafting in WV. I was so impressed by the beauty of the New River Gorge, I moved to the area a couple of months later. I worked as a rafting photographer and as a mountain bike tour guide prior to joining NRCS as a Soil Scientist in 2003. Currently, I am the project leader for the Fayette and Raleigh Counties Soil Survey Update, and part of a team working on a new project to apply digital soil mapping techniques to National Park Service lands around the Bluestone, Gauley, and New Rivers. I spend most of my free time mountain biking, trail running, kayaking, or otherwise playing in the woods and in the rivers. Someday, I plan to own a small organic vegetable farm and raise goats, chickens, and maybe even some children.

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**Personnel Updates**

(as of July 26, 2007)

Name	Action	Location	Change
Adkins, Dustin	Reassignment Effective 05/27/2007	Princeton FO	Beckley, WV
Redden, Gary	Reassignment Effective 07/08/2007	Beckley AO	District Conservationist Beckley FO
Spardy, Mary	Transfer out Effective 06/24/2007	State Office	Harrisburg, PA

**West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation**

Name	Home Unit	Location	Agency	Assignment	Date
Egerstrom, Tammy	State Office	Utah	NRCS	EWP	June 18-29
Lagodich, Carol	State Office	Nevada	BLM and FS	Public Information	July 10-15

**eOPF**

In an effort to streamline information and improve efficiency, eOPFs are being implemented. An eOPF is an electronic version of the paper based Official Personnel Folder containing the employee's personnel records. eOPFs will allow employees to view their own information and print a copy of a document, if desired along with providing HR with immediate access to information and reduce costs associated with storage. For additional information see [National Bulletin 360.7.22, Implementation of Electronic](#)

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[Official Personnel Folders](#) (eOPFs) for more information.

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## Gary Milliman Retires

Co-workers and friends were in attendance on July 15, 2007 to help Gary Milliman celebrate his upcoming retirement. Gary Milliman, Civil Engineer for the West Area, is retiring after 30 years of dedicated service.



Greg Kist, West Area ASTC-FO, Welcomed guests to Gary's Retirement Dinner.



L to R---Delmas Carr (Retired NRCS), Larry Sturm (NRCS), Scott Hoover (NRCS), Carlos Cole (NRCS), and Willis Ridenour (Retired NRCS).



Gary Milliman giving his farewells



Bill O'Donnell presenting a Fenton vase to Gary for his 30 years of dedicated service to NRCS.

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