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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
May 2008

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Potomac Headwaters RC&D, Mountain RC&D, Little Kanawha RC&D, Great Kanawha RC&D.

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West Virginia State Conservationist, Kevin Wickey (third from left) joined Governor Joe Manchin III and other partners announcing the Abram Creek Restoration project on April 19, 2008.

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[75th Anniversary of the New Deal /Soil Erosion Service](#)



The New Deal is the title that President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave to a sequence of programs and promises he initiated between 1933 and 1938 with the goal of giving relief, reform, and recovery to the people and economy of the United States during the Great Depression. NRCS has its roots in the Soil Erosion Service, created in 1933 as a temporary agency under the National Industrial Recovery Act.

[...More Info](#)

[Bill O'Donnell Honored for Service in Afghanistan](#)



On May 2, USDA honored more than 40 Department employees, including Bill O'Donnell and 13 other NRCS personnel, for their service in Afghanistan and Iraq. Bill O'Donnell detailed to Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan from August 2004 - February 2005.

[...More Info](#)

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Pipestem is a new soil series in West Virginia. "Pipestem," is a plant that once grew in abundance on the upper waters of Pipestem Creek, a tributary of the Bluestone River.

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FIRST Robotics Competition Winners, 2008 WV Save Our Streams, Greenbrier County 2008 Career Day, The Grassland Evaluation Contest, WVU Soil Judging Team, Celebrating Earth Day in a Different Sort of Way, Arbor Day/ Butterfly Garden , Envirothon

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May is National Stroke Awareness Month, What Women (and men) Need to Know about Retirement

[...More Info](#)

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The WV Master Calendar is now a shared calendar in Outlook for all employees to view. This calendar will be updated daily, weekly and/or monthly as the editors add information.

See WEST VIRGINIA BULLETIN NO: WV330-6-9 at http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/archive_bulletins/fy-06/330-6-9-MasterCalendar.pdf (231 KB) for instructions to access the master calendar.

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

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

Spring is here and construction is in full swing. I know that this is a very busy time of year for field offices. With our balanced budget, I've dedicated some of our resources to three areas. First, four individuals from Kentucky NRCS are coming to help us with the CSP signup for a month. Second, we've successfully hired three WVU students this summer (two in the field and one engineer). Third we're hiring over a dozen temporary intermittent employees (the old term was WAE's). Hopefully these individuals are here in time to provide some extra help in this busy season.

Our balanced budget is also allowing us to further our staffing plan. We have adjusted our service boundaries back to align with our partner Conservation District boundaries. We have now analyzed the workload in our offices by Conservation District. When we did this, we noticed some wide discrepancies in the workload per person because of retirements, transfers, etc. that have occurred over the last several years that were not addressed. We have advertised several positions based on this workload analysis. With our reduced staffing, every position becomes critical to the delivery of our programs. We will continue to update and use measureable analyses as we make staffing decisions.

As I write, the farm bill debate is still on-going. No matter what the outcome, I am encouraged over the support for conservation that is evident during this process. People want to invest themselves in the conservation of their own natural resources and appreciate the help we provide. I appreciate the dedication and professionalism I see that is evident in the way we are conducting our business. Keep up the good work.



Kevin Wickey

State Conservationist

West Virginia

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From the Field

Potomac Headwaters RC&D

Submitted by Rebecca MacLeod



This year has been an active one for the Potomac Headwaters RC&D Council. Potomac Headwaters RC&D is dedicated to providing assistance for worthy projects that may have no other champions.

This document requires [Adobe Acrobat](#)



[Potomac Headwaters RC&D Council Annual RC&D Sponsors](#)

[Report](#) (500 KB)

For more information contact Rebecca MacLeod at the [Potomac Headwaters RC&D Office](#).

Mountain RC&D



2008 WV State Wide Trails Conference

This year's conference was held March 18-20, 2008 in Oak Hill WV. New River Convention Visitors Bureau and Mountain RC&D hosted the conference location and logistics while WV Dept of Highways provided meeting speakers. Presentations included WV RC&Ds, WV CCC, Rahall Transportation Institute, Rails to Trails, Geocaching, Trail Construction, Water Trails, and the DoT grant program. Over 150 people registered for this year's conference an increase of over 100% from last year.

Ashland Wastewater Project

The McDowell Wastewater Coalition a composite of local groups, non-profits and government entities (includes Mountain RC&D) were visited by student volunteers from Notre Dame University. WV Ministry of Advocacy & Work Camps sponsored the week long mission. They came the first week in March to help install a wastewater drainfield for the small rural community of Ashland in McDowell County. Surveys conducted by the Coalition show that 67% of the county's residents have inadequate sewage management. It is the hope of the Coalition to improve water quality by helping interested communities address their wastewater needs.

Fayette Biodiesel Workshop

WV Student Conservation Association along with Mountain RC&D sponsored a Biodiesel workshop at the Country Roads Cabins facility in Hico, WV on March 29, 2008. Nationally recognized Rich Cregar was the keynote speaker discussing fuel sources, processing and components of a processor, also presenting were 3 local biodiesel processors. An open roundtable discussion was also part of the evening.

For more information contact [Mike Gasper](#) at the [Mountain RC&D Office](#).

Little Kanawha RC&D

2008 Lawn, Garden & Forestry Exposition

Little Kanawha RC&D hosted the 3rd Annual Lawn, Garden & Forestry Exposition on April 5 and 6, 2008. Over 2,000 people attended the event to learn about plant care, soils, tree care and much more. The event also included equipment demonstrations, presentation on lawn and gardening concepts, landscaping and entertainment.

On Saturday, the Professional Timber Sports competition led the way with lumberjacks competing in six different events. Musical entertainment included Roy

Clark Jr. and the Isaac Fork String playing old time Appalachian music. The event also included antique farm equipment used to make ice cream and grind corn meal.

Over 60 vendors including small businesses and agencies provided demonstrations and educational opportunities for all to enjoy.

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

Great Kanawha RC&D



Community Gardens at Carroll Terrace

Great Kanawha RC&D recently supplied a grant to West Virginia State University and the Charleston Area Housing Authority to provide materials to be used at the Carroll Terrace Community Garden. The Carroll Terrace Community Garden was designed to be fully accessible to the disabled and the elderly residents of the low-income housing complex. The garden accommodates these residents with four large community garden plots, 40 individual garden plots, four ornamental beds, and an English herb garden. The garden plays host to regularly-scheduled social events, includes a sitting area in memoriam for residents that have passed away, and promotes ongoing education trainings and programs. Through one-on-one interaction with the participants, the garden has become a center of learning for all involved. Vegetables produced in the gardens are used by the residents that provide labor to the up keep of the gardens in the complex. Extra food not used by the Carroll Terrace residents is sent to the local Food Bank to assist them in stocking their shelves with fresh vegetables.

For more information contact [Jackie Byars](#) at the [Great Kanawha RC&D Office](#).

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WHIP Improves Aquatic Habitat in Abram Creek



West Virginia State Conservationist, Kevin Wickey (third from left) joined Governor Joe Manchin III and other partners announcing the Abram Creek Restoration project on April 19, 2008.

Abram Creek, part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in Grant County, is being restored. Acid mine drainage from previous mining activities in the area has resulted in the loss of aquatic life in Abram Creek and many of its tributaries.

The goal of the project is to improve water quality, restoring aquatic life and recreational fisheries in more than six miles of tributary streams, and more than 18 miles of Abram Creek.

In 2006, NRCS provided \$60,000 through WHIP to improve aquatic habitat. An annual instream application of limestone sand will help neutralize the effects of acid mine drainage. Limestone will be placed in the tributaries to be naturally dispersed into the streams by rain or rising water levels. The benefit accrual from limestone fines application begins immediately.

Restoration of the watershed will be achieved by ongoing neutralization of the acid content in the water by using limestone dozers, which are structures placed alongside a waterway that release limestone into the water increasing the pH level. The project is a cooperative effort. Federal and state agencies, as well as private entities have worked together to make this stream restoration possible.

As water quality improves, Abram Creek is expected to provide a diverse trout fishery, with opportunities for native brook trout expansion in the headwaters.

Abram Creek was prioritized by the multi-state North Branch Potomac River Task Force and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the most significant West Virginia

contributor of acid water to the North Branch of the Potomac.

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Appalachian PMC Hosts Workshop for WV Conservation Agency

Submitted by John Vandevender, PMC Manager

The Appalachian Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Alderson, West Virginia hosted a technical training session for several State Conservation Agency employees on March 12. Focus of the training was proper preparation of dormant "Bankers' dwarf willow hardwood cuttings for successful planting in riparian areas. 'Bankers' dwarf willow is a small to medium sized semi-prostrate shrub growing only 6 to 8 feet in height, with smooth, slender, tough, resilient branches that are lime green at first but later change to a darker green. 'Bankers' sends up many branches from the roots to form a dense surface cover, while the roots themselves form an interlocking network to tie the soil together. Dwarf willow is recommended for erosion control plantings along small stream channels. Fast growth, resilient stems, and the ability to recover from mechanical damage make it an ideal plant for this use.



WVCA Employees hard at work harvesting willow whips at the Appalachian PMC. Photo by John Vandevender

'Bankers' is easily established by planting sections of the dormant stems, thus the term "unrooted cuttings". Whips or stems are cut into approximately 8 inch long pieces which are simply pushed into the soil to a depth that leaves only 2 leaf buds exposed.



WVCA Personnel make unrooted cuttings from willow stems. Photo by John Vandevender

Training was led by John Vandevender, PMC Manager, and Randall Lester, Assistant PMC Manager, and consisted of proper methods of field harvesting willow whips or stems followed by processing the whips to produce unrooted cuttings suitable for riparian plantings later this spring. Production of willow wattles or fascines was also demonstrated. A second training session on planting techniques for unrooted cuttings and fascines is being planned for later this spring.

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75th Anniversary of the New Deal/Soil Erosion Service

The New Deal is the title that President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave to a sequence of programs and promises he initiated between 1933 and 1938 with the goal of giving relief, reform, and recovery to the people and economy of the United States during the Great Depression. The "First New Deal" of 1933 aimed at short-term recovery programs for all groups in society. NRCS has its roots in the Soil Erosion Service, created in 1933 as a temporary agency under the National Industrial Recovery Act.

Hugh Hammond Bennett helped establish the Soil Erosion Service in the Department of the Interior and became its director in September 1933. The agency worked with farmers to demonstrate soil conservation methods in watershed-based demonstrations.

Glenville State College has an Archives & Special Collection exhibit honoring the [75th anniversary of the New Deal in Gilmer County](#). Congressman Alan B. Mollohan introduced the exhibit on March 24, 2008.

Larry Sypolt, Senior Project Coordinator in the Cultural Resource Management Certificate Program



West Virginia University and Kelli Lee Adams (left), Public Administration graduate student and Earth Team Volunteer discovered field journals relating to New Deal work in the WV NRCS State Office publications room.

Field books prepared by Norris Caryl, Soil Conservation Service (SCS) specialist in central West Virginia from 1937–1940. Caryl worked through the SCS Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in Elizabeth West Virginia. There were a total of eleven SCS CCC camps throughout West Virginia from 1934-1942.



The CCC employed America's youth, ages 17-25 on reforestation projects. Over 460 Gilmer County youth joined the CCC program.

http://www.glenville.wvnet.edu/pdfs/Archives_CCC_Enrollees.pdf

As the Depression gripped the nation, the newly elected president, Franklin Roosevelt, promised a New Deal to rescue the nation from its economic woes. Within the "First Hundred Days" of his inauguration in 1933, dozens of new agencies and programs were established to put people to work and tackle the problems that had led to economic collapse. In addition, for the first time, the federal government took a strong hand in efforts to prevent the soil erosion and agricultural abuses that had led to the devastating desertification of the Great Plains and to reduce the region's vulnerability to future droughts•a conservation legacy that continues to this day.

Hugh Hammond Bennett, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and a leader in the soil conservation crusade, declared that "no nation or race within historic time has been so wasteful of its agricultural lands as we of the United States." When the Soil Erosion Service was created in March 1933 as a temporary agency under the National Industrial Recovery Act, Bennett became its director. Using equipment and seeds supplied by the government and labor provided by men enrolled in federal job programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that were part of the New Deal effort to put unemployed men to work, the Soil Erosion Service was able to build support among farmers and show them how to reduce erosion on their land. The agency taught such techniques as terracing (creating a staircase of wide flat rows along a hillside to hold water) and contour plowing (plowing across a slope, instead of up and down), so that the soil forms ridges that help slow the flow of

rain water.

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) within the Department of Agriculture was established as a permanent entity in 1935, and still exists today under a different name, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

SCS continued to rely on the CCC and the WPA to provide labor for demonstration projects to promote new farming methods. As noted, contour plowing of fields and contour furrows on grassland improved water retention and prevented runoff. Stripcropping, in which close-growing crops, such as wheat or alfalfa, were alternated with wider-spaced crops like corn, also helped to slow down water flow and control wind erosion, especially when strips were planted perpendicular to prevailing winds. Conservation tillage that left crop residues on the surface of fallow land anchored loose soil and helped increase nutrient content. Planting patches of trees surrounded by lower shrubs created effective windbreaks on the flat, open land.

The most novel approach—and the key to the SCS's long-term success—came in 1937 when President Roosevelt persuaded the states to adopt standard legislation creating soil conservation districts. Through these districts, local involvement became the centerpiece of the soil conservation movement, with the federal agency serving in an advisory capacity. Because the districts were managed by locally elected officials, farmers had a direct role in determining how to deal with conservation problems in their own regions. Working with the districts, SCS was able to extend its technical assistance to areas beyond the demonstration projects.

One of the most important preventive measures undertaken by SCS was identification of the most vulnerable lands. "They emphasized use of the soil survey to figure out which lands were most likely to have a wind erosion problem and encouraged the farmer to put that land in pasture and plant crops on land that might have better soil retention," explains NRCS historian Douglas Helms. In addition, to make the best use of all their land and better withstand fluctuations in weather and prices, farmers were encouraged to diversify by dividing their operations into a combination of farming and ranching.

Source: <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/desertific/experience.htm> and
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Deal

For more information on The Civilian Conservation Corps: Demonstrating the Value of Soil Conservation, go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/ABOUT/history/articles/ccc.html>

For more information on the Biography of Hugh Hammond Bennett, the Father of Soil Conservation go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/ABOUT/history/bennett.html>

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Bill O'Donnell Honored for Service in Afghanistan

On May 2, USDA honored more than 40 Department employees, including Bill O'Donnell and 13 other NRCS personnel, for their service in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The ceremony recognized those who have completed deployments as Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) agriculture advisors, ministry advisors, or Foreign Service officers serving at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

"The greatest honor we can bestow on the USDA employees here with us today is to continue the mission to help rebuild and revitalize the physical and institutional agricultural sectors in Afghanistan and Iraq so that the work they performed will have lasting effects for the people and land of those countries," said Secretary Ed Schafer.

Secretary Schafer presented a special recognition award to Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Arlen Lancaster for having contributed more employees than any other USDA agency to the U.S. Government effort to stabilize and rebuild both countries.



Bill O'Donnell detailed to Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan from August 2004 - February 2005. Bill worked with the central government Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources in 5 northern provinces. His residence while in Afghanistan was with the British Army. There were 10 different nations represented at this Provincial Reconstruction Team military compound.

Bill in the Afghanistan desert.



Cotton picking
Afghans

Proposed flood
control project site

Wooden plow and
farmer

Wool Spinning
Wheel and
Combing Demo
Andkhoi Intl Carpet
Exhibit

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MLRA-127 Soil Survey Staff Identify New Soil in West Virginia

The new MLRA-127 soil survey staff in Morgantown has been working to update soil mapping in the New River Gorge area for the National Park Service. In doing so, they have identified a new soil and have developed a new series. Pipestem is a new soil series in West Virginia.

"Pipestem," is a plant that once grew in abundance on the upper waters of Pipestem Creek, a tributary of the Bluestone River. Pipestem's true species is unverified but is referred to as *Spirea alba*. The practice of using the plant's hollow, woody stems had been attributed to native Americans who lived in villages in the New and Bluestone River valleys around 1000 A.D. Pipestem State Park and the community of Pipestem, WV also take their names from the plant.

"We were using "Shouns", a Tennessee series to cover these landscapes and the fit was never that good," said Steve Carpenter, State Soil Scientist. "Shouns is an Ultisol and if you go to Tennessee and look at a Shouns, it is not the same soil. We sampled eight pedons and six came back as a different soil order (Inceptisols). The new series will affect most areas that have Mississippian age parent materials such as Mercer, Summers, Fayette, Raleigh, Nicholas, Webster, Pocahontas, as well as others. It is part of the new age of soil survey where we update those inconsistencies that were part of the project era. We now have more time to look at broad landscapes".

<http://www.wvexp.com/index.php/Pipestem>



Pipestem Soils occur on middle back slopes in the New River Gorge along with Cateache and Meckesville soils.



The soil survey staff prepared a soil monolith of Pipestem for the New River Gorge visitor center.

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Bits and Pieces

WV Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society Newsletter

The WV Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society has started a newsletter. If you are interested in receiving it, contact:

Byars, Jackie	RC&D Coordinator	304-776-5256	Jackie.Byars@wv.usda.gov
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Geochemistry in the Modern Soil Survey Program

Submitted by Peg Reese

This paper was written to provide a background on trace element distribution in soils as well as demonstrate the utility of geochemistry in soil survey. It is a cooperative effort between soil scientists in several states (including Tony Jenkins) as well as the NSSC.

This document requires [Adobe Acrobat](#)

[Geochemistry in the Modern Soil Survey Program](#) (471 KB)

Ash Tree Seed Collection Campaign

The PMC in Michigan has launched a campaign to collect ash tree seed for genetic preservation as a response to the emerald ash borer which originated in Michigan and has destroyed countless trees, and is coming your way. The PMC has been collecting seed which is being stored at an ARS facility in Colorado. They'd like to collect seed from all over the country of native ash species especially from states that already have the borer or are located nearby. This is in case all of those trees are lost and their genetic diversity with them.

Go to

ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/MI/programs/PMC/Ash/AshSeedFlyer_MSUE.pdf for

more information or contact:

Brian Buehler

Public Affairs Specialist

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250

East Lansing, MI 48823

Ph. 517-324-5244

FAX 517-324-5171

Brian.Buehler@mi.usda.gov

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Conservation Education



FIRST Robotics Competition Winners

Submitted by Pat Bowen

The MARS First Team stands for the Mountaineer Area Robotics, First In Science and Technology Team. Pat Bowen's youngest son is a member of the MARS First Team. The teammates and mentors/coaches (including Pat) went to the regional competition held at the University of Pittsburgh on March 15. The FIRST Robotics Competition is a national program that requires high school students to build a teleoperated robot from a limited set of parts in just six weeks. The MARS team includes students from both Morgantown and University High Schools.

AND, they came home with the TROPHY! They are a rookie team with a robot they designed to knock 4 ft. balls off a rack and heard them around a course. Originally the team strategized to be recognized as a rookie all star team, but was able to win the regional competition AND won the recognition as rookie all star team, either of which would guarantee their admission and participation in the National FIRST competition in Atlanta Mid April.

A recent Brandeis University study found that FIRST Robotics Competition participants are 50% more likely to attend college and 2-3 times more likely to major in science or engineering once in college.

For more information, and a video shot by Pat, go to <http://ulysses.phys.wvu.edu/~escime/MARS/MARS.html>

2008 WV Save Our Streams

WV Save Our Streams is in final preparation for 2008. The program will cut-back on the overall number of workshops during the season but hopefully will be able to provide better follow-up and resources in the future. Below are some important links you should take a look at if you are considering scheduling or attending a stream-monitoring workshop, or just want to get involved and learn more about water monitoring.

[Volunteer Monitoring Manual](#): The program has adopted EPA's Volunteer Stream Monitoring: A Methods Manual to provide a general overview. However, in the very near future WV Save Our Streams will produce Stream Modules that describe the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for each survey level. Summary SOPs are provided with the surveys in the interim.

[Scheduling a stream monitoring workshop](#): Here you are provided with the information and considerations for scheduling a monitoring workshop for your volunteer groups, students and others. There are still plenty of spaces available for the season.

[Workshop registration](#): An on-line form that needs to be submitted if you plan to attend an upcoming workshop. The workshop schedule is posted on the WV Save Our Streams website.

Stream survey data sheets: A few minor changes (mostly in format) have occurred. I've brought-back a [simple level-one data sheet](#) for those who may be slightly uncomfortable with describing habitat procedures that are included in the [standard level one survey](#). [Level three](#) volunteer monitors are encouraged to perform family-level identification for their surveys. If you prefer to preserve your sample instead of attempting streamside identification, then WV Save Our Streams will offer to identify your sample. However, you will need to purchase alcohol, containers etc. and are responsible for sample delivery.

For many more resources and learning opportunities visit the [WV Save Our Streams website](#). The page is updated on a regular basis so you must refresh the page each time you visit. I look forward to a great year! Feel free to pass this information along to others.

Tim Craddock, Citizen's Monitoring Coordinator
West Virginia Save Our Streams Program
601 57th Street, SE
Charleston, WV 25304

Office: (304) 926-0499 Ext. 1040

Cell: (304) 389-7630

E-mail: tcraddock@wvdep.org

Website: <http://www.wvdep.org/dwwm/wvsos>

Greenbrier County 2008 Career Day

On Thursday March 20th, the Lewisburg Field Office participated in the 2008 Greenbrier County Career Day at the State Fairgrounds in Fairlea, WV. This career day was open to students attending both Greenbrier East High School and Greenbrier West High School. A table top display was set up during this event which highlighted various NRCS activities (educational/outreach included Landjudging Contest, Grassland Evaluation Contest, Farm Field Days, etc; the other section included field work: assisting a local VFD with the installation of a dry hydrant, surveying for a pond with a watering trough & pipeline, taking soil samples, etc).

Pamphlets on the Earth Team Volunteer Program, Challenging Careers in the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Planning, Web Soil Survey, and many other informative brochures were handed out to over 200 students.

"I believe this career day was an educational experience for most of these students. I had several students who genuinely asked questions about our job within the agency and the educational requirements needed. There were several students interested in our Earth Team Volunteer Program and said they would like to do that during the summer months" says Katy McBride, Soil Conservationist.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#) at the [Lewisburg Field Office](#).

The Grassland Evaluation Contest

Submitted by Katy McBride

The 2008 Grassland Evaluation Contest was held on Friday April 11th in Jackson's Mill in Lewis County. The Grassland Evaluation program consists of four sections: Grassland Condition, Soil Interpretation, Wildlife Habitat, and Plant Identification. Each of these factors were considered in evaluating the pasture to best utilize the resource and to help make useful management decisions. A scenario with the landowner's goals for livestock and wildlife production was provided along with appropriate soil survey information, aerial photos, maps, scorecards and other relative information. The contestants first determined the condition of the field then made corrective decisions based on sound agricultural practices compatible with the landowner's goals. The judging site was typical pasture used for livestock grazing.

This year's contest consisted of ten 4-H and FFA teams. The top three finishers were:

1. Ravenswood FFA 1 (also top scoring individual)
2. Clay County FFA
3. Ripley FFA

The other teams were: Tyler County FFA 1, Roane County FFA, Tyler County FFA 2, Lincoln County FFA 1, Lincoln County FFA 2, Cabell Midland FFA, and Ravenswood FFA 2.

Each member of the winning team receives a \$500 scholarship. Each member of the second winning team receives a \$250 scholarship. The first and second place teams are eligible to participate in the Mid-America Contest in Missouri. The top scoring individual receives a \$500 scholarship.

Technical support for the WV contest is provided by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Sponsors for this year's contest were the 14 Conservation Districts, WV Conservation Agency, WV Department of Agriculture,, WV

Association of Professional Soil Scientists, WV Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the West Fork Conservation District, and private donators.

Individuals attending and/or assisting were:

- WV NRCS: Jamey Darlington, Gary Redden, Katy McBride, Barbara Greenleaf, Rebecca Flanagan, Aron Sattler, Andy Sentz, Jared Nestor, Matt Murphy, Greg Stone, Greg Kist, Kevin Wickey, Tom Vance, John Cox, Rob Pate, Debbie Dorsey, Dustin Adkins, and Eugene Friend.
- WVCA: Bruce Skidmore, Tracy Winders, Mark Buchanan, Matt Gadd, Melissa Turner, Harry Huff, and Norm Bailey
- WVACD: Dixon Law, Rex Reeder, Clyde Bailey, William Bolenbach, Arthur Mouser, Carroll Cumberledge, William Coffindaffer, Joe Gumm, Freddie Fields, Harry Huff, and Gary Oates.

On behalf on the Grassland Evaluation Contest Committee, we would like to extend our appreciation to all of the individuals who assisted in making this year's contest a great success. Without their hard work and dedication to this educational experience, this contest would not be possible.



Kevin Wickey reviewing the Plant Identification section of the contest (left). Gary Redden explaining the the Grassland Condition of the contest to Greg Kist.



Eugene Friend, Greg Stone, Kevin Wickey (left); Barbara Greenleaf, Andy Sentz, Greg Kist, Matt Gadd, and Jared Nestor (right) listening to Gary Redden go over the contest directions.



Joe Gumm and Barbara Greenleaf having fun at the contest site.

More photos may be seen at http://gallery.wvca.us/2008_Grassland_Contest

WVU Soil Judging Team

Submitted by Peg Reese

The WVU Soils Team traveled to Kingston, Rhode Island for the National Collegiate Soils Contest on April 17 and 18, 2008. WVU finished third in its regional contest to represent the Southeast Region. Despite having only two students with previous experience at the national level, the Team performed well. When the results were announced, WVU once again earned high placement in both the individual and team competition. Over the last three years the students have established WVU as a top team in both the Southeast Region and nationally, with three straight top five finishes at the National Contest (third in 2007, first in 2006) and four top five individual finishes at the National Contest.

Many NRCS employees are distinguished Alumni of the team. See who at <http://www.caf.wvu.edu/plsc/soilscience/thompson/courses/agrn125/history.htm>

Celebrating Earth Day in a Different Sort of Way

Submitted by Katy McBride

The Greenbrier Valley Conservation District and the Southern Conservation District held a Landjudging & Homesite Evaluation Contest on Earth Day, Tuesday April 22, 2008, at the Plant Material Center in Alderson, WV. The local NRCS field offices

(Lewisburg, Monroe, and Beckley) and employees of the PMC assisted with the technical part of the contest (got the pits ready, scoring, etc). The districts provided breakfast and lunch for everyone.

The Homesite Team winners were:

- 1st place: Shady Spring FFA
- 2nd place: Shady Spring Biology Club
- 3rd place: Fayette County Team 1
- 4th place: Greenbrier West
- 5th place: Fayette County Team 3

The Landjudging Team winners were:

- 1st place: Shady Spring FFA
- 2nd place: Shady Spring Biology Club
- 3rd place: Fayette County Team 1
- 4th place: Greenbrier West
- 5th place: Fayette County Team 3

Landjudging is a high school competition that challenges students to gain a better understanding of soil structure and land evaluation. Landjudging, enables each participant to learn how to recognize the physical features of the soil, determine land capability for crop production, and evaluate management practices needed for proper stewardship. Landjudging is oriented to the conservation of agricultural land. The major factors affecting how the land can be used must be determined. These factors are used to correctly recommend conservation practices and fertilizers for conserving soil.

A team is made up of three or four members. The total of the top three scores made by the individual members of the team is the team score. All team members are eligible for individual and team prizes. Team members judge four fields previously selected by the judges. Each field is marked off with stakes or other boundary markers. At some point in the field, a pit or hole is dug, exposing the soil

profile. From this profile, the contestant determines the texture, depth, degree of erosion, permeability, and internal drainage of the soil. After these soil properties are determined, land use interpretations can be made. In each field, two wooden stakes are set up to determine slope. The leaders give any information that is needed about each field. This may include the original topsoil depth, pH or soil acidity, amount of available plant nutrients, and size of the field. Contestants are given 20 minutes to score each field. More information on landjudging may be found at <http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/landrec/judging/>

Many of the factors used in judging agricultural land are also applicable to evaluating sites where homes will be constructed.

The following made this years contest a success.

- NRCS employees: Tom Vance, Teddy Hanson, Katy McBride, Lee Godbey, Dewey Broyles, Gary Redden, Dustin Adkins
- GVCD & SCD supervisors included: Beckie Irons (GVCD), Sid Howard (SCD), Dave Smith (GVCD), Gary Truex (GVCD), Steve Hedrick (GVCD), Gary Sawyers (GVCD), Bill Bollenbach - SCD, Wallace McGraw (SCD)
- WVCA & district employees: Adam Merritt, Dennis Burns, Anita Crance, Becky Floyd, Christi Floyd, Sam Masters, Dottie Cyfers

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. - Margaret Mead



Sam Masters, Dave Smith, Steve Hedrick, Gary Sawyers, and Beckie Irons are part of the "group of thoughtful, committed citizens" involved in this years contest.

Arbor Day/Butterfly Garden



Submitted by Nicole L. Viars

Four John Marshall Horticulture classes joined forces with the Northern Panhandle Conservation District (NPCD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to create a butterfly and hummingbird garden at the USDA Service Center in McMechen in observance of Arbor Day.

20 students along with advisor Nicole Shipman arrived at the Service Center to plant over 100 plants and 4 plots of wildflowers, all native to West Virginia. The students also helped to landscape and clean up the area around the newly installed pond.

The butterfly and hummingbird garden is another step towards the completion of the Outdoor Classroom, which is in its third year of construction. The area has been designed to provide a natural resource education facility to be used by schools and youth groups in the four northern counties of West Virginia. They will study native plants, shrubs and flowers and observe animals, birds and fish in their natural habitats.

This project has been made possible with grants and donations from the West Virginia Conservation Agency, Northern Panhandle Resource Conservation and Development Council, Columbia Gas, Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Fund, Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites Program, Marshall County Commissioners, Cabela's and private individual donations.

For more information call Sharon Andrews, Outreach Coordinator Northern Panhandle Conservation District at 242-0576 extension 114.

Envirothon

The West Virginia Envirothon is a competition for students in grades 9 through 12

in which they face hands-on challenges testing their natural resource knowledge, skills and problem-solving abilities. The tests focused on five subject areas: forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife, and a current environmental topic. The

Advised by Tina Moore, the Doddridge County Gold Team won first place at the 2008 Envirothon at the Canaan Valley Resort. The team earned a \$5,000 scholarship, sponsored by the Weyerhaeuser Foundation, to be shared equally among team members as well as the opportunity to represent West Virginia at the international event, the Canon Envirothon in Flagstaff, Arizona this summer.

Shady Spring High School Team, advised by NRCS retiree Kelley Sponaugle, took second place and received a shared scholarship of \$3,750, sponsored by the Dominion Foundation.

Advised by Tiffany Litton, the Lewis County B Team secured the third place position and a shared scholarship of \$2,500, sponsored by the 319 Clean Water Program at the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and West Virginia Conservation Agency. This team also on the Mary Lee Hines Most Enthusiastic Award, which is determined by votes by student competitors.

Hampshire County Home School Team, advised by Susan Sine, won fourth place and a shared scholarship of \$1,250, sponsored by the Mountain and Wes-Mon-Ty Resource Conservation councils.

Tygarts Valley High School Team, advised by Kay Hart, picked up fifth place team a shared \$500 scholarship, sponsored by Amvest West Virginia Coal LLC.

The Liberty Future Farmers of America Red Team, advised by James Carr, was the overall sixth place winner and highest scoring Future Farmers of America (FFA) team in the competition. This team will go on to compete in the national FFA competition.

NRCS employees participated at the at the Soil (Jared Beard, Steve Baker, Jason Teets, Charlotte Elliott-Friend), Forestry (Barbara McWhoter), and Special Topic

(Carol Lagodich) stations. Greg Kist helped in overall organization and represent NRCS as a finalist judge.

Photos of the event may be seen at <http://gallery.wvca.us/Envirothon-2008>

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May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Suggested by Henry Ferguson

Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women after diseases of the heart and cancer and the number one cause of adult disability. A stroke is the disruption of the blood supply to, or within, the brain. When the blood supply is cut off, the brain does not receive the oxygen and nutrients it needs. The result is injury to the brain cells. Recognizing stroke symptoms, and getting quick diagnosis and treatment could mean the difference between life and death or permanent disability. Women having a stroke are more likely to delay seeking treatment than their male counterparts.

If you think a person is having a stroke, call 911, especially if the person has trouble with the tasks listed below. Remember the first three letters of stroke (STR) or FAST to identify the symptoms of stroke.

S - Ask the individual to SMILE.

T - Ask the person to TALK

R - Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out their tongue.

If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke.

Every minute counts for stroke patients and acting **F.A.S.T.** can lead patients to

the stroke treatments they desperately need. The most effective stroke treatments are only available if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within the first three hours of the first symptoms.

Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred? Can the patient repeat the sentence correctly?

Time: Get the affected person to a Certified Stroke Center right away to receive the most effective treatment.

And ask the person to 'stick' out their tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke.

For more information, go to <http://www.strokeinfo.org/> or <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4742>

What Women Need to Know about Retirement

Suggested by Peg Reese

Women earn only 74 cents for every dollar earned by men, earn on average less than \$30,000 annually, are frequently in low-paying jobs without retirement plans, regularly take time off to care for their young children or their aging parents, and often struggle with a lack of education and ample job opportunities.

What Women Need to Know about Retirement is a joint project of the Heinz Family Philanthropies and The Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement. Chapters include:

1. Women and Retirement Income: Some Facts to Get You Thinking
2. A Lifetime Money Plan
3. Understanding Stocks, Bonds, and Investing in Financial Markets
4. Six Things You Need to Know about Social Security
5. Prescription for Your Health Care Future: What You Need for a Healthy,

Worry-Free Future

6. Where Will Your Retirement Money Come From?
7. When the Unthinkable Happens: How to Make Financial Plans for Unexpected Events

Go to http://www.wiserwomen.org/pdf_files/ebook/completeebook.pdf to see the book. A hard copy of the booklet is located in the NRCS State Office, on the bookshelf to your right as you enter the main office. Please feel free to check out the book (a blue notebook is on the shelf for your signature), request a book from [Carol Lagodich](#) (304-284-4826).

Go to <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/about/civilRights/fwp/library.html> to see other available books in the Federal Womens Program library.

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Meet . . .

Brandon Duckworth

WV Protracts/Toolkit Coordinator

Buckeye, WV

After graduating from WVU in the spring of 2004 with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Resources, my job options were looking thin. I'd been hired by the WV DNR at a whopping \$8.00 an hour (with no benefits) to travel the state with a team doing electro-fishing work, collecting fish specimens to update the "Fishes of WV" book. I was doing my best to enjoy those couple of weeks between graduation and the beginning of work.

Driving to Dolly Sods for a backpacking trip on a Thursday, I got a message on my cell phone that a "Sergeant" from the DNR had called my parents house about a job. I thought that was odd since I hadn't applied for any law enforcement jobs with DNR, why would a sergeant be contacting me? After a little thought, I realized that it could be Larry Sargent, Human Resources Manager with NRCS. I had applied for a career intern position with them April, but after not hearing anything for a couple of months I'd assumed I didn't get the job. We decided it would be worth it to camp close to the truck that night, so we could drive into Davis the next morning for breakfast and a phone call. If I had known then what I'd known now about the federal government, I wouldn't have bothered trying to reach anyone early on a Friday morning (just joking!). Either I was lucky or Larry was diligent, because I was able to catch him first thing Friday after a hearty breakfast of buckwheat pancakes in Davis. Larry offered me the job over the phone, said it was in Hamlin. I had no idea where Hamlin was, but I accepted the job anyway.

My career began in the Hamlin Field Office working for Alan Boone. During my

time there I worked with landowners in Lincoln, Logan, Boone, and Mingo counties to develop conservation plans and cost share contracts for the EQIP and WHIP programs. I was also able to serve as construction inspector on several EWP sites working on stream bank protection. While working in Hamlin in the summer of 2005 I married Melissa, who was still in school at WVU working on a master's degree in education.

When I was offered the position in Marlinton in December of 2005, I was eager to accept. I'd always loved Pocahontas County and was looking forward working there. Here, I've had the opportunity to work with WHIP, EQIP, AMA, FRPP, WRP, and the Knapp's Creek Watershed Project. Being able to work with Susan Davis and the landowners of Pocahontas County has really taught me a lot.

In the spring of 2006 I was lucky enough to be detailed to Utah for flood work, which was a great experience. Now I'm trying my hand at the Toolkit/ProTracts coordinator position. It has certainly been a rewarding yet challenging experience so far. It's really eye opening to get first hand look at the issues that "support" staff deal with. I wouldn't say it's more challenging than working with a cabinet full of cost share contracts, but its close.

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Personnel Updates

(Submitted by Lonnie Williams as of May 13, 2008)

Name	Action	Location	Change
Cook, Raeanna	Summer Administrative Clerk	Gassaway FO	-
Dill, Teresa	Summer Administrative Clerk	Ranson FO	-
Dilley, Abby	Summer Student Hire (STEP)	Buckeye FO	-
Farrell, Colin	Summer Student Hire (STEP)	SO Programs Staff	-
Gardner, David	Summer Soil Conservation Aide	Buckeye FO	-
Harper, Elizabeth	Summer Administrative Clerk	Petersburg/ Moorefield	-
Judy, Richard	Retirement Effective 03/29/2008	SO Engineering Staff	-
Nester, Nancy	Summer Administrative Clerk	Philippi FO	-
O'Leary, Erin	Summer Student Hire (STEP)	SO Engineering Staff	-
Poling, Roger	Summer Soil Conservation Aide	Weston FO	-

Rutan, Nikki	Summer Soil Conservation Aide	McMechen FO	-
Taylor, Sarah	Summer Student Hire (STEP)	Martinsburg FO	-
Topalanchik, Judy	Retirement- Effective 04/26/2008	SO Management Services	-
Ward, Denise	Summer Administrative Clerk	Beckley FO	-
Ward, Isaac	Summer Soil Conservation Aide	Mount Clare FO	-
Ware, Matt	Summer Soil Conservation Aide	Huntington FO	-
Viars, Nicole	Selection/ Reassignment	McMechen	RC&D Coordinator McMechen

Phone Directory

An updated phone directory is available at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/employeeDirectory/app?agency=nrcs&state=wb>

Contact information may be found by searching on the employee name, city, all employees in the state, or by Service Center.

If your phone number or contact information is missing or incorrect, go to <https://icams.usda.gov/> (password required) and update your personal information.

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