

## NEWS RELEASE



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### State Conservationist Honored

INDIANAPOLIS, November 6, 2006—Indiana's State Conservationist Jane Hardisty of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) received this year's Distinguished Alumni Award from Ball State University on October 20, 2006. Hardisty graduated from Ball State University (BSU) in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in natural resources, biology, and geology. She is the first natural resources graduate to receive this award.

Firsts are not uncommon to Ms. Hardisty. She was the first female to serve as acting director of the NRCS National Employee Development Center in Fort Worth last year, and the first female to receive the Ball State Natural Resources and Environmental Management Alumni Society's Award of Achievements in 2002. She presently serves Indiana as the first female state conservationist with NRCS.

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

Ball State University also recognized Hardisty for Distinction in Natural Resources Conservation at the 2005 Indiana Women of Achievement Awards by the Task Force on the Status of Women of the College of Sciences and Humanities.

Hardisty leads a workforce of 260, who provide assistance to farmers who voluntarily apply conservation measures to their farmland. She also administers the incentives programs that offer nearly \$30 million annually in financial assistance to agricultural producers who apply conservation practices. She inherently exemplifies her agency's mission of *'Helping People Help the Land.'*

Having grown up on a farm in Hancock County, her parents, Laurel and Marjorie Hardisty, instilled in her the values and work ethics that she holds dear. "I drove a tractor before I could reach the pedals," Hardisty recalls. "My dad was molding my management and supervisory skills each day as he taught me about life, sometimes letting me discover it for myself." Hardisty continues, "My parents taught by example that when a task was started, it had to be finished. They also showed me how important it was to treat everyone kindly."

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