



Rose Lake  
Plant  
Materials  
Center  
*Spring  
Newsletter  
2006*



## *Regional Assistant Chief Richard Coombe Attends State Conservationists' Plant Materials Advisory Committee Meeting*

The Rose Lake PMC hosted the 2006 State Conservationists Plant Materials Advisory Committee meeting on May 23 – 24. State Conservationists from Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and a State Resource Conservationist from West Virginia attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the State Conservationists about the activities of the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and receive guidance on current and future projects.

NRCS Regional Assistant Chief Richard Coombe attended the meeting on May 23. That was the first time Mr. Coombe had visited an NRCS Plant Materials Center. Mr. Coombe toured the facility and interacted with the full time and part time staff at the Center during his visit. The State Conservationists' Advisory Committee also provided Mr. Coombe with input regarding the Plant Materials Program at the Regional and National level.

In addition to Assistant Chief Coombe, several other guests attended the Advisory Committee meeting. Ms. Rebecca Humphries, Director of Michigan Department of Natural Resources was in attendance on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Humphries was able to interact with Jack Bricker, NRCS State Conservationist in Michigan, as well as the other State Conservationists in attendance. Mr. Greg Huntington and Mr. John Mitchell of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs made a presentation on the partnership between the NRCS Plant Materials Program and the Ft. Custer Military Training Center.

Signatures for release notices of two *Desmodium spp.* Tick-trefoil species were initiated during that meeting. Notices for Alcona germplasm tick-trefoil and Grant germplasm tick-trefoil were presented to the advisory committee. In addition, study plans for evaluation of poverty oatgrass and Canada bluejoint were approved. The Advisory Committee reviewed the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center Long Range Plan and provided recommendations for new projects over the next five years.



L-R Kevin Wickey, Michigan Assistant State Conservationist-Technology; John Leif, PMC Manager and Richard Coombe, NRCS Regional Assistant Chief



L-R— John During Rose Lake Agronomist; Jack Bricker, Michigan State Conservationist, Terry Crosby, Ohio State Conservationist; Richard Coombe, Regional Assistant Chief; John Leif, PMC Manager and Kevin Wickey Michigan Assistant State Conservationist– Technology.



## *Sergio Perez Involved with Outreach to Minority Farmers*

Sergio Perez, Biological Science Technician at the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, has been involved with outreach by NRCS to Hispanic farmers in Michigan and northern Indiana. Sergio worked with Michigan State University professor Dr. John Biernbaum to translate into Spanish materials on construction and utilization of hoop houses for year around vegetable production. In addition, Sergio has worked with Dr. Biernbaum and his staff to learn about hoop house vegetable production and vegetable marketing through a student cooperative.

Sergio presented information on hoop houses and vegetable production at the Michigan Family Farms Conference, held in Battle Creek, Michigan in March. The audience was Hispanic farmers and land owners considering hoop house technology to produce vegetables throughout the winter. In addition to the Family Farms Conference, Sergio is scheduled to conduct an additional two-day training session in October to help interested Hispanic land owners use the technology for year around vegetable production.



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## *Staff Happenings at the PMC*



*Farewell Zeek*

Ezekiel (Zeek) Cooley has been a W.A.E. at the PMC for several years. He has accepted a position with USDA-APHIS doing bird studies in conjunction with the Avion Flu. Zeek's degree is in wildlife biology, so he will be putting his knowledge to work.

### *Love Blooms at the PMC*

Amanda Quinlan and Jerry R. Grigar, both W.A.Es at the PMC were married June 2, 2006. When they started at the center, they were just friends and now they are married. After a two week honeymoon out west they will be back to work at the PMC. Congratulation to Amanda and Jerry.



## *Conservation Partners, Seed Producers, Field Offices, and Plant Materials Centers Work to Provide Field Data, Demonstrations and Conservation Seed for Public.*

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center supplied plant materials to 27 partners, producers, field offices, and Plant Materials Centers to conduct field plantings, demonstrations, and grow conservation plants for purchase by the public. Non-NRCS conservation partners played a major part in establishing demonstration plantings of new releases. Michigan Department of Natural Resources had five wildlife management areas including Harsons Island Managed Waterfowl Area, Flat River State Game Area, Barry State Game Area, Haymarsh State Game Area, and the Rose Lake DNR Field Office establish wildlife demonstration plantings of Southlow germplasm and Prairie View germplasm warm season grasses. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources Winamac Fish and Wildlife Area, and the Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Game Area also established wildlife demonstration plantings of Prairie View germplasm warm season grasses. In addition to the Department of Natural Resources, the Coal Creek Chapter (Indiana) Pheasants Forever established a demonstration of Prairie View germplasm big bluestem.

Field Offices in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan also established field plantings and demonstration plantings for several plant species. Jerry Lish (Indiana NRCS), Dave Kopchak (Ohio NRCS), Scott Kendreich, Tom Bernt, Jackie Korn, and Jennifer Taylor (Michigan NRCS) have established plantings of warm season grasses, cool season grasses, and shrubs that have been developed at the Rose Lake PMC. In addition to field plantings of released materials Theresa Wojkovich of the La Porte, Indiana field office is coordinating field trials to evaluate multiple accessions of Canada bluejoint and poverty oatgrass.

In order to gain more information on the adaptation and survival of plant selections outside the Rose Lake PMC service area, several Plant Materials Centers across the eastern and central United States are evaluating new and future releases from the Rose Lake PMC. Centers receiving plant material include Alderson PMC in Alderson, West Virginia; Manhattan PMC in Manhattan, Kansas; Big Flats PMC in Big Flats, New York; Bismark PMC in Bismark, North Dakota; Elsberry PMC in Elsberry, Missouri; Cape May PMC in Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey; and the National Plant Materials Center in Beltsville, Maryland. Those Centers will evaluate new and future releases for survival, vigor, susceptibility to disease and insects, seed production, and overall usefulness as conservation plants.

The Rose Lake PMC enjoys a close working relationship with many commercial seed producers. In 2006 the PMC supplied seed to Shooting Star Native Seed Nursery in Spring Grove, Minnesota, Ernst Conservation Seeds in Meadville, Pennsylvania, Cold Stream Farms in Free Soil, Michigan, Van Pines Nursery in West Olive, MI, and Lincoln-Oaks Nursery in Bismark, North Dakota. Commercial nurseries receiving plant materials allocations from the Rose Lake PMC, propagate these materials and make them available to the public through commercial channels.

## *Spring Planting Plans at the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center*

The Spring planting season approached rapidly at the Rose Lake PMC, and preparations were under way for field trials, production field plantings, and propagation for reimbursable projects. Most of the projects involved propagating plant material in the greenhouse and transplanting it into the field when weather conditions were favorable.

The largest project in the greenhouse was the propagation of warm season grass plants for the Fort Custer Military Training Center in Augusta, MI. About 17000 indiagrass and 5000 big bluestem plants were being propagated for production fields that will be located on the Fort. The PMC will provide a transplanter and the labor to install the production fields.

In preparation for Indiagrass propagation, the seed was collected from Fort Custer in 2005 and stratified using procedures provided by the Manhattan, KS Plant Materials Center. The stratification process increased germination and provided enough plants to meet the target number of plants without additional seed planting.

The PMC is working with Fort Custer to test plant materials and establishment techniques for re-vegetating steep-slope ammunition bunkers with low maintenance plant materials that are drought resistant. Several species were planted on the bunker in 2005. Additional species will be planted on the bunker in 2006 including buffalograss and grass pinks. Grass pinks is being propagated in the greenhouse for transplant onto the bunker. Buffalo grass will be direct seeded onto the bunker or grown in erosion control fabric and placed on the bunker as a sod mat.

In addition to the project at Fort Custer, the Rose Lake PMC propagated plant materials for the Apostle Island National Lakeshore in northern Wisconsin. The PMC produced hairgrass, evening primrose, pearly everlasting, and wormwood, equisetum, red elderberry, beach grass and goldenrod to aid in their restoration efforts. Plants were delivered in June.



*Transplanter at work  
at Ft. Custer*



*Bunker at Ft. Custer*



*PMC Greenhouse*

## *Technical Specialists to be included in Plant Materials Study*

A Plant Materials Program Study Plan is the tool used by Plant Materials Centers to define a project, determine desired plant materials and technology products, and identify cooperators that could partner with the Plant Materials Center in meeting the project's objectives. The current Study Plan template provides opportunity to identify cooperators to partner in the work, but does not specifically allow a list of technical specialists that can help plan the work, provide technical input on the project, or help interpret the results of Plant Materials studies.

Plant Materials Specialist Dave Burgdorf presented an idea for revising the Plant Materials Study Plan to include a list of "Technical Specialists," at the Central Region Plant Materials meeting in Manhattan, KS in November, 2005. Technical specialists could be NRCS discipline specialists, University researchers, and other non-NRCS technical experts that can provide technical expertise on the project described in the study plan. Dave has had similar discussions with Regional Plant Materials Specialists, the National Plant Materials Program Leader, and members of the Plant Materials technical committee.

The inclusion of technical specialists on Plant Materials Study Plans will encourage participation from those outside the NRCS Plant Materials Program in order to improve the study plan, define the types of observations to be made, and provide expertise that may not be present at a Plant Materials Center. This also provides an opportunity for discipline specialists in other States within a PMC service area to be more directly involved in Plant Materials projects. The ultimate benefit of this change will be to improve the technical information in the Field Office Technical Guide and provide the best possible products to NRCS clientele.

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center has included Technical Disciplines as part of all new study plans, starting in FY 2006. The expectation is that this revision will be incorporated into the National Plant Materials Manual and be utilized by all Plant Materials Centers in the future.



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