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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
May 2007

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Test results for samples collected from turkeys at a farm in West Virginia indicated exposure to H5N2, a low pathogenic strain of avian influenza (LPAI) virus. West Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was called upon to recommend burial sites to dispose of a million pounds of carcasses.

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[RC&D Awards](#)



The Coordinator of the Year Award went to Kurt Simon of the Little Kanawha RC&D Council.

[...More Info](#)

[Soil Survey](#)



The eleventh Soil Scientist Field Week was held at Camp Washington–Carver. *Soil That's Suitable for Framing. Should we be spending more time playing in the dirt?*

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[Key Findings of the 2003 NRI in West Virginia](#)



A statistical survey of land use and natural resource conditions and trends on U.S. non-Federal lands.

[...More Info](#)

[PMC 'Panbowl' River Alder](#)



The cultivar 'Panbowl' was released by the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in 2007. Foundation plants are available to commercial and government nurseries from the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in Alderson, West Virginia to establish seed orchards.

[...More Info](#)

[Conservation in the Mountain State](#)



Kevin Wickey, West Virginia State Conservationist, appeared as a guest on *Conservation in the Mountain State* a television show featuring news and information about many conservation issues.

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Farm Bill Summary, NRCS Logo, *Backyard Conservation* booklet is again available, LANDCARE staff, NRCS Logo, Official Font, COMET-VR.

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WV Grassland Evaluation Contest, WVU Soil Judging Team Endowment Fund, Envirothon

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Are you an Indian? National Women's Health Week.

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TJ Burr in Iraq, Charlotte A. Elliott-Friend, Rebecca MacLeod.

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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

I'll soon have completed 4 months as your State Conservationist. I'm still amazed at how steep my learning curve is. NRCS is very active here, and we have a wide diversity of activities.

You all know by now that this is a tough budget year for us, probably the hardest budget year we've had in this state. This is because the new allocation formulas are transferring decreasing CTA and other program funding to other states. I've told some of you personally, but I want to tell all of you several things about our budget:

1. Don't worry about the budget. The Chief has stated there will not be any furloughs or RIFs this year. It's my job to worry about the budget and we don't need two or more people doing the same job.
2. You are needed within this agency in WV. We are doing important work, and the best thing you can do for our budget is to provide quality customer service to and for the citizens of West Virginia each and every day.
3. Be prepared. We will be given opportunities to work our way out of our deficit, and we are going to have to react quickly with 4.5 months left. We are going to have to pull together.

I'm thankful for the welcome you've given me, and I'm hopeful we can continue to get to know each other on a better basis.

Kevin Wickey

State Conservationist



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Quarterly Summary

Resources

Multiflora Rose/Autumn Olive funding for

- Pasture transects.
- Determine brush acres.
- Determine 90% kill goal achievement.
- Follow up prescribed grazing plan.

Appalachian Grazing Conference

- Thank you!
- Almost 250 attended.
- Beef, horse, and goat production covered.

Farm Bill

- EQIP, 330 applications approved,
-Value of \$5,938,222.
- WHIP, 59 applications approved,
-Value of \$635,751.
- AMA, no new funding.
- WRP, need applications.
- Conservation Security Program (CSP).
-No 2007 signup.
-Existing contracts payments.
- FRPP
-Informational meetings.

-30th agricultural conservation easement.

-Approximately \$1.64 to match resources.

-16 county boards set up.

- GRP

-Finalizing FY 2005 applications.

-Existing review appraiser retired.

-Working with the USACE to utilize their services to conduct appraisal reviews.

-Negotiating for title search and easement closing services with local attorneys.

-Advertising for surveying services and appraisal services to close easements quicker.

-Delegated the authority to acquire easements.

Water Resources

- Construction is proceeding on, Elkwater Fork, Little Whitestick Creek and Deckers Creek

Soil

- Web Soil Survey
Monroe County added

Conservation Innovation Grants

- Three Active Projects
 - Controlling woody invasive weed species
 - Planning and development of a Board of Trade for Water Quality Credits in the Potomac Basin
 - Biofuels gassifier project attached to a poultry house to generate heat

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From the Field

Mountain RC&D Resource Conservation and Development



Nicholas County Sheltered Workshop

Nicholas County Sheltered Workshop opens its doors to the newly completed expansion. Initial planning began for the expansion in 2003 with actual construction beginning spring 2006. The new 10,000 sq. ft. building was completed January 2007 which is adjacent to the preexisting 2,400 sq. ft. facility. Fifteen to twenty new jobs will be created for it's vocationally challenge cliental. The primary financial supporters of this project were Appalachian Regional Commission, the USDA Rural Development, along with many local supports.

Lime Spreaders



Mountain and Great Kanawha RC&D helped Elk Conservation District sponsor the purchase of 2 new Agricultural lime spreaders. In just a few months of operation the spreaders have serviced over 30 cooperators by applying critically needed lime to central WV grasslands.



Mountain RC&D Sponsored Watersheds

- McDowell Coalition

The McDowell Wastewater Coalition just received the Ashland system designs

from Stafford Consultants. This innovative treatment system is designed to incorporate septic tanks, wetlands and filtration fields. Upon implementation the system will provide stream protection for 1,700 feet of Windmill Gap Branch. If the system is modified to include individual systems an additional 2 miles of stream will be improved.

- Upper Guyandotte W/S

The Upper Guyandotte Watershed has just advertised for an engineering firm to explore methods to improve wastewater management on Devils Fork in Wyoming County. RC&D Board Member Donald Crookshanks, Coordinator Mike Gasper and Watershed Director Kelly Jo Houck met to complete a property appraisal of land being donated by Appalachian Fuel.

- Guyandotte River around the Community of Ury

At the March RC&D meeting the Council approved funding that will begin the water quality planning on the Guyandotte River around the Community of Ury located in Raleigh County.

- Indian Creek Watershed

- The RC&D received a \$4,999 Canaan Valley Institute grant. This along with other sponsored funding will help with a stream restoration project on Turkey Creek. Approximately 1,500 feet of stream will be improved.



The RC&D received a \$15,000 FLOW (Future Leaders of Watersheds) grant which is designed to help educate and improve awareness as it relates to water quality and threats to the watershed. Mountain RC&D is in the process of signing up Indian Creek Watershed members as Earth Team Volunteers to facilitate the success of this project.

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

Mt. Clare Field Office

Partners for Wildlife Program working in Harrison County

Three riparian area fencing projects were recently completed on Harrison County Farms. The projects were completed under the EQIP and WHIP programs and through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which is a cooperative effort between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, WV Division of Natural Resources, Conservation Districts, Trout Unlimited, NRCS and the landowner. Three fence projects were completed by the US FWS fencing crew headquartered out of Elkins, WV. The projects installed 10,052 feet of high tensile electric fence protecting 11.4 acres of riparian area as well as 2 miles of streambank from grazing livestock.

For more information, contact [Jeff Griffith](#) at the [Mount Clare Service Center](#).

2007 Lawn, Garden & Forestry Exposition in Mineral Wells

The Little Kanawha RC&D helped sponsor the 2007 Lawn, Garden & Forestry Exposition in Mineral Wells March 31st and April 1. There were 64 vendors and just under 2,000 in attendance despite the rainy weather. Kurt Simon from Little Kanawha RC&D had a display and chaired the planning committee. Marvin Kerr, David Sweeney, Ben Collier and Crystle Buchanan were other NRCS employees on the planning committee. Casey Shrader presented a Backyard Conservation Program. Barbara McWhorter provided an Invasives display.

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

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Avian Influenza

WV NRCS Employees Participate in Avian Flu Emergency

Test results for samples collected from turkeys at a farm in West Virginia indicated exposure to H5N2, a low pathogenic strain of avian influenza (LPAI) virus. The samples were collected by an industry group as part of routine, pre-slaughter surveillance. The turkeys showed no signs of illness.

LPAI viruses pose no risk to human health. But to eliminate the threat of the virus mutating into a more dangerous high-pathogen strain, the turkeys were destroyed. A water-based foam method of mass depopulation was used on the 25,000 forty pound turkeys. The most desirable disposal method was burial on the farm. West Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was called upon to recommend burial sites to dispose of a million pounds of carcasses.

Bird testing took place on Friday, March 30, 2007. Pat Bowen (Assistant State Conservationist-Field Operations) was informed of the agricultural emergency Saturday evening around 21:00. He consulted with Doris Brackenrich (District Conservationist for Pendleton County) and Jason Teets (Resource Soil Scientist) by phone to identify soil types appropriate for burial of the birds. Online soil reference tools, the Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>) and Soil Data Mart (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>) were used to map potential sites.

Doris Brackenrich's day started early Sunday morning. Before 08:00 she traveled to the site with the farm's EQIP folder, soil maps, soil probe, and soil survey. Doris was to determine the best sites for burial and/or composting and making sure biosecurity measures were followed. West Virginia Department of Agriculture personnel provided coveralls and plastic boots, erected signs, and established a decontamination station.

Several possible burial sites were visited but none were suitable. Composting was determined to be the preferred disposal alternative after extensive interagency

discussion. Doris was asked to proceed with the burial pit as a backup plan. She mobilized equipment onto the site, prepared a test hole to determine depth, drainage characteristics, etc. in case burial was necessary.

Two roofed litter sheds at the poultry farm were designated as the primary composting sites. Both were located more than 200 feet from the river and well out of the 100-year floodplain. Due to the quantity of carcasses, a separate area was designated for additional windrow composting. The windrow was covered to prevent any additional moisture from entering. Finely shredded wood mulch from a local plant was transported in to be added to the compost as an added carbon source. The mulch also absorbed some of the leachate produced in the composting process to help prevent any runoff.

Sunday afternoon, Doris helped unload the first delivery of mulch. Shredded bark and available poultry litter was mixed to use for the base layer in the two litter sheds, under the guidance of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VA-DEQ). The mulch was placed as close as possible to the entrance of the litter sheds. During the afternoon, Doris also helped the landowner develop the site by moving cattle and equipment, preparing the houses (shutting down feed and water supplies to the turkeys), and providing moral support. By mid morning on Monday the mulch unloading area was stabilized and the litter sheds ready for carcasses.



From left to right: terrace for additional windrow composting, litter sheds with mulch piles, and poultry houses.



Two grades of mulch, fine and coarse shredded bark, were delivered to the site.



The front litter shed was built to NRCS specifications using EQIP funding. The shed contains composted turkeys.

On Monday, Jared Beard (Area Resource Soil Scientist) visited a pit that was dug over the weekend to evaluate the potential for its use as a contingency plan burial site.

Jared confirmed the previous assessment of the pit as being unsuitable for burial. The soil was mapped as BnD – Berks-Weikert channery silt loams, 15 to 25 percent slopes. This soil was 15 inches thick overlying highly fractured shale bedrock to a depth of 38 inches. The bedrock became harder and less fractured to a depth of 11 feet. Ground water was seeping through the bedrock as high as 25 inches (gray and red redoximorphic features were present at this depth between the fractures).

While at the poultry site, Jared suggested using straw bale dikes to slow runoff water from the poultry houses so it would have time to infiltrate into the soil. This soil was mapped ErB – Ernest silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes and ErC – Ernest silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes. Runoff potential was high due to the slope, compaction of the soil surface, and increased moisture level due to heavy rain.

West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture, Gus R. Douglass temporarily ordered a halt to any movement of poultry litter in counties in the state's eastern panhandle. Farmers in Hardy, Hampshire, Mineral, Grant, and parts of Pendleton Counties may resume poultry house cleanouts, litter movement and land application of litter. Negative test results of birds within a six-mile radius of the affected farm indicated the risk posed by regular litter management activities is minimal.

Cuba, Japan, Russia, and Taiwan have declared poultry from West Virginia temporarily ineligible for importation following the discovery of avian flu based on international guidelines. Timeframes for resuming poultry imports will depend on each country's standards.

Turkeys raised in West Virginia during 2006 totaled 3.6 million birds, up 33 percent from 2005. Because the affected poultry producer participates in the expanded National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), USDA provided 100 percent indemnity for all specified costs associated with depopulating this flock.

H5N2 was last detected in West Virginia in 2002. That time, about 14,000 chickens on a Hardy County farm were destroyed. Historically, there have been three highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in poultry in this country—in 1924, 1983, and 2004. No significant human illness resulted from these outbreaks. The 1924 H7 HPAI outbreak was detected in and contained to East Coast live bird markets. The 1983-84 H5N2 HPAI bird outbreaks resulted in the destruction of approximately 17 million

chickens, turkeys, and guinea fowl in the northeastern United States to contain and eradicate the disease. In 2004, USDA confirmed an H5N2 HPAI outbreak in chickens in the southern United States. The disease was quickly eradicated thanks to close coordination and cooperation between USDA, state, local, and industry leaders. Because of the quick response, the disease was limited to one flock.

For more information on Avian Influenza go to:

USDA Spotlight: Avian Influenza

Get the facts about the avian influenza virus http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?navid=AVIAN_INFLUENZA

Questions and Answers: Avian Influenza

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?
contentidonly=true&contentid=2005/10/0458.xml&navid=](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2005/10/0458.xml&navid=)

The **U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)** works to keep HPAI from becoming established in the U.S. poultry population.

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/avian_influenza/avian_influenza.shtml

One-stop access to U.S. Government avian and pandemic flu information.

Managed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

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RC&D Awards

On Tuesday February 27, 2007 the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARC&DC) presented seven deserving individuals and groups with its' highest awards, the NARC&DC National Awards. Each year, the NARC&DC honors those individuals and groups who have shown exceptional efforts to meet the needs of the RC&D.



The Coordinator of the Year Award went to Mr. Kurt Simon of the Little Kanawha RC&D Council. Mr. Simon's efforts include providing training throughout the Country on RC&D Concepts, fundraising and endowments, and capacity building. He has been critically involved in two major outreach projects; Operation Sharing and the Dell Printer Project. Mr. Simon oversaw the development of the revolving loan fund, the lawn and garden expo, and local grant writing sessions.



Foundation Award This year, the National Association of RC&D Councils wanted to recognize an outstanding Council, with a Foundation Award. This award represents the exceptional encouragement and dedication to the concept, mission and goals of the NARC&DC. The Little Kanawha RC&D Council earned this award in appreciation and recognition for its continued partnership with the NARC&DC and RC&D Councils around the Nation.

There are approximately 400 RC&D councils nationally.

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Soil Scientist Field Week

The soil survey third quarter staff meeting and eleventh field week was held at Camp Washington–Carver on May 7 through 11 near Clifftop, in Fayette County.

The field week goal was completing the 2007 data collection goals for the National Park Service (NPS) New River Gorge National River mapping contract and updating the Fayette and Raleigh Counties soil survey. Field teams completed sampling, monolith capture and transects. Rob Pate, Resource Soil Scientist, was the moderator. Eileen O'Neill, Soil Scientist, was the project leader.

In service training on plant roots and dense soil properties earned continuing education credits. Micaceous soils, the National Soil Information System (NASIS), and GPS were evening seminars subjects.

"Field week gives us the opportunity to work as a functioning group—on the same page with a common goal of working towards completing the update to Fayette and Raleigh soil survey," said David Kingsbury, Soil Data Quality Specialist.



The lodge, site of the staff meeting, was constructed from Chestnut logs killed by a blight that ravaged chestnut tree throughout WV. The trees were harvested from the camp property by the WPA.



Attendees at the eleventh Soil Scientist Field week.



Rob Pate and Debbie Murphy used Charles Delp as a model for personal protective equipment in the quarterly safety lecture.



Steve Carpenter presented Eileen O'Neill the MO Leader's Trophy. The coveted trophy is awarded each year for outstanding service in the field.



Wendy Noll assists with the morning coffee.



Debby Cunningham, Tim Dilliplane, and Michael Jones check the maps for the days transects.



Tim Prescott, Charles Delp, Steve Baker, and Aron Sattler working on the first of two soil monoliths prepared for the NPS.

Read more about *Soil That's Suitable for Framing* at

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/23/>

[AR2007042301710.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/23/AR2007042301710.html)



Aron, Tim, and Steve starting on the second monolith.

Should we be spending more time playing in the dirt?

Exposure to certain forms of soil bacteria can boost the immune system, which can in turn improve mood as effectively as antidepressant drugs. Researchers suspect that the microbes are affecting the brain indirectly by causing immune cells to release chemicals called cytokines, which stimulate the production of the mood-regulating chemical serotonin.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/healthnews.php?newsid=66840>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18082129/>

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Conservation in the Mountain State



On March 13, moderator Yvonne Shepard interviewed Carl Mullins (Southern CD, current President WV Association of Conservation Districts) and Kevin Wickey, West Virginia State Conservationist.

Conservation in the Mountain State is a television show featuring news and information about many conservation issues, including watershed structures, best land management practices and conservation education projects. See the interview at <http://www.wvca.us/tv/> (not updated at posting time).



Conservation in the Mountain State is a half hour program shown at various times on the West Virginia Library Commission Library Television network. A list of current Library Television Network (LTN) cable television subscribers that air *Conservation in the Mountain State* is at: http://www.librarycommission.lib.wv.us/ltn/ltn_index.html. See the map for viewing areas. These programs are also available through one hundred and forty public libraries around the state via our web video server.

The program schedule is at: http://www.librarycommission.lib.wv.us/ltn/Library_Television_%20Network_Schedule_2006.pdf



LTN produces programs ranging from the Department of Agriculture to the Treasurers Office and private sector programming.

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Call Before You Dig

Submitted by Barbara Broxterman, Agricultural Engineer

Most of our conservation practices require some type of soil disturbance or earth movement which requires that the landowner and the contractor to locate and have underground utilities marked prior to construction.

The new 811 number is a national "Call Before You Dig" phone number designated by the FCC to eliminate the confusion of multiple "Call Before You Dig" numbers and help save lives by minimizing damages to underground utilities. One easy phone call to 811 quickly begins the process of getting underground utility lines marked. Local One Call Center personnel will then notify affected utility companies, who will send crews to mark underground lines **for free**. This is especially good for locations that are near or at state lines.

The West Virginia local contact is Miss Utility at 1-800-245-4848.

Knowing where underground utility lines are buried before each digging project begins helps to prevent injury, expense and penalties. The depth of utility lines may vary and multiple utility lines may exist in one area. Simple digging jobs can damage utility lines and can disrupt vital services to an entire neighborhood, harm those who dig, and result in expensive fines and repair costs.

For more information, go to <http://www.call811.com/about-us/default.aspx>

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WV Agricultural Statistics

West Virginia was only one of four states to report a gain in farms.

The number of farms in West Virginia totaled 21,200 in 2006, an increase of 400 farms from 2005. The total land in farms was 3.6 million acres, unchanged from 2005. The average farm size was 170 acres, down 3 acres from 2005.

The West Virginia number of farms in the \$1,000–\$9,999 economic sales class totaled 17,500, up 300 from 2005. Land in farms for this sales class totaled 2.05 million acres, unchanged from 2005. The number of operations with cattle and calves totaled 12,500 operations, unchanged from 2005. Beef cow operations totaled 10,800 operations, down 100 operations from 2005. Milk cow operations totaled 470 operations, unchanged from 2005.

The number of operations with hogs and pigs totaled 900 operations, up 100 from 2005. The number of operations with sheep and lambs totaled 1,100 operations, up 10 percent, or 100 farms from 2005.

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/West_Virginia/Publications/Current_News_Release/FarmNumbers0207.pdf

2006 West Virginia Honey Production

Honey production in 2006 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 210,000 pounds, down 198,000 pounds from 2005. There were 5,000 producing colonies in 2006, down 3,000 colonies from 2005. Yield per colony averaged 42 pounds, down 9 pounds from 51 in 2005. Honey stocks on December 15, 2006, were reported at 57,000 pounds, down 45,000 pounds from the amount reported in 2005.

Prices for the 2006 crop averaged 195 cents per pound, compared to 130 cents per pound in 2005. Value of production totaled 410,000 dollars, down 120,000 dollars from 2005.

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/West_Virginia/Publications/Current_News_Release/honey0307.pdf

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The agency's primary responsibility is to prepare official estimates of agriculture for the nation. The West Virginia State field office is located in Charleston, West Virginia, and is considered a Division within the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

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Bits and Pieces

Farm Bill Summary

The current farm bill expires at the end of this fiscal year. Based on 52 USDA forums, including one in Elkins last fall, the proposed 2007 Farm Bill simplifies and streamlines programs and increases funding by \$7.8 billion over 10 years. A few of the proposed changes to make programs more user friendly for us and those we serve include:

- Consolidating existing cost-share programs into a newly designed Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Simplifying the Conservation Security Program (CSP) by creating two tiers of conservation achievement instead of three. CSP would also be offered nationwide on an annual basis, instead of in select watersheds.
- Streamlining working lands easement programs into one Private Lands Protection Program
- Broadening conservation compliance provisions to discourage the conversion of grassland to crop production.
- Combining the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the easement function of the Emergency Watershed Program.

Main goals of the 2007 Farm Bill is making conservation more efficient and available to more landowners including specialty crops farmers, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged producers. For more information, go to the [Secretary's proposals for the Conservation Title of the 2007 Farm Bill](#).



***Backyard Conservation* booklet is again available from LANDCARE**

And for the first time, a Spanish version is available in hard copy.

Backyard Conservation available in English and Spanish

The 28-page, 8½ x 11-inch publication shows how scaled-down versions of 10 conservation practices that farmers and ranchers use to improve agricultural land can be used by homeowners in urban and suburban yards and communities.

NRCS, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the Wildlife Habitat Council first published *Backyard Conservation* in 1998. The National Audubon Society joined the partnership in 2003. Through an agreement with NRCS this year, Audubon helped revise the publication, reprinted the English version, and printed the first Spanish edition.

You may order copies of *Backyard Conservation* or *Conservación en su jardín* through <http://landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov/>, by e-mailing landcare@usda.gov, or by calling 1-888-526-3227. Both booklets continue to be available on the NRCS Web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/backyard> (the updated versions will be posted soon).

LANDCARE

Looking for a NRCS brochure? Need to order a display? Have a question about the Earth Team? Then you need to contact LANDCARE. The LANDCARE office keeps inventory and processes orders for NRCS publications, forms and displays for NRCS employees and the general public. Orders may be placed by calling 1-888-LANDCARE (1-888-526-3227), or by visiting <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov/>



LANDCARE staff includes (L-R) Michele Eginore-National Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator, Alan Bengue-Program Assistant, Venessa Alvarado-Office Assistant, Bonnie Allely-Volunteer Liaison.

APHIS Publications, the *Take the First Step* series is now available at [LANDCARE](#). To view the publications, visit the APHIS Web site at http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/contact_us/order_materials.

NRCS Logo and Information Use and Crediting

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 - For requests of a commercial nature, NRCS cannot endorse a product or service, or give the appearance of doing so.
 - [National Instruction 260-307 “Cooperative Ventures and Non-Government Entities”](#) covers this topic, and prescribes the required language for commercial promotional requests.
-

Official Font

The Conservation Correspondence Branch has stated that “Times New Roman 12” is the official font used for all correspondence.

COMET-VR

A tri-fold brochure on COMET-VR, a web-based tool for estimating changes in soil carbon sequestration, fuel, and fertilizer use as a result of changes in land management. COMET-VR is listed on the LandCare website (landcare@usda.gov):

PRINT ON DEMAND ONLY (500 LIMIT)- Email landcare@usda.gov to order Hard Copies.

The brochure is directed to farmers and ranchers but will also provide information to field conservation professionals and partners on how the tool works, where to find it, resource benefits, and some conservation activities that can help sequester carbon.

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Conservation Education

WV Grassland Evaluation Contest

On Friday, April 13, 2007 the Seventh Annual Grassland Evaluation Contest was held in Jackson's Mill in conjunction with the Annual Beef Expo. This year's contest had nine teams participating; Cabell Midland, Clay County, Ravenswood, Ripley FFA (had 2 teams), Tyler FFA (had 3 teams), and Lincoln County.



The judging site was typical pasture used for livestock grazing. A scenario with the landowner's goals for livestock and wildlife production was provided; along with the appropriate soil survey information, aerial photos, maps, scorecards and other relative information.



The contestants determined the condition of the field and then made corrective decisions based on sound agricultural practices compatible with the landowner's goals.



The Grassland Evaluation Contest consisted of four sections: Grassland Condition, Soil Interpretation, Wildlife Habitat, and Plant Identification. Each of these factors was considered in evaluating the pasture to best utilize the resource and to help make useful management decisions.



Each team was made up of 3 to 4 FFA or 4-H students who are currently enrolled in high school. Each member of the winning team receives a \$500 scholarship.

This year's winning team was from Cabell Midland High School and they will represent West Virginia in the Mid America contest in Springfield, Missouri this summer. Each member of the second winning team received a \$250 scholarship. This year's second place team was from Clay County. The third place team was from Ravenswood. The highest scoring individual receives a \$500 scholarship and this year's highest scoring individual was from Cabell Midland.

This year's contest had many sponsors, including the WV Grassland Steering Committee, NRCS, WVCA, WVU Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Research Service, Farm Bureau, RC&D Councils, WV Conservation Districts, WV FFA, WV Association of Professional Soil Scientists, WV Chapter SWCS and many individuals who offered their time and/or money. On behalf of the contest committee, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to all of those who helped make this year's contest a success. Without their hard work and commitment, this educational experience would not be possible.

NRCS employees participating were: Gary Redden, Rob Pate, Jamey Darlington, Jason Teets, Greg Stone, Debbie Dorsey, Jared Nestor, Andy Sentz, Barbara Greenleaf, Rebecca Flanagan, and Katy McBride.

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

WV SWCS Helped Start An Endowment Fund For the WVU Soil Judging Team!

Through the generosity of one Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) member the students of West Virginia University involved with the soil judging team will have an enriched program for years to come. Peg Reese, a life member of the International SWCS, is an alumni of WVU and a former member of the soil judging team. She talks about how influential the program was on her life and how important it is for students to travel and learn from experience. She has pledged \$5,000 over the next 5 years to get the fund up and running. So far Ms. Reese has donated \$3,000. The good news is everyone can contribute to this fund! You can make a check out to WV SWCS Soil Judging Team and mail to Katie Fitzsimmons, WV SWCS Treasurer, at 7007 Mountain Park Drive, White Hall, WV 26554. She can send you a receipt to keep for taxes.

For more information, contact [LaRae Baker](#) at the [Mount Clare Service Center](#).

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 2007 West Virginia Envirothon is at Canaan Valley Resort in Davis, WV.



NRCS retiree, Kelley Sponaugle, coached the Shady Spring High School Biology Club to another first place finish at the 11th West Virginia Envirothon on April 27, 2007.

Each team member won a \$1,000 scholarship and will represent the Mountain State at the national event, the Canon Envirothon at Hobart & William Smith Colleges, New York.



The weather was cold and foggy.

This year an instructional day was added on Thursday. It gave the students an opportunity to interact and learn from the experts.



Jared Beard and Greg Kist are at the soils station.



Barbara McWhorter grading tests at the Forestry station.



Jared Beard and Peg Reese time students in the soil pit.



Jared Beard and Steven Baker monitor the soil pit. The pit was bailed out between groups because of the wet weather.



Jason Teets takes his turn as the pit monitor.



The top five teams were required to give an oral presentation that explored affordable and practical ways to use alternative and sustainable energy sources. Kevin Wickey served as an orals judge.

For more information go to http://www.wvca.us/news/news_story.cfm?id=835

More photos of the 2007 Envirothon may be seen at http://gallery.wvca.us/envirothon_2007.

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Useful Links

NRCS PowerPoints

Submitted by Barbara McWhorter

Illinois NRCS has a variety of PowerPoint presentations available. <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/news/publications/pwrpnt/index.html>

Magic Self-Service

On March 26th the ITS Service Desk announced the change to the URL for the Magic Self-Service "Help Desk." The new URL is <https://merlin.sc.egov.usda.gov/helpdesk/>

Absentee Landowners

More than 42% of the land in the United States is owned by absentee landowners. This website was developed for the Midwest but some of the information may be helpful in WV. www.absenteelandowners.org

WV Rural Development Newsletter

Find out what Rural Development is doing. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv/default.html>

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West Virginia's Civil Rights

Are you an Indian? You might just be!

Submitted by Michael Jones, American Indian/Alaska Native Program Manager

Currently in the United States, 10 to 20 million people may have Indian ancestry, but only a small percentage identifies themselves as being primarily Indian. The Bureau of the Census counts anyone an Indian who declares himself or herself to be an Indian. In 1990 the Census figures showed there were 1,959,234 American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States (1,878,285 American Indians, 57,152 Eskimos, and 23,797 Aleuts). This is a 37.9 percent increase over the 1980 recorded total of 1,420,000. Why such a large increase? Well, the increase has been attributed to improved census taking and more self-identification during the 1990 count.

So, are you one of the 10 to 20 million Americans that is an Indian?

You might think that is an easy question to answer. It only takes a simple yes or no, right. Well, let us take a look and see just what it takes to be an Indian.

There is no single definition of "Indian" - socially, administratively, legislatively or judicially. Since there is no single definition, to know whether or not you qualify for tribal or government programs, you must contact them directly. The USDA says that the 1964 Civil Rights Act does not apply to American Indians and Alaskan Natives. In order to be considered American Indian 1/32 of your ancestry must be Native American or Alaskan Native (NJ USDA-NRCS web page). The Bureau of Indian Affairs give the following requirements for their services; an Indian must (1) be a member of a Tribe recognized by the Federal Government, (2) one-half or more Indian blood of tribes indigenous to the United States (25 USC 479); or (3) must, for some purposes, be of one-fourth or more Indian ancestry. By legislative and administrative decision, the Aleuts, Eskimos and Indians of Alaska are eligible for BIA services. Most of the BIA's

services and programs, however, are limited to Indians living on or near Indian reservations.

Have you figured it out yet? Are you an Indian? Not so fast! One of the most important questions to know the answer to whether you are an Indian or not is *what tribal ancestry do you have?*

Different tribes require different blood quantum for membership. A few examples for Oklahoma tribes are; Apache 1/4 total Indian blood, Caddo 1/8 Indian blood, Ft. Sill Apache 1/16 Apache blood, and Cherokee any degree-descendent of tribal member. Remember, that is just Oklahoma.

Since American Indian reservations are self governing bodies, a constitution is drawn up for each. An example of how membership requirements are written into the constitution of tribes is given below for the Paiute-Shoshone Tribe in Nevada. The membership of the Paiute-Shoshone Tribe shall consist of all living persons in the following categories, provided such persons are not members of some other tribe or band:

All persons whose names appear on the Fallon Allotment Schedules as approved by the Secretary of the Interior. All persons of Indian Blood whose names appear on the Census of the Fallon Reservation as of January 1, 1940. All persons of Indian Blood whose names appear on the Census of the Fallon Colony as of January 1, 1940. Direct descendants of persons in the above categories, provided that such descendants possess one-fourth or more Paiute and/or Shoshone Indian Blood.

So, are you an Indian?

National Women's Health Week

Submitted by Carol Lagodich, Federal Women's Program Manager

National Women's Health Week was May 13-19, 2007. Often women are the caregivers for their families and forget to take care of themselves. The week encourages women to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life including of the need to visit the doctor and to make sure screenings are up-to-date.

West Virginia has the nation's highest levels of heart disease. Heart disease and stroke are the No. 1 and No. 3 of killers both men and women over age 25 in WV. WV has the second highest diabetes rate in the United States and one of the highest obesity rates.

- Every year more women than men die of heart disease. African American women have the highest mortality rates from heart disease in part due to increased rates of high blood pressure, smoking and obesity, as compared to Caucasian women.
- Many women do not know that lung cancer, not breast cancer, is the leading cancer killer of women. More women are dying of lung cancer since smoking among women is on the rise especially among young women. Caucasian women have the highest death rates from lung cancer.
- Native American, Alaskan native, Mexican American and African American women are more likely to develop diabetes than Caucasian women.
- Diabetes and heart disease risk both increase as body weight increases. According to a recent study, the average woman's weight has jumped from 144 lbs. in the late 1970's to 152 lbs. in the late 1990's. The typical woman then was a size 8 and is now between sizes 12-14. It is helpful to understand that even a 10% weight loss, for most a loss of 10-15 lbs., can improve blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.
- Excess abdominal body fat increases risk of heart disease and diabetes. A quick test to determine if you have excess weight around the middle is to measure your waist. If you are a woman, and your waist is larger than 35 inches, you are at increased risk. For a man, a waist of 40 inches increases health risk.



The NRCS Federal Women's Program sponsored a lunch speaker to promote health on May 15. Dr. Bob Thompson, of MedExpress, talked about health issues including the Zone, hormones, and general wellness.

For more information, go to <http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/>



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Earth Team

Earth Day Celebration

By Christina Yakunich, Earth Team Volunteer



On Tuesday April 24, 2007, Nutter Fort Primary Second Grade hosted students from West Virginia University representing the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of West Virginia. The three students, Christina Yakunich, Michael Marra, and Kelly Lang are Earth Team Volunteers for the NRCS and members of the WVU Environmental Protection Club.



The Earth Team Volunteers put together an inter-active education project to teach the students about the importance of the Earth's natural resources.



Nearly 150 Second Grade students participated in a hands-on activity dealing with soil and water conservation. WVU students displayed the water cycle and described for primary students how the cycle works. Primary students also looked at layers of soil and learned how they are formed and how long it takes to form each layer.

All this was in conjunction with Earth Day celebrated on April 22, 2007. Inside the classroom, many primary students continued their education, learning in depth about water and how it is important for us in order to live.



Michael Marra said everyone had a good time and they want to do it again next year.

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Meet . . .



TJ Burr, Civil Engineer and USAF Reserve Officer

On April 10, 2007, TJ Burr left for a 4-6 month deployment to Northern Iraq. He is managing the construction completion of the military's busiest hospital in Iraq, the Air Force Theater Hospital. The \$20 million project will provide a medical campus consisting of over 100,000 square feet. This hospital is foremost for the American soldiers in Iraq, but will also be used for Iraqi soldiers and civilians who are injured in the war.

TJ is in a hostile-fire area. At times he has had to seek cover in bunkers and under his desk.

Last May, TJ Burr described his service in the US Air Force reserves. Go to http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/06may_nv/meet.html.



Charlotte A. Elliott-Friend
 State Administrative Officer
 State Office, Morgantown, WV

Familiar Face, New Name

On March 23, 2001 Charlotte A. Elliott-Friend became the first woman to hold the State Administrative Officer position in West Virginia and the highest-ranking woman in NRCS in West Virginia.

Charlotte said "Six years later, I am and will continue enjoying the position very much."

There have been many challenges with this job and I have learned a lot."

I credit the support I receive from my co-workers, friends, and family for my success. I have a great staff and enjoy working with them. I credit my success to my staff; they do excellent work!

I look forward to the future with open arms. I love the work that NRCS does and the employees in West Virginia are of the best in the Nation second to none. I am so proud to be an employee with NRCS here in West Virginia, and I would like to say to all the employees, "Great Job!"



**Rebecca MacLeod, RC&D
Coordinator**

I was very excited about becoming the Project Coordinator for Potomac Headwaters RC&D in January 2007 after Roger Boyer retired. It is a very fulfilling job with a tremendous amount of freedom. I am trying to contain my happiness so I don't cause offense.

I have worked for the agency for 24 years, starting as a student trainee in Jefferson County in 1983. From there I spent time in Jackson and Pendleton Counties. I have fond memories about all the soil conservationists and DC that trained me, but I have an especially soft spot for the technicians, Ralph Hartman, Owen Pingley, and Charles Henry Jamison. They would drive me crazy at times, but I learned so much from them. I know new employees get tired of hearing us go on about "in the old days", but everything (well, almost) is true. I hear this all the time when I serve as an instructor for NEDC's Orientation for New Employees.

It was a hard decision to leave the District Conservationist position. I really did love the job having done it for 20 years in Morgan (when Morgan was a single employee Field Office), Martinsburg, WV and Frederick, MD. My main objective with that job was

always to help our clients achieve a better environment. Now, my clients are somewhat different, but my objective is still the same.

RC&D spills over into my weekends and evenings with projects and meetings. It has never been easy for me to separate my family life and career. I am grateful that my husband, Gordon, has been supportive all through the years, and my children Clayton, age 16, and Diandra, age 12, are tolerant, even when they are corralled to help plant trees or clean up trash on the weekends.

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Personnel Updates

(as of May 1, 2007)

Name	Action	Location	Change
Adkins, Dustin	Reassignment Effective 03/04/2007	Union FO	Princeton FO
Boone, Alan	Retirement Effective 04/28/2007	Huntington FO	-
Cragar, Ray	Transfer Out Effective 04/01/2007	Alderson PMC	Knox City, TX
Elliott-Friend, Charlotte	Name Change Effective 04/01/2007	State Office	Formerly Charlotte Wertz
Smith, Wanda	Reassignment Effective 03/04/2007	Princeton FO	Union FO
Staddon, Alan	Retirement Effective 04/27/2007	State Office	-
Winslow, Chris	Reassignment Effective 03/18/2007	Ranson FO	Martinsburg FO

West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation

Name	Home Unit	Location	Agency	Assignment	Date
Egerstrom, Tammy	State Office	Utah	NRCS	EWP	April 16-20

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