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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
November 2007

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2007 Golden Auger Award, Forages for Horses Workshop, Thanks to you. . . the World is stronger, LincPass

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The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) played a part in permanently protecting farmland and wetland from development in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle.

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Richard Jones, Soil Scientist, in the land of 10,000 haystacks.

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 [WV Conservation Partnership Congressional Tour 2007](#)
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[Water Concerns Addressed for Two Local Farmers with AMA](#)



Two local producers, one in Marion County and one in Monongalia County, have recently addressed water concerns associated with growing blueberries, apples, and truck crops.

[...More Info](#)

[Conservation Education](#)



Girls Can Do!, and a new student educational publication, PA-1936 *For the Good of the People*, is intended for use by elementary school-aged youth to inform them about the need to have a good conservation ethic.

[...More Info](#)

[Useful Web Links](#)

Smart Growth Resource Library, Preserving the World's Seeds, NRCS Suggestion Survey Responses, Rural Development Newsletter.

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To submit news items for the February *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 woke up this morning to a dusting of snow on my patio. One of the things I like about West Virginia is a climate with a full 4 seasons. Change is in the air.

We had a very successful year in FY2007 and I'm very proud of our accomplishments, but we can't stay in FY07. I announced some major changes in the Management Team earlier this week. Changes that I believe will make us more efficient and effective. Some additional changes will be following.

The Soil Survey program had a banner year in FY2007. SSURGO seemed like a pipe dream 18 years ago and now we have reached it here in West Virginia. Change is coming though, with two new MLRA offices in Huntington and Morgantown.

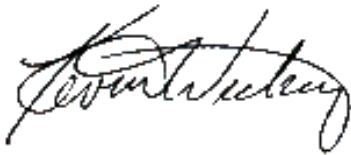
The US Senate is debating the next Farm Bill this morning. We are still under a Continuing Resolution. Our staff numbers have decreased by 13 since I started here in January with more retirements expected soon. Changes are coming with our budget and our programs and staffing.

We are wrapping up construction activities for the year and it has been our culture in NRCS to slow down between fall and late winter. We have to change. We need to be busy writing conservation plans, ranking EQIP applications, and making CSP and other program payments and getting ready for the huge construction season we will have next year. We have another enormous opportunity with EQIP funds here in West Virginia again right now. The challenge to conservationists is to write good plans that address the resource concerns and advance the quality of our natural resources here in West Virginia.

I heard a former Chief say that many of us have "conservationist" in our titles. We are not "administrators". That is not meant to belittle or reduce the importance of administrators or the administrative duties that are necessary to our successful operations. Rather, it is to emphasize that our goal in NRCS is not to write contracts

and spend money. We do that; and we do that very well. We have made great strides as an agency in developing tools and policies that have streamlined the administrative tasks we perform and more are coming. We have more accurate information regarding the management of contracts than we have ever had allowing us to be more effective. Our goal, however, in NRCS is to help people help the land. It is very important that we keep that in focus. Contracts are only useful as tools to achieve that end – getting conservation on the land. They are not an end in themselves. The people in NRCS here in West Virginia are what make the difference – you decide whether we are having a positive effect on our natural resources or simply chasing paperwork.

And that brings us back to the opportunity we have right now here in West Virginia. One thing that hasn't changed is our mission. Keep that in focus. We still help people help the land. Don't miss the opportunity we have to achieve that mission; to make a difference here in Wild and Wonderful West Virginia.

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

Kevin Wickey
State Conservationist
West Virginia

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From the Field

Mountain Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)



Paint Creek Scenic Trail

Mountain RC&D has received a DoT grant of \$80,000 to develop a corridor management plan for the Paint Creek Scenic Trail. An engineering firm has been contracted to assist with the development of the plan.

Two public meetings were held in August for local input and community projects are now being identified for inclusion in the plan. The trail is a DoT by-way/back-way project that runs from Tamarack in Raleigh County to the Kanawha River in Kanawha County.



White Oak Rail to Trail

The White Oak Rail to Trail includes a 6.2 mile Rail/Trail Right of Way that was purchased from Northfork and Southern RR July 2004. Two miles of the trail will soon be fully ADA compliant--grading and paving is currently underway. The next phase of the Oak Hill, WV trail enhancement is in design status.

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

The Potomac Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Some current projects are:

- Potomac Water Watch This project is focusing on Fish Kills, Intersex, Emerging Contaminants, and Endocrine Disruptors

Purpose:

1. Better inform public on fish kills and intersex in Potomac watershed
2. Solicit public's help in better reporting fish kills and diseases
3. Increase data collection of WVDEP, WVDNR, and USGS by enlisting the public to report sightings

- Potomac River National Heritage Corridor

Purpose:

1. Assist local organization with the development of a preliminary data collection and feasibility study for the designation of a system of trails highlighting the economic importance of the Potomac River during the period of 1750 to 1850.

- Morgan County Source Water Protection Plan

Purpose:

1. Facilitate the development of a source water protection plan by the Morgan County Rural Water Committee through coordination of public forums, focus groups, and citizen volunteers.
2. Publish plan that will guide local government on development of policy and regulations designed to protect water quality and quantity.
3. Create and disseminate educational brochure to county residents explaining the importance of source water protection and their responsibilities in the effort.

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

Plants for Pollinators

Appalachian Plant Materials Center is cultivating five native species for improved wildlife/pollinator habitat: a blackeyed Susan, Illinois bundleflower, spiked blazing star, and two native lespedezas.



blackeyed Susan seed production fields.



A honeybee and bumblebee collecting nectar and pollen from a blazing star plant



a swallowtail butterfly visiting a blazing star plant

Pollinators play an important role in food production.

Pollinators are threatened worldwide by habitat loss, pesticides, disease, and parasites.

For more information, go to http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/07feb_nv/pollinators.html

White Hall/Morgantown Service Center

Education and Program Outreach is the Focus of the North Preston Farmers Club Fall Festival

The North Preston Farmers Club Fall Festival was held on September 7th & 8th in Bruceton, WV. Exhibits from various agencies including WVCA, Monongahela Conservation District, WVDA Regulatory Division, USDA Wildlife Services, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA NRCS were in attendance. Each agency brought valuable

information on different programs they are involved with in hopes of reaching out to all in attendance. Not only did NRCS try to provide program information to attendees but also wanted to reach out to the youth in attendance. Program information is always important to provide to the public but as conservationists we should all try to educate the youth of tomorrow about our natural resources.

After a bit of construction from a White Hall/Morgantown Service Center Earth Team Volunteer a NRCS Educational Barn was constructed. The barn provided questions about soils that the youth in attendance could have answered by opening a barn door. The NRCS Education Barn seemed to be a hit for the young and young at heart. The Barn was designed so that different questions and answers can be utilized to make this a unique educational tool anytime of year. Katie Fitzsimmons, soil conservationist, was instrumental in putting together a new exhibit that combines program and educational information to the public.



The NRCS Educational Barn was a big hit. Phil & Sam Evans taking time out from the festival to learn a little more about soils.



Taking a look at some completed practices, Katie Fitzsimmons and Kirby Clark (Preston County Farmer), talk about the different resource concerns that can be addressed by a range of conservation practices.

For more information contact [Ray Carr](#) or [Katie Fitzsimmons](#) at the [White Hall Service Center](#)

Outdoor Classroom Project in McMechen, WV

Submitted by: Nicole Viars, District Conservationist, McMechen, WV

The Northern Panhandle Conservation District (NPCD), in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Northern Panhandle RC&D, is several steps closer to making the Outdoor Classroom located at the USDA Service Center in McMechen, WV a reality. For over 2 years, the district has been in the planning stages of

developing an outdoor learning center to be used by schools and youth groups in West Virginia's Northern Panhandle, consisting of Marshall, Ohio, Brooke, and Hancock Counties. Over \$25,000 has been raised to complete the center, which will ultimately consist of a walking trail, gazebo, constructed wetland/pond, butterfly and hummingbird garden areas, forested areas, weather station, and more.

Last fall, the asphalt walking trail was installed. Over the winter, the district work crew built the gazebo/learning shelter. This spring and summer were spent trying to control Japanese knotweed that was penetrating the asphalt trail and surrounding areas, thereby delaying the planting of the trees and the butterfly and hummingbird gardens.

On October 29, 2007, 21 student and teacher volunteers from the Cameron FFA Chapter assisted the district by planting 130 trees and shrubs in the learning center. Some of the trees include walnut, hickory, oak, maple, redbud, dogwood, tulip poplar, ash, sycamore, and other native species. In addition, a small pond complete with waterfall and winding creek has been installed in the area where the butterfly and hummingbird gardens will be planted next spring.

This outdoor education lab is being created to give teachers and students a chance to study plants and wildlife native to our area. The NPCD plans to offer workshops for teachers over the summer, such as Project Wild and Project Learning Tree. The district is hopeful that they will incorporate what they learn in the classroom and arrange for classrooms to visit the site. Schools, scout troops, FFA chapters, 4-H groups and even adults will be encouraged to utilize the classroom.

Questions about the project can be directed to Sharon Andrews, Outreach Coordinator with the NPCD. Her phone number is 304-242-0576 x 114, and her email address is sandrews@wvca.us.



Nicole Viars instructed the group in planting techniques.



The Cameron FFA Chapter assisted the district by planting 130 trees and shrubs in the learning center.



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Bits and Pieces



2007 Golden Auger Award

Stephen Carpenter

The 2007 Golden Auger Award was presented to Stephen Carpenter (center), NRCS State Soil Scientist for West Virginia and MO-13 Leader. The award was presented by West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists (WVAPSS) vice-president Rob Pate (left) and president Dave Kingsbury (right). This award is given jointly by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and WVAPSS and recognizes individuals who have made major contributions to the field of soil science and to the soil survey program in West Virginia.



Forages for Horses Workshop

Submitted by Katie Fitzsimmons

Twenty three WV NRCS employees attended a Forages for Horses Workshop sponsored by the WV Soil and Water Conservation Society on October 15 & 16. Bob Hendershot, Ohio NRCS GRASSLAND SPECIALIST, presented the program.

Bob covered a variety of topics including pasture management and paddock design, tall fescue management, soils and soil fertility, plant growth physiology, forage species selection, pasture renovation procedures, poisonous plants and hay quality and storage. The second day of the workshop the group visited the Valerie McDonald farm for a tour and to talk about waste management, resource concerns, and various other aspects of horse production.



Thanks to you. . . the World is stronger

Generous WV NRCS State Office, MLRA Soil Survey Region 13 Office, and National Geospatial Development Center employees contributed \$5,162 for the 2007-2008 Monongalia and Preston Counties Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

The mission of the CFC is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all.

CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign.

Pledges support eligible non-profit organizations that provide benefits throughout the world.

If You Work For USDA, A "LincPass" Is About To Be A Part Of Your Future

By October 27, 2008 virtually all USDA employees are to be issued new USDA employee ID cards, called the "LincPass."

The USDA version of this government wide "smart card," with its variety of new features, is called "LincPass" in honor of President Abraham Lincoln, who founded the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1862.

The cards will be 2" x 3.5", will be multicolored, will include the USDA employee's name, plus his/her identification as an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will include identifying data including height, color of hair, and color of eyes, will include the card's expiration date, and will include the official USDA logo. In addition, a contact computer chip will be imbedded in the card that will hold the following items of data to verify the cardholder's identity: a fingerprint 'algorithm;' a digital head shot of the cardholder; the cardholder's unique ID--which is not the cardholder's Social Security

number; and information--called "PKI Certificates"--which provides authentication, encryption, and a digital signature, all of which are unique to that employee.

USDA employees will insert their LincPass to automatically access their office computer, and scan their LincPass to automatically access their USDA facility. USDA's plan is to complete implementation of LincPass access to USDA office laptops by September 2008. All other USDA employees will be required to use their LincPass, to access their office desktop computers, by October 2009. Finally, by October 2011 all USDA employees will be required to use the "scan" feature of their LincPass in order to enter applicable USDA facilities.

For more information, go to http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_10B?contentidonly=true&contentid=Vol66_No5_Article1.xml

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NRCS Employees See Dam Progress

Dick Judy, Louis Aspey, and Sam Ware showed state office employees and retiree's the Elkwater Fork dam on August 22. Most of the employees on the tour were involved with some aspect of the project.



Sam Ware (right) and Dick Judy (left) told the group about the project history. Lynn Shutts (center), retired Environmental and Biological Science Specialist, took care of environmental permitting, NEPA compliance, mitigation plans, writing the EIS, and answering congressional correspondence.



Crews are working behind Dick Judy (left) and Sam Ware (right). Dick has overall engineering responsibility for the dam. Sam is the Contracting Officers technical representative and serves as project engineer on site. Sam, along with the inspection staff assures that the work is done in accordance with the contract requirements.



Leonard Jackson (left) and Amy Bolyard (center) listen to Louis Aspey (right), the program manager for WV PL 566 funds.

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566) authorizes the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to help local organizations and units of government plan and implement watershed projects. Projects can include flood prevention and damage reduction, development of rural water supply sources, erosion and sediment control, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, wetland creation and restoration, and increased recreational opportunities.



Amy Bolyard, Contract Specialist (left) put out the solicitation and assists with contract administration. Ron Bricker, Budget Officer, (right) processes pay estimates.



Nathan Knox, Civil Engineering Technician, provided drafting assistance in developing a land rights map for the project property acquisition.



Andy Feher (yellow hard hat), retired design engineer, served as the Contracting Officers Technical Representative for the design contract.

West Virginia NRCS is responsible for contract administration and quality assurance for the roller-compacted concrete (RCC) 123 foot tall dam. The Elkwater Fork Dam's 54 acre reservoir's primary purpose will be water supply. It is expected the 32 million dollar construction contract, the largest ever administered by NRCS, will be completed in the late spring of 2008.

During RCC placement, the contractor worked two shifts and NRCS had a staff of 7 engineers and inspectors on site. The RCC placement began in early April and was completed in early August. Approximately 140,000 cubic yards of RCC was placed during that period.

See <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watershed/elkwater/elkwater.html> for more information and photos.

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FRPP Grand Slam

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) played a part in permanently protecting farmland and wetland from development in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. On September 24, 2007, Walter Washington, the current owner, signed the conservation easement on 219 acres surrounding the historic Harewood mansion near Charles Town. Mr. Washington is a direct descendant of George Washington's brother, Samuel, who built Harewood in 1770.

The easement ensures continued use of the farmland for agricultural purposes. The land was used historically as a dairy farm and is now leased for hay production to an adjacent landowner. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided \$200,000 in matching funds toward the easement because of its prime agricultural value.

"I have to say I'm honored to be here," said Gary Mast, Deputy Under-Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), during the October 10, 2007 signing celebration. "You've got highly productive soils. You've got history going on as well as the wetlands. It's like a grand slam."

The location also has historical significance. The Harewood mansion itself is already on the National Historic Register. The marriage of James and Dolly Madison took place there. The site is the only Washington family residence in Jefferson County still owned by a member of the family. The Battle of Summit Point in 1864 played a significant role in the outcome of the Civil War. General Jubal Early advanced over its fields to attack General Sheridan at Locust Hill, just east of the current Harewood farm. He later retreated back across the same fields when General Sheridan re-took Locust Hill. The American Battlefield Protection Program, which is part of the National Park Service, contributed to the project.

Harewood contains about 50 acres of marl wetlands, which occur mainly in the Northeast. In West Virginia, the marl wetlands only exist in Jefferson and Berkeley

counties and provide a habitat for several species that are considered rare in the state including the spotted turtle, marsh skullcap, Baltic rush and great bulrush. The wetland is the water source for Evitts Run and the Altona-Piedmont marsh downstream.

The assessment of the easement is the difference in the value of the 219 acres for development and the agricultural value. Other funding for the easement came from the [Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board](#), the [National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program](#), The [Nature Conservancy](#), and a substantial donation by Mr. Washington. The funds will be placed in an endowment used to maintain the farmland and wetland. The Land Trust will monitor the property annually to ensure that provisions of the easement are being observed.

Bob Glennon, National FRPP Manager, met prior to the signing ceremony with Eastern Panhandle and State farmland protection leadership to discuss details about FRPP and steps that land trusts, farmland protection boards, and NRCS-WV can take to improve West Virginia's farmland protection and FRPP programs. Glennon emphasized that farmland protection proponents should explain the importance of saving prime, unique, and important farmland. "There are technical reasons for saving the best land," said Glennon "Unfortunately, the best land for agriculture is also the easiest and least expensive to develop."

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement that prevents development from taking place on a piece of property now and in the future, while protecting the property's agricultural, ecological, and open-space values. The landowner retains ownership and right to use the land for agricultural or other, non-prohibited purposes.

The Eastern Panhandle of WV is under development pressure. The latest Natural Resource Inventory conducted by NRCS showed that developed land in West Virginia tripled from 1982 to 2003. West Virginia has limited prime farmland acreage and the loss of each acre has a profound impact upon our rural economy, rural lifestyle, and farm families. WV NRCS has committed nearly \$9 million to protect more than 7,300 acres of farmland since 2002.

For more information on West Virginia FRPP, please contact Patrick Bowen at 304-457-1118, extension 105, or Patrick.Bowen@wv.usda.gov. For more information about [FRPP](#)

and other conservation programs in West Virginia, please visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>.



Patrick Bowen (Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations and FRPP Program Manager), Kevin Wickey (West Virginia State Conservationist), Gary Mast, (Deputy Under-Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment [NRE]), and Grant Smith (Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle President) discuss the success of the WV FRPP.



Representatives of preservation and conservation groups attended a ceremonial placement of "Protected Land" signs at Harewood. From left: Kevin Wickey (West Virginia State Conservationist), Gary Mast, (Deputy Under-Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment [NRE]); Paul Hawke (Chief of the American Battlefield Protection Program) Walter Washington (landowner); Peter Fricke (Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board); Rodney Bartgis, (State Director of The Nature Conservancy); and Grant Smith, (Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle President).

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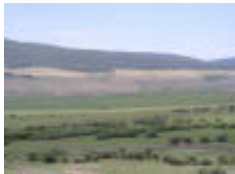
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Dillon Detail

Submitted by Richard Jones, Soil Scientist at the MLRA-126 Soil Survey Project Office



This past May I received notification from the Montana State Office that I was selected to work in Beaverhead County for the summer. This is the largest county in Montana, and the leading beef producing county in the state.

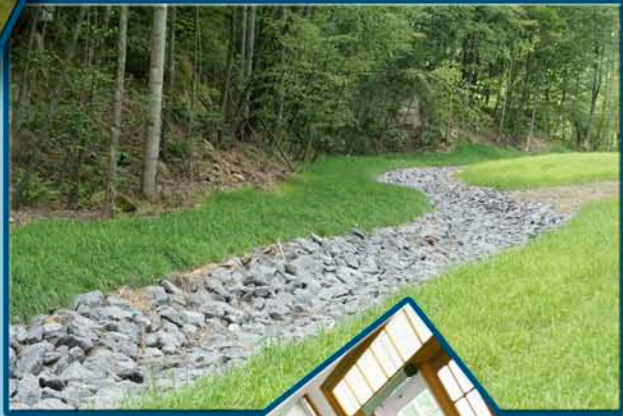
The initial soil survey in Montana has not been completed, in part due to the vastness of the acreage, and the rugged terrain itself. Many areas can only be accessed via ATV or on foot. The focus in MT is not only on soil data collection and mapping, but Land resource unit and ecological site assessment for the rangeland as well. I totaled about 130 hours of overtime, collecting the above mentioned data on 18,000 acres so I went home a little weary, but my experience this past summer was great. The staff in Montana welcomed me and treated me very well. The bison, moose, elk, and antelope were everywhere! It was awesome.



Dillon is called the area the land of 10,000 haystacks. There was hay everywhere. The ranchers here do an excellent job producing (alfalfa, rye and orchardgrass mix) hay with what little precipitation they receive in the Beaverhead valley (9-14 inches). Of course, irrigation is a must.

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2007 West Virginia Conservation Partnership Congressional Tour Report



WV Conservation Partnership Congressional Tour 2007

Itinerary

Monday, August 13:

- 11:45 AM Introductions and Lunch at Stonewall Jackson Resort
Sponsored by: West Fork Conservation District
- 1:00 PM Travel to Elkwater Fork Dam Construction site
- TVCD Comments: Joe Gumm and Jim Harman
 - NRCS Comments: Louis Aspey and Dick Judy
- 4:30 PM Travel to Kesling Mills
- 6:30 PM Arrive at Kesling Mills for Dinner
Sponsored by: WV Resource Conservation & Development Association
Return to Stonewall Jackson Resort

Tuesday, August 14:

- 8:00 AM Travel to Upper Buffalo Site 22 Flood Control Structure
- 9:30 AM Arrive at Upper Buffalo Site 22
- MCD Comments: Don Headley
 - NRCS Comments: Ray Carr
- 10:45 AM Travel to Damon's
- 11:30 AM Lunch at Damon's
- 12:45 PM Depart for Gary Walls farm near Cooper's Rock State Forest
- Comments by Gary Walls
- 1:10 PM Arrive at Gary Walls farm
- 2:00 PM Travel to Dillan A-29 PL566 Land Treatment Site
- 2:45 PM Arrive at Dillan Site A-29
- NRCS Comments: Louis Aspey and Dick Judy
- 3:00 PM Depart for Monongahela Conservation District Office
- 3:30 PM Arrive at Monongahela Conservation District for light refreshments
- 4:00 PM Travel to Jackson's Mill
- 5:00 PM Arrive at Jackson's Mill
- WVCA Comments: Larry Layman and Gene Saurborn
- 5:30 PM Depart to Lambert's Winery for Dinner
- 6:30 PM Arrive at Lambert's for Wine Tasting and Dinner
Return to Stonewall Jackson Resort

Wednesday, August 15:

- 8:30 AM Travel to Law Farm (Lost Creek)
- 9:15 AM Arrive at Law Farm
- Comments by Richard Law
 - NRCS Comments by Jeff Griffith
- 10:15 AM Travel to Salem Fork Flood Control Structure, Dark Hollow Dam
- 11:15 AM Arrive at Salem Fork Dark Hollow Dam
- WFCD Comments: Jim Foster
 - NRCS Comments: Louis Aspey and Jeff Griffith
- 11:45 AM Travel to Clarksburg
- 12:30 PM Arrive at Minard's for Lunch
- 2:00 PM Return to Stonewall Jackson Resort and Charleston, West Virginia

WV Conservation Partnership Congressional Tour 2007
Speaker Contact Information

Monday, August 13:

Elkwater Fork Dam Construction site :

TVCD Comments: Joe Gumm, Route 2, Box 264-9 Elkins, WV 26241 & Jim Harman, Route 2, Box 182-A, Elkins, WV 26241

NRCS Comments: Louis Aspey, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 75 High St., Room 301, Morgantown, WV 26505 & Dick Judy, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 75 High St., Room 301, Morgantown, WV 26505

Kesling Mills for Dinner , Sponsored by: WV Resource Conservation & Development Association,
James L. McClelland, P.O. Box 2985, Huntington, WV 25728

Tuesday, August 14:

Upper Buffalo Site 22

MCD Comments: Don Headley, 75 Pike View Drive, Fairview, WV 26570

NRCS Comments: Ray Carr, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, White Hall Service Center, 7007 Mountain Park Drive, White Hall, WV 26554

Gary Walls farm near Cooper's Rock State Forest: Comments by Gary Walls, Route 1, Box 337 Bruceton Mills, WV 26525

Dillan Site A-29 PL566 Land Treatment Site

NRCS Comments: Louis Aspey, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 75 High Street, Room 301, Morgantown, WV 26505

Jackson's Mill

WVCA Comments: Larry Layman, West Virginia Conservation Agency, Greenbrier Valley Conservation District, 179 Northridge Drive, Lewisburg, WV 24901 & Gene Saurborn, West Virginia Conservation Agency, Morgantown Field Office, 201 Scott Avenuc, Morgantown, WV 26508

Wednesday, August 15:

Law Farm: Comments by Richard Law, Route 2, Box 281 B, Lost Creek, WV 26385

NRCS Comments by Jeff Griffith, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mount Clare Service Center, Route 2, Box 204-D, Mount Clare, WV 26408

Salcm Fork Flood Control Structure, Dark Hollow Dam

WFCD Comments: Jim Foster, Route 1, Box 105, New Milton, WV 26411

NRCS Comments: Louis Aspey, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 75 High St., Room 301, Morgantown, WV 26505 & Jeff Griffith, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mount Clare Service Center, Route 2, Box 204-D, Mount Clare, WV 26408

2007 West Virginia Conservation Partnership Congressional Tour List of Participants

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2007 WV Conservation Partnership Congressional Tour

A Review in Pictures

Elkwater Dam Construction Site
Randolph County, Tygarts Valley Conservation District



Upper Buffalo Site 22 Flood Control Structure Marion County, Monongahela Conservation District



Gary Walls Farm
2006 Second Place Conservation Farm of the Year Winner
Preston County, Monongahela Conservation District



Dillan A-29 PL566 Land Treatment Site Monongalia County, Monongahela Conservation District



The Law Farm
2007 Conservation Farm of the Year Winner
Harrison County, Westfork Conservation District



Salem Fork Flood Control Structure, Dark Hollow Dam Harrison County, Westfork Conservation District



West Virginia Conservation District Facts

What are Conservation Districts?

Across the United States, nearly 3000 conservation districts -- 14 in West Virginia -- are helping local people to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources. Known in various parts of the country as "soil and water conservation districts," "resource conservation districts," "natural resource districts," "land conservation committees" and similar names, they share a single mission: to coordinate assistance from all available sources -- public and private, local, state and federal -- in an effort to develop locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns.

Nationally, more than 15,000 volunteers serve in elected or appointed positions on conservation districts' governing boards. In West Virginia, 106 volunteers serve as supervisors on the governing boards of conservation districts. (Conservation District Supervisor is an elected position in West Virginia.)

How did Conservation Districts originate?

In the early 1930s, along with the greatest depression this nation ever experienced, came an equally unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away, creating huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. Thousands of "dust refugees" left the black fog to seek better lives.

On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Since about three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.

In 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts. All 50 states now have conservation districts.

West Virginia's Soil Conservation Committee was created in 1939. Its functions and programs were to conserve soil and retard erosion. This committee was mandated to develop and provide assistance to soil conservation districts within the state. The first conservation districts were created in 1940. Today, there are 14 West Virginia Conservation Districts. In 2002, the state legislature changed the name of the committee to "State Conservation Committee" to show that the committee's responsibilities went beyond soil to all natural resources such as air and water.

What are Conservation Districts doing?

Although Conservation District activities will vary according to the needs of the local area, here is a list of some common activities.

- Helping implement farm conservation practices to keep soil in the fields and out of waterways
- Helping conserve and restore wetlands, which purify water and provide habitat for birds, fish and numerous other animals
- Protecting groundwater resources
- Planting trees and other land cover to hold soil in place, clean the air, provide cover for wildlife and beautify neighborhoods
- Helping developers and homeowners manage the land in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Managing and maintaining flood control, recreation and water supply structures
- Reaching out to communities and schools to teach the value of natural resources and encourage conservation efforts

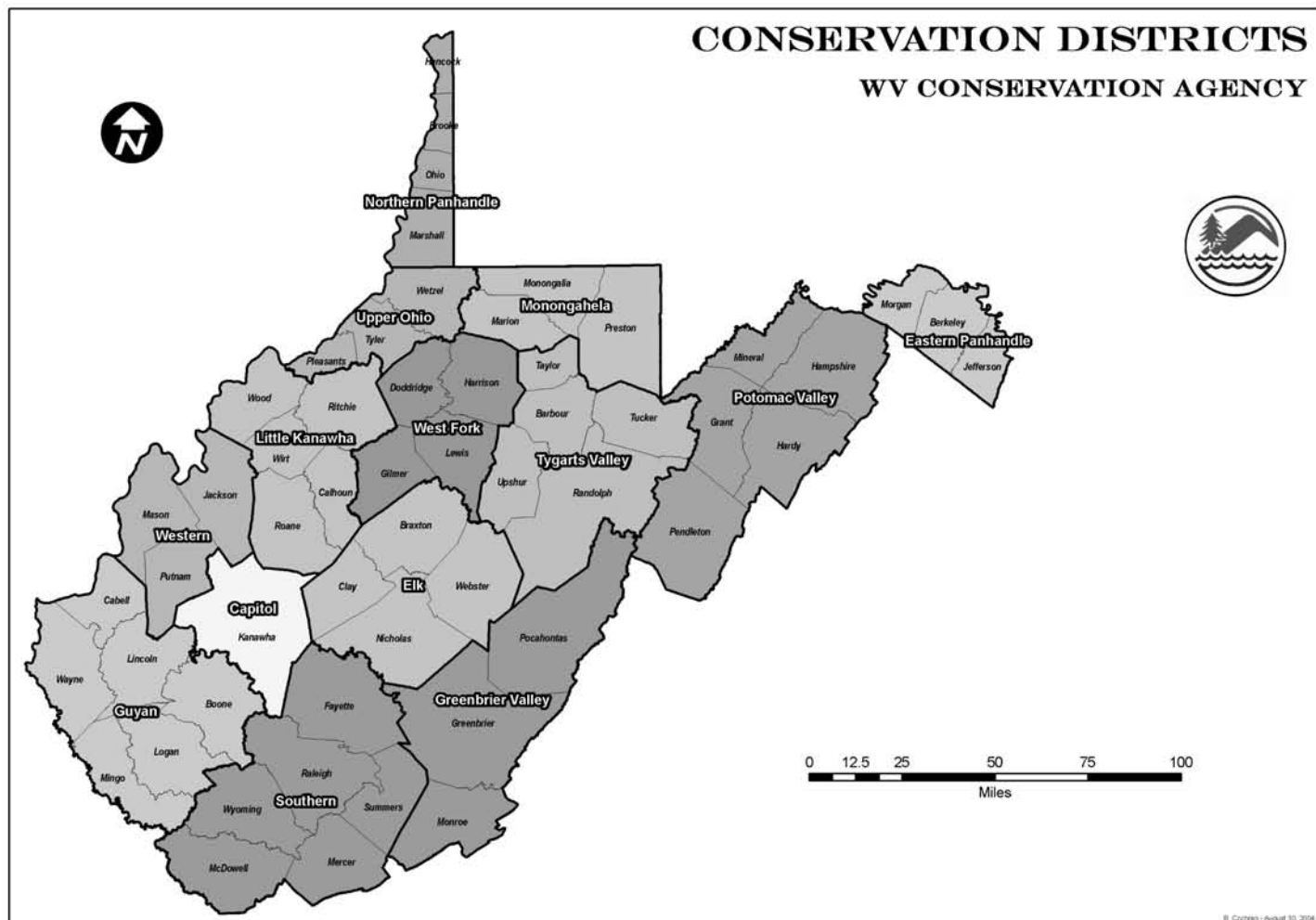
How can you get involved?

- **Volunteer.** Districts need help with everything from planting seedlings in wetland restoration projects to filing in the office. Contact your district to let them know you are willing to help.
- **Practice good stewardship at home.** You can improve your corner of the world by composting food scraps and lawn clippings in your backyard, conserving green areas in your urban neighborhood or implementing best management practices on your farm. Ask your district for assistance.
- **Exercise your right to vote.** Conservation District Supervisor is an elected position in West Virginia.

Where Is Your Conservation District?

www.wvacd.org

www.wvca.us



Conservation District Phone Numbers

•**Capitol:** 304-759-0736
Kanawha

•**Eastern Panhandle:** 304-263-4376
Berkeley, Jefferson, Morgan

•**Elk:** 304-364-5105
Braxton, Clay, Nicholas, Webster

•**Greenbrier Valley:** 304-645-6173
Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas

•**Guyan:** 304-528-5718
Boone, Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, Wayne

•**Little Kanawha:** 304-422-9088
Calhoun, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt, Wood

•**Monongahela:** 304-296-0081
Marion, Monongalia, Preston

•**Northern Panhandle:** 304-238-1231
Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio

•**Potomac Valley:** 304-822-5174
Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton

•**Southern:** 304-253-0261
Fayette, McDowell, Mercer, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming

•**Tygarts Valley:** 304-457-3026
Barbour, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, Upshur

•**Upper Ohio:** 304-758-2512
Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel

•**West Fork:** 304-627-2160
Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis

•**Western:** 304-675-3054
Jackson, Mason, Putnam

West Virginia Conservation Districts Contact Information

Capitol Conservation District

Kanawha
418 Goff Mountain Rd. Suite 102
Cross Lanes, WV 25313
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Fax: (304) 776-5326

Eastern Panhandle Conservation District

Berkeley, Jefferson, Morgan
151 Aikens Center, Suite 1
Martinsburg, WV 25401
Phone: (304) 263-4376
Fax: (304) 263-4986

Elk Conservation District

Braxton, Clay, Nicholas, Webster
801 State Street
Gassaway, WV 26624
Phone: (304) 364-5105
Fax: (304) 364-5434

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District

Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas
179 Northridge Drive
Lewisburg, WV 24901
Phone: (304) 645-6173
Fax: (304) 645-4755

Guyan Conservation District

Boone, Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, Wayne
2631 5th Street Road
Huntington, WV 25701
Phone: (304) 528-5718
Fax: (304) 697-4164

Little Kanawha Conservation District

Calhoun, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt, Wood
91 Boyles Lane
Parkersburg, WV 26104
Phone: (304) 422-9088
Fax: (304) 422-9086

Monongahela Conservation District

Marion, Monongalia, Preston
201 Scott Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26508
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Fax: (304) 285-3151

Northern Panhandle Conservation District

Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio
1 Ballpark Drive
Mc Mechen, WV 26040
Phone: (304) 238-1231
Fax: (304) 242-7039

Potomac Valley Conservation District

Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton
500 East Main Street
Romney, WV 26757
Phone: (304) 822-5174
Fax: (304) 822-3728

Southern Conservation District

Fayette, McDowell, Mercer, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming
463 Ragland Road
Beckley, WV 25801
Phone: (304) 253-0261
Fax: (304) 253-0238

Tygarts Valley Conservation District

Barbour, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, Upshur
Route 4, Box 501
Philippi, WV 26416
Phone: (304) 457-3026
Fax: (304) 457-6927

Upper Ohio Conservation District

Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel
10 Pleasant View Lane
Sistersville, WV 26175
Phone: (304) 758-2512
Fax: (304) 758-4303

West Fork Conservation District

Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis
Route 2, Box 204-E
Mt. Clare, WV 26408
Phone: (304) 627-2160
Fax: (304) 624-5976

Western Conservation District

Jackson, Mason, Putnam
224-C First Street
Pt. Pleasant, WV 25550
Phone: (304) 675-3054
Fax: (304) 675-3054

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Water Concerns Addressed for 2 Local Farmers with AMA

Submitted by: Katie Fitzsimmons

The Morgantown/White Hall NRCS Office Team has recently had first hand experience in working with irrigation for small crops. Two local producers, one in Marion County and one in Monongalia County, have recently addressed water concerns associated with growing blueberries, apples, and truck crops. Both producers have been assisted using the AMA program.

The Marion County farm has been in blueberry production for the last 6 years and has worked with truck crops for 8 years. During summer months there was a problem, not enough rainfall when needed. Because of this the farm had a lower production rate on their blueberries and truck crops. In 2004 the local producer applied for the AMA program in hopes of getting assistance with a much needed irrigation system to aid in watering the crops. After (researching irrigation systems) (months of research on irrigation systems) Gary Ely, Soil Conservation Technician in the White Hall Service Center, was able to design a working system for the farm. A spring fed pond was constructed for a water source where water is pumped to a 2,500 gallon tank on top of the hill. The water is then gravity fed through a series of pipes and filters to provide water to 0.2 acres of blueberries and 0.3 acres of truck crops.

The Monongalia County farm has been in the apple and blueberry production business for 20+ years. Just like the Marion County farm lack of adequate rainfall was a continuing problem for the producer and his goals. Through the assistance of the 2004 AMA program, a well fed irrigation system was installed. This system was designed with knowledge of irrigation from the landowner, TSP planners, and NRCS Ag Engineer. A well was drilled for the water source and is pumped to water 4.4 acres of blueberries and 0.4 acres of apple trees while flowing through approximately 1,450 feet of pipeline.

Thanks to the AMA program and the assistance of the Morgantown/White Hall NRCS office, the local producers are now going to be able to continue to grow quality products that they will be able to market to the public as well as expanding their operations into highly productive blueberry, apple, and truck crop farms.



Monongalia County irrigation system for blueberry field. This picture was taken during the construction phase.



On the Monongalia County Farm the farmer is using drip irrigation to supply water to his blueberry plants.



The Marion County Farm is using a pond to supply water for their irrigation needs. As you can see, he is utilizing a gasoline powered pump to siphon the water from the pond which then runs through a filter before being pumped up hill to an above ground storage tank.



The Marion County Farm is utilizing an above ground tank for water storage.



After the water leaves the storage tank it flows to this sand filter system to ensure that no debris pass on to the drip irrigation tubes. Our Marion County Farmer also included an injector at this point to aid in adding nutrients to the water.

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Conservation Education

Girls Can Do!

Kathy Allen and Rebecca Flanagan were role models for the *Girls Can Do!* project on Oct 29. The project offers 9th grade girls hands-on workshops taught by successful women who are working in math, science, technology, and the skilled trades. The purpose of the conference is to provide support and encouragement to girls interested in nontraditional courses and careers.

Kathy Allen covered surveying, delineating watersheds and water cycle in her sessions.



For the Good of the People

Fun Facts about Farmers and Ranchers

A new student educational publication, PA-1936 *For the Good of the People*, is intended for use by elementary school-aged youth to inform them about the need to have a good conservation ethic. The publication describes a good conservation ethic and tells the story of America's farmers and ranchers, and illustrates the importance of agricultural products in our lives.

Copies may be ordered from 1-888-LANDCARE. or go to <http://landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

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Useful Links

Smart Growth Resource Library

Farmland Information Center Sample Documents

The Farmland Information Center (FIC) offers a sample documents area on its website. This feature provides easy access to tools•easements, LESA systems, excerpts from comprehensive plans, and more•used by communities to protect agricultural resources and support agriculture.

Using the search feature, visitors can filter by state, topic, type of resource and/or entity. Search results can be sorted by title, category, and date. An advanced search is also available.

The FIC is a clearinghouse for information about farmland protection and stewardship. It is a partnership between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and American Farmland Trust.

Read more or at the resource link below.

Resource: http://www.farmlandinfo.org/farmland_sample_documents/?RequestTimeout=999

Preserving the World's Seeds

Submitted by Rob Pate

There's an effort afoot to preserve the diversity of the world's crops by collecting seeds. Those seeds will go into the Svalbard Global Seed Vault now being built in Norway, above the Arctic Circle.

<http://www.theworld.org/?q=node/12154>

<http://www.croptrust.org/main/arctic.php?itemid=217> (photos)



NRCS Suggestion Survey Responses



https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/PortalStatic/OnLine_Suggestion_Survey_Responses.xls

(285 KB)

[USDA West Virginia Rural Development](#) web page with link to current newsletter.

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West Virginia's Civil Rights



American Indian Heritage Month

What started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of this Nation has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose. But, it has been a long and winding trail that has taken many turns during the last 84 years that has not resulted in an "official day" of recognition.

For many years, Indians and non-Indians have urged that a special day be set aside to honor America's first citizens. From time to time, legislation was proposed in the U.S. Congress that would designate the Fourth Friday in September of each year as American Indian Day. There has also been legislation that would establish a Native American Awareness Week the fourth week in September. Introduction of these bills, none of which were passed by Congress, resulted in modern day almanacs listing the fourth Friday in September as American Indian Day under the heading "Day usually observed -- not legal holidays".

One of the very first proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the Director of the Museum of Arts and Science, Rochester, NY. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the "First Americans", and for three years they adopted such a day. In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kansas, formally approved a plan. It directed its President, the Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call upon the country to observe such a day. He issued a proclamation on September

28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens.

The year before this proclamation was issued, Red Fox James, a Blackfeet Indian, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for the celebration of a day in honor of Indians. He later presented the endorsements of 24 state governments at the White House on December 14, 1915. However, there is no record of such a national day being proclaimed.

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared on the Second Saturday in May 1916, by the Governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, it became that day by legislative enactment in 1919. In Massachusetts, in accordance with a law passed in 1935, the Governor issued a proclamation naming the day that will become American Indian Day for any given year. Presently, several states have designated Columbus day as Native American Day, but, it continues to be a day we observe without any recognition as a legal holiday.

Presidential Proclamations designates National Native American Heritage Month.

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Meet . . .



Charles H. Delp
 Assistant State Soil Scientist
 Summersville, WV
 39 Years of service

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work on a variety of interesting projects and the satisfaction of seeing how a project benefited our cooperators and other land users. It really is a good feeling to be able to provide a customer with soils information that can save thousands of dollars. One of the activities that I have been heavily involved with over the past few years is making soil monoliths. When I was an undergraduate student at West Virginia University, Dr Pohlman got some of the students interested in taking monoliths and putting them on display in the soils laboratory. I always thought that this was a good way to demonstrate the variability in soils and to learn a lot about soil properties when going to the field was not practical. I was not to get involved with soil monoliths again until 1999, some 32 years later. In 1999, the National Cooperative Soil Survey celebrated its 100 year birthday. A part of the festivities included each state preparing a monolith of their state soil to be put on display at the Mall in Washington, D. C. In West Virginia, the soil scientists got together and took a monolith of Monongahela silt loam on the farm of one of our retired soil scientists, Mr. Troy Yokum. At about this same time, the director of the West Virginia State Conservation Agency asked our state soil scientist, Steve Carpenter, and I if we would make some monoliths for each of West Virginia's Conservation Districts as a part of our out reach work. We agreed to do these as time allowed not really knowing just how much they would be in demand and the impact that they would have on educating folks on the importance of our soil resource. Making soil monoliths is hard work but a

lot of fun too. Everyone seems to really enjoy doing this work. My office is located in the Post Office building and we often “pick the profile down” outside in the parking lot. Within just a few minutes a crowd will gather around to see just what we are doing. They are amazed by the process and the way a soil really looks. It is a great time to educate people about soils and the National Cooperative Soil Survey. We now have monoliths in many of the Conservation District Offices, Forest Service visitor center and National Park Service visitor center. I hope to be a part of “monolith mania” for at least a few more years.



John R. Cox
District Conservationist
Gassaway Field Office
39 years of Federal
service.

Helping the farmers in Braxton and Clay counties has always been a rewarding experience. This year has been a particularly productive program year in my Field Office. My staff and I have written 88 contracts totaling over \$634,789.00 in the 2 counties. The rapport we share with our farmers has earned us their respect and their assistance in getting program information out in these very rural counties where word of mouth is an important outreach tool.

To further assist my farmers, I spearheaded a mitigation effort which resulted in additional funds coming into my area. Consol Coal needed to mitigate for a facility they plan to build. We provided access and planning to willing farmers who will have conservation practices installed at Consol’s expense. Using these funds promoted positive environmental results while providing another means of installing conservation resource management practices for farmers in need of financial assistance. In addition to the immediate results of this effort, it has opened a new avenue for similar future projects.

Steve Baker
MLRA Project Leader
Huntington, WV

My name is Steve Baker, and I am the new MLRA project leader in Huntington. This is an exciting time for the soil survey as we transition from county to county surveys to a geographic area. Specifically, my new area will be the southern portions of the Western and Central Allegheny Plateaus, comprising 10 million acres.

While attending WVU, I worked for Dr. John Sencindiver as a lab/field technician where I met a number of NRCS employees and decided that I liked the culture and the career path of the agency. Unfortunately, there was an agency wide hiring freeze when I graduated in 1999, so my career led me to Wooster, OH as a manager trainee for Tractor Supply Company, then to Marietta, GA as an assistant golf course superintendent. I always kept an eye on WV as I traveled, and an opportunity arose in the form of a cooperative soil scientist between the WVCA and the NRCS. I began this co-op in the Fayette-Raleigh Survey in 2001, became a full NRCS member in 2003 in the Preston-Tucker-Barbour survey. The moral of this story? When you're the anvil, be patient, when you're the hammer, strike.

My wife LaRae, a soil conservationist with NRCS, and I were married in 2003; we have a son, Philip, a daughter, Rachel, and the unborn baby X. I want to thank my family for their patience in this trying time of relocation and promise them things will settle down soon. (We have yet to bring two children home to the same house) Also I would like to say to my fellow project members in Huntington, Rick Jones and Debbie Cunningham, thanks for the warm reception and I can't wait to get this project running.

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Personnel Updates

(as of November 11, 2007)

Name	Action	Location	Change
Baker, LaRae	Reassignment Effective 11/11/2007	Mount Clare FO	Point Pleasant FO
Baker, Steven	Reassignment Effective 09/16/2007	Philippi FO	MLRA Lead Huntington Soil Survey
Bell, James "Skip"	Reassignment Effective 10/14/2007	Soil Scientist MO-13 Soil Survey Staff, SO	MLRA Leader MLRA-13-3 Soil Survey Morgantown FO
Broomall, Corine	Reassignment Effective 09/16/2007	Biologist Huntington FO	District Conservationist
Crislip, Carrie	Reassignment Effective 11/11/2007	Parkersburg FO	Ripley FO
Duckworth, Brandon	Reassignment Effective 09/16/2007	Soil Conservation Technician Buckeye FO	Soil Conservationist
Egerstrom, Tammy	Transferred out Effective 09/04/2007	Contracting Staff	Utah SO
Hoover, Scott	Reassignment Effective 10/28/2007	Glenville FO	Supervisory Soil Scientist Marietta, OH
Jackson, Leonard	Retirement Effective 09/01/2007	State Office	-
Milliman, Gary	Retirement Effective 08/03/2007	Parkersburg AO	-
Noll, Wendy	Reassignment Effective 10/28/2007	MO-13 Soil Survey Staff, SO	MLRA-13-3 Soil Survey Morgantown FO

Sargent, Larry	Retirement Effective 11/03/2007	State Office - HR	-
Sturm, Larry	Retirement Effective 11/03/2007	Ripley & Cross Lanes	-
Tamasco, Thomas	Transferred out Effective 09/16/2007	Water Resources Staff	DOL
Wigal, Ron	Reassignment Effective 11/11/2007	Soil Conservationist Water Resources Staff	Environmental & Biological Science Specialist

West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation

Name	Home Unit	Location	Agency	Assignment	Date
Bill Harris	Princeton Service Center	NY	NRCS		July 30-60 days
James Dodson	Beckley - South Area Office	NY	NRCS		July 30-60 days
Cherry Dawson	Huntington Service Center	UT	NRCS	EWP	Aug 30-60 days
Donny Dodd, Jr.	Beckley - South Area Office	UT	NRCS	EWP	Aug 30-60 days
Ernest Morgan	Franklin service Center	UT	NRCS	EWP	Aug 30-60 days

Michael J. Marks, 55, of Milton, W.Va., passed away Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2007, at Hospice House of Huntington due to colon cancer. He was employed by the USDA, NRCS for 33 years, the last 27 as District Conservation for Cabell and Wayne counties.

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Earth Team

2007 Earth Team Awards

Submitted by Peg Reese

Justin Brackenrich, son of Doris and Jerry Brackenrich, received the Youth Volunteer Award at the annual Partnership Conference. Justin, 16, has been an Earth Team Volunteer in the Franklin Field Office since February 13, 2006. He assisted with the collection of data needed for the development of conservation plans, copied and compiled forms needed for Farm Bill contracts, and assisted with field work. This is very important as the Franklin Office has a very high workload and is currently understaffed. Justin also spent several days with NRCS Soil Scientist, Jared Beard on various projects, including basic soils training for a class from the University of Maryland.

The individual Earth Team Volunteer of the year is Sherry Finkel from the Morgantown Service Center. Sherry donated 155 hours to help NRCS, WVCA, and the Monongahela Conservation District conservation efforts. She gave conservation education programs, entered data in the Farmland Protection data base, collected soil samples, performed Nitrogen Quick tests, created a display, and performed clerical support duties. Sherry's award was presented to her earlier as she was not able to be here today. She has been nominated for a national award. You can read more about her summer working for NRCS in the fall issue of Volunteer Voice (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/volunteers/voice/volunteervoicefall2007.pdf>)

The Monongahela Conservation District won the District/NRCS Earth Team award. This award recognizes the effective partnership of a conservation district, NRCS and volunteers. Eleven volunteers donated 324 hours to further conservation efforts in the Monongahela Conservation District. They gave conservation education programs, assisted with a no-till field day, created displays, helped survey for the Decker's Creek project, collected soil samples, and performed clerical support duties. This nomination

was forwarded for national competition.

Molly Brackenrich, daughter of Doris and Jerry Brackenrich, was recognized for her volunteer service at an East Area Staff meeting in October. Like her brother, Molly does clerical support work in the Franklin Field Office. Doris said "This office holds more than 200 active contracts and Molly's assistance with these tasks allows me to work on the more complex steps in conservation planning."

Congratulations, volunteers! And thank you for your service to conservation.

Captions:



Kevin Wickey presents the Junior Earth Team Award to Justin Brackenrich



Monongahela Conservation District Supervisors with the District/NRCS award (Left to Right: Howard Shriver, Art Mouser, Jim McDonald, Don Headley, Bob Strawser).



Don Headley, Chairman of the Monongahela Conservation District, accepted the District/NRCS award on behalf of the MCD.



Christi Hicks, East Area Volunteer Coordinator, and Molly Brackenrich, Earth Team Volunteer

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