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# West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
August 2008

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Mt. Clare Field Office, Great Kanawha RC&D, Little Kanawha RC&D, Mountain RC&D

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### [Dig it! The Secrets of Soil](#)



The exhibit is spectacular. A lot of talented individuals from the Smithsonian worked closely with NRCS personnel, and created an exhibit that we all can be proud of. West Virginia does stand out from the rest of the Nation.

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### ['Augusta' Orchardgrass](#)



The cultivar 'Augusta' was released by the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in 2008. The anticipated uses of 'Augusta' orchardgrass are: cool season forage for pasture and hay, cool season grass component in cool season grass and legume mixtures for wildlife habitat, and critical area stabilization on areas where seed mixtures are used or succession to woody species is desired.

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### [WV Soil Interpretation for Disaster Planning](#)



The WV Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the WV Department of Agriculture (WVDA) have concluded field testing of a local soil interpretation, developed for the disposal of catastrophic losses incurred by WV poultry farmers. It is designed to rate the soils for disposal by composting in windrows on the soil surface.

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### [Climate Change](#)

The U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) released *Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.3 (SAP 4.3): The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity in the United States.*



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### **Sack Plastic Bags**

The U.S. goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually. (Estimated cost to retailers is \$4 billion). It's time to sack plastic bags. There are many reasons for passing on plastic.



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### **Peg Reese Recognized**

Margaret (Peg) J. Reese received the Soil and Water Conservation Society's 2008 Fellow Award.



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### **Appalachian Plant Materials Center Special Recognition Award**

The Appalachian Plant Materials Center received a Special Recognition Award from Dept of Interior National Parks Service (NPS) Denver Service Center for their work with native plants for the Stones River National Battlefield.



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## [Bits and Pieces](#)



Flood Control Project Dedicated, Behind the Scene with Elephants, Senate Resolution Shines Spotlight on the Importance of Soil.

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### Women's Equality Day - August 26



Women suffragists marching on Pennsylvania Avenue; Capitol in background, March 3, 1913.

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## [Meet](#)



Penny Sheeler, Luke Hunter, and Jim Cooper

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To submit news items for the November *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

It's August already and we have seven busy weeks in the fiscal year left after this one. I know that many of you are trying to fit in a last summer outing before school starts. Roseanne is counting the days until the opening WVU football game (less than 25). A look back at the year so far shows that we have already accomplished a lot. In fact, the Chief last week asked us to pass on his thanks to all of you. He is very proud of what we've accomplished so far this fiscal year and how we came through the difficult time during the farm bill debate. I think we closed our books five times already this FY with one more to go. I want to include my thanks to you as well. I was worried that we were asking too much when the extra funds came in after the farm bill was made law. But there wasn't any hesitation in meeting this new challenge and that makes me proud of you.

However, it is not yet time to look back. It is important for us to finish the year well by cleaning up our business plans, finishing our staffing actions, finishing our obligations, and meeting our goals. We are depending on every one of you for something yet this fiscal year and we need you to deliver. I have confidence that we can do this and do it well and still find some time to spend with friends and family yet this summer.

We're also planning for next fiscal year already. Based on the renewed authorities in the farm bill, we can say with pride that once again the nation is making historic investments in conservation. In an era of tight budgets and lots of competing demands, Congress made the decision this year that spending in conservation programs was a safe bet based on our performance in carrying out the 2002 Farm Bill. We have a balanced conservation portfolio for working lands, stewardship, land protection, and land retirement. Let's remember, however, that the programs in the farm bill are just tools. They need to be used by skilled practitioners, like you, to actually achieve conservation on the ground. I'm eager to get started.



Kevin Wickey  
State Conservationist  
West Virginia

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## From the Field

### Mount Clare Field Office

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the West Fork Conservation District, West Virginia University (WVU) Cooperative Extension Service, and Kencove Farm Fence, Inc are sponsoring a High Tensile Fence Field Day & Pasture Walk at the William & Peggy Ashcraft Farm, in Harrison County, WV, on August 9, 2008.

There will be a high tensile fence building demonstration and lunch. Discussion topics include:

- Fence Planning
- Installation Procedures
- Fence Maintenance
- Fence Chargers/Grounding
- Pasture Management & Livestock Watering Systems

Jeff Griffith and Rex Gardner (USDA-NRCS, Mount Clare Service Center) and Jeff Stutler, (local farmer and Kencove Fence Dealer) are speakers.

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



### Great Kanawha Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Launches Cut Flower Program



Great Kanawha (GK) RC&D in partnership with West Virginia State University (WVSU) Extension has been provided a grant from the West Virginia Department of Agriculture Specialty Crops Grant Program.

Our program will allow five producers within the RC&D area to receive money and technical advice in raising a 50' X 150' plot of flowers, shrubs, and trees to sell to local florists, wholesalers, chefs, or others for the cut flower industry.

The overall goal of the program is to provide a diversity of income for small farmers, provide an alternative crop to former tobacco producers, and make buying fresh cut flowers a local industry for many of the existing markets in the state.

Applications are now being gathered by GK RC&D and WVSU for the program. The only requirements of the program are that the participant be located in one of the GK RC&D Counties (Boone, Cabell, Clay, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Putnam, or Wayne) and that the participant provide land and labor for the project. WVSU personnel will work with approved applicants in small workshops and one-on-one trainings. A field day will be held at each site at the conclusion of the grant for the general public.

For more information, contact [Jackie Byars](#) at 304-776-5256 ext. 111.

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## **Little Kanawha Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)**

Activity is always flourishing in the nine-county area of the Little Kanawha RC&D Council. In April, we sponsored our third annual Lawn, Garden & Forestry Expo which drew over 2,000 people. With everything from lumberjacks and chainsaw sculpting, antique tractors and engines to power equipment demonstrations, guest speakers, various foods including a Taste of West Virginia by the WV Department of Agriculture, and children's activities, the Expo was a hit for all ages. Roy Clark, Jr., and his Appalachian String Band was featured entertainment and helped make this a success.



Construction on the North Bend Lake Trail continues, with recent additions of a trailhead, parking area, watering facilities for horses, and handicap-accessible area for horseback riders is a project sponsored by the Little Kanawha RC&D..

Project Sharing, our focus of assisting underserved citizens in the region, has grown greatly in the two years it has been in existence. Items are received and re-distributed, with over 170 charities assisted with food, clothing, hygiene products, office supplies and equipment, books, school supplies, and children's items. The Council has assisted well over 30,000 people in need.

Our Council offers low-interest rate loans to existing or new businesses and recently provided to a local full-service tree company.

For more information, contact [D. J. Allen](#) at 304-679-3639

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## Mountain Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

### Camp Summers

Working with camp officials the Mountain RC&D Council was able to obtain the remaining funding required to complete improvement to the main dining hall and install a new basketball court for this camping year. The camp is owned and operated by the Summers County Commission, however, open to area wide use.

### Braxton County Multi-Purpose Building Improvement

Working with the Braxton County Fairs and Festivals committee the RC&D Council was able to assist with the purchase of a new ventilation system that will provide improved air flow to livestock and fair participants. Because of the improvements this exhibit location is one of the most popular among visitors. County employees along with volunteers installed the system to help control the overall cost.

### Cooper's Mill

The RC&D has and continues to assist with the restoration and preservation of Cooper's Mill. Cooper's Mill was placed on the National Registry of Historical Places in July 2000, and is an important site of interest for Summers County. This is the

only standing preserved grit mill remaining in Summers County.

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

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## Dig it! The Secrets of Soil

Submitted by Rob Pate, Resource Soil Scientist

The day was hot•Washington D.C. in July. The museums and gardens were beautiful, groomed to perfection for the thousands of tourists who were visiting our Nation’s Capitol. A jazz trio played on the patio as we enjoyed some refreshments in the shade of the large umbrella over our table.

We were here for the opening of, “Dig it! The Secrets of Soil”, which opened July 19th, in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. West Virginia soil scientists had been working towards this day for more than 10 years, as had other soil scientists in every other state and territory in the Union. We had dug monoliths, written articles, lobbied the legislature, and raised over \$10,000.00 towards the exhibit which displays the WV State Soil, Monongahela Silt Loam.

It was hard for me to believe that I was actually here, enjoying the success of our efforts. The people who helped contribute to this national exhibit are too many to mention, but you know who you are. I would like to remember one contributor who stands out in my mind. A class act, the late Mr. Roy Pyle, whose family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be given towards the Smithsonian Soil Exhibit, and whose thoughtfulness helped put our WV fund over the top. I wish Roy was here to see this.

“Step back, doors closing. Next stop Smithsonian.” the automated voice on the Metro rang out. The Metro is the only way to travel in Washington and takes us right to the major attractions. It is a whole different, urban world, and for me it is a great place to visit, (for only about a week at the most). The USDA National Headquarters rolled out the red carpet for all of us who were visiting. NRCS Chief, Arlen Lancaster, and even the Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Schafer, showed up for some events, which included a formal Gala opening event, with wine and hors

d'oeuvres. I do not believe that I will ever again see 400 soil scientists together in one place, dressed in formal attire!

The exhibit is spectacular. A lot of talented individuals from the Smithsonian worked closely with NRCS personnel and created an exhibit that we all can be proud of. West Virginia does stand out from the rest of the Nation, because the idea for this exhibit started with Dr. Patrick Drohan at Shepherd University, here in WV about 15 years ago. West Virginia is also highlighted because of our soil monoliths. One monolith was even pulled out over all others, and used as a "teaser" in the United States Botanical Gardens, to peak interest in the soils exhibit. This is a beautiful monolith of the West Virginia State Soil, which is secured on a thick board of American Chestnut. Many people worked on this monolith, but the majority of the credit goes to Charles Delp and Sue Bell.

The information about the monolith at the Botanic Garden can be viewed at: [http://www.usbg.gov/education/events/exhibitors\\_map.cfm](http://www.usbg.gov/education/events/exhibitors_map.cfm). Click on #15.

It is well worth your time to visit "Dig it! The Secrets of Soil." The exhibit will stay open until January 2010, and after that will become a traveling exhibit that will tour major cities around the country until 2013. Further information may be found at: <https://www.soils.org/smithsonian/learn.html>



West Virginia State Soil Monolith highlighted at the United States Botanical Gardens.



Monolith display at "Dig it! The Secrets of Soil."



Henry Ferguson with his mad scientist soil experiments.



Models of rural soil usage.

### [Former 'Rolling Stone' Plants The Seed](#)

July 19, 2008, 11:26 a.m. Eastern

Chuck Leavell of the Rolling Stones on his passion in tree farming and what makes soil so fascinating.

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## WV Soil Interpretation for Disaster Planning

Submitted by Jared Beard, Resource Soil Scientist

Disease and natural disasters are two examples that could potentially cause catastrophic losses of poultry to West Virginia (WV) farmers. A catastrophic loss is considered to be a loss greater than can be handled by a grower in a reasonable amount of time. Disposal of such losses can be expensive, time consuming, and cause adverse impacts on the environment. West Virginia soils commonly exhibit properties such as near surface bedrock and water tables, extremely clayey or sandy subsoils, steep slopes, flooding or are located in karst areas. These individual soil properties impose very limiting conditions for the disposal of large numbers of birds (which could exceed 20,000) by the burial method.

The WV Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the WV Department of Agriculture (WVDA) have concluded field testing of a local soil interpretation, developed for the disposal of catastrophic losses incurred by WV poultry farmers. It is designed to rate the soils for disposal by composting in windrows on the soil surface. Historically following a disaster, soils were sought out to dispose of the carcasses by burying them. The interpretation rates the overall suitability of the soil while indicating which specific soil properties are the most limiting.

On June 24, WV NRCS and the WVDA conducted a training session to introduce the interpretation to some of its' potential users. Participants included individuals from the poultry industry, local farms, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, WV NRCS, and WVDA. The session took place at the WVU Reymann Memorial Farm in Wardensville, WV. Participants used the interpretation report and site map in the field on several different landforms and soil types to see how differing soil characteristics could limit individual fields for this use. The soils have the potential to affect construction and stability of the windrows, trafficability of equipment and vehicles, windrow

function, and the risk of pollution and disease transmission.

The overall goal of this project is to develop a pre-disaster preparedness plan on every poultry farm in West Virginia and the interpretation would be an integral part of the plans development. The plan would include the specific site(s) designated for disposal, estimated number, size and spacing of windrows, and an estimated amount of carbon material required to achieve the proper composting mixture as well as other pertinent information. The plan would be available at each poultry farm so that responders to the disaster are well informed and could begin cleanup with minimal delay. Anticipated benefits of this plan include improved quarantine activities, timely response and disposal, protection of soil and water resources, protection of human and animal health, and the production of a beneficial soil amendment.



Participants discuss the soil limitations for a soil mapped as Buchanan. Photo taken by Rob Pate, NRCS.



Participants observe soil characteristics that are produced by a seasonal water table. Photo taken by Rob Pate, NRCS.

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## Climate Change



The U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) released *Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.3 (SAP 4.3): The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity in the United States*. The CCSP integrates the federal research efforts of 13 agencies on climate and global change.

The report is one of the most extensive examinations of climate impacts on U.S. ecosystems. USDA is the lead agency and coordinated its production as part of its commitment to CCSP. It provides practical information that will help land owners and resource managers make better decisions to address the risks of climate change. It is posted on the CCSP Web site at: <http://www.climate-science.gov/Library/sap/sap4-3/default.php>

The report finds that climate change is already affecting U.S. water resources, agriculture, land resources, and biodiversity, and will continue to do so. Specific findings include:

- Higher temperatures will negatively affect livestock. Warmer winters will reduce mortality but this will be more than offset by greater mortality in hotter summers. Hotter temperatures will also result in reduced productivity of livestock and dairy animals.
- Weeds grow more rapidly under elevated atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. Under projections reported in the assessment, weeds migrate northward and are less sensitive to herbicide applications.

USDA agencies are responding to the risks of climate change. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency are encouraging actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration through conservation programs.

For more information, please visit:

[http://www.usda.gov/oce/global\\_change/files/SAP4\\_3/NRCS\\_FactSheet\\_1.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/global_change/files/SAP4_3/NRCS_FactSheet_1.pdf)

[http://www.usda.gov/oce/global\\_change/](http://www.usda.gov/oce/global_change/)

<http://www.climatescience.gov/Library/sap/sap4-3/default.php>

<http://www.sap43.ucar.edu/>

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## Sack Plastic Bags

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Fifty years ago, plastic bags, starting first with the sandwich bag, were seen in the United States as a more sanitary and environmentally friendly alternative to the deforesting paper bag. The U.S. goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually. It's time to sack plastic bags. There are many reasons for passing on plastic.

- Hundreds of thousands of sea turtles, whales and other marine mammals die every year from eating discarded plastic bags mistaken for food.
- Dubbed the "urban tumbleweed," plastics bags are a tremendous source of litter because they get caught in trees, clog waterways and storm drains
- Plastic bags don't biodegrade, they photodegrade—breaking down into smaller and smaller toxic bits contaminating soil and waterways and entering the food web when animals accidentally ingest.
- It takes 430,000 gallons of oil to manufacture 100 million bags.
- Recycling rates for plastic bags are extremely low. Only 1 to 3% of plastic bags end up getting recycled.

Recycling plastic bags is not financially feasible. Sorting, contamination of inks, and the overall low quality of the plastic used in plastics bags, cause recyclers to focus on recycling of more viable materials such as soda and milk bottles that can be recycled far more efficiently. If the economics don't work, recycling efforts don't work. It costs \$4,000 to process and recycle 1 ton of plastic bags, which can then be sold on the commodities market for \$32 (Jared Blumenfeld, director of San Francisco's Department of the Environment as reported by Christian Science Monitor).

Many bags collected for recycling never get recycled. A growing trend is to ship them to Third World countries. Rather than being recycled they are cheaply incinerated under more lax environmental laws.

**What you can do: Use reusable bags.**

Reusable bags are inexpensive and last for many years. Each high quality reusable shopping bag you use has the potential to eliminate hundreds, if not thousands, of plastic bags over its lifetime. Some stores credit your bill a few cents for each reusable bag used in packing your groceries.

Sources: <http://www.earthresource.org/campaigns/capp/capp-background-info.html>

<http://www.reusablebags.com/facts.php>

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/03/28/MNGDROT5QN1.DTL>

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## Peg Reese Recognized



Margaret (Peg) J. Reese received the Soil and Water Conservation Society's 2008 Fellow Award. The following is from the [June 2008 Conservogram](#), the newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS).

Peg Reese has demonstrated her professional excellence as a conservationist supporting and working for natural resource conservation as an employee of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). As a state and regional volunteer coordinator, she was instrumental in establishing and nurturing the Earth Team, the volunteer arm of NRCS that has recruited millions of volunteers to help put conservation on the land. As a former public affairs specialist, Peg helped develop regional informational campaigns for the Chesapeake Bay, grassland management, and other conservation issues. She has demonstrated excellence as a professional through her promotion and maintenance of the Certified Erosion Control Specialist program for SWCS in the region. Peg is a lifetime member of SWCS and the West Virginia Chapter having served on virtually every committee and in numerous leadership positions. She is recognized and honored for her professional, personal, and financial commitment to helping develop new, capable professionals in the natural resource conservation field. She defines the Society's 2008 Fellow Award and we are honored to provide her with this recognition.

"Peg has been a consistent messenger for conservation and natural resource planning throughout her 33-year career and has recently embarked upon assisting West Virginia with the development of an aggressive Farmland Protection Program to help stem the tide of urban sprawl out of the Washington, DC/Baltimore, MD metro region which is moving over the state," said Pat Bowen in the WV SWCS

June newsletter. "She helped develop the national Earth Team Volunteer Program and is recognized as a person who supports volunteer efforts to get things done•conservation and beyond, and has been recognized by the WV Commission for National and Community Service for her work supporting volunteer efforts regionally".

Peg told SWCS-WV Chapter Members "Thanks for telling me that I made a difference. It means a lot to me!"

Peg joins Frank Glover (1971), Dr. John Sencindiver (1977), Jim Michael (1988), Willis Ridenour (1995), and Jim Piper (2005) as the sixth West Virginia Chapter member to receive the Fellow Award.

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# Appalachian Plant Materials Center Special Recognition Award

The Appalachian Plant Materials Center received a Special Recognition Award from Dept of Interior National Parks Service (NPS) Denver Service Center for their work with native plants for the Stones River National Battlefield.



Warren S. Haynes, Biological Science Technician; John Vandevender, Plant Materials Center Manager; and Randall Lester, Plant Materials Center Assistant Manager (left to right) are shown with the plaque.

The certificate/plaque reads:

In recognition of your dedication and contribution to the NPS/NRCS Interagency Plant Materials Program and Assistance to the Stones River National Battlefield. The native plant revegetation technical development, seed and plant propagation you have provided through the program has allowed the National Park Service to meet many native revegetation challenges.

Sam Whittington, Director

Larry Walling, Chief of Transportation Division

March 2008

Stones River National Battlefield is located in South-Central Tennessee on the outskirts of the City of Murfreesboro. Historically, this park is the location of the first major battle in the Union's effort to divide the Confederacy by mounting an eastward moving campaign through the South to the Atlantic Ocean. Vegetation and terrain played an important role in the outcome of this battle. Many battlefield accounts of the difficult terrain exist, especially of the cedar thickets, glades, brakes, and rock ledges and outcroppings that presented major obstacles to the

movement of troops and equipment.

Introduced and exotic plant species have encroached onto many areas of the battlefield. Park managers identified restoration of native plant communities as a high priority for maintenance of the parks circa 1862 authenticity. The Appalachian PMC has agreed to work with the National Park Service to collect seed, develop propagation techniques, and produce seedling plants and/or seed of the targeted species for plant community restoration within the park.

For more information on Native Plant Restoration at Stones River National Battlefield, go to [http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/06may\\_nv/stonesriver.html](http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/06may_nv/stonesriver.html) and <http://www.nps.gov/stri/naturescience/nativeres.htm>.

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## Bits and Pieces

### Flood Control Project Dedicated

Conservation officials, citizens and community leaders gathered on Friday, May 16, 2008 at Beckley Praise Church for the dedication of the Little Whitestick Creek flood control project.

"It's important work to help our communities become prosperous and a good place to do business," said Kevin Wickey, State conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. "It's important work to invest in infrastructure and to conserve resources. It's a great time to thank the people who work hard to make these complex projects come together. "These dedication events also propel us forward. When we stop and appreciate what we have accomplished, we begin to imagine what else is possible."

The project is one of several flood control projects in the Piney Creek Watershed Plan, which includes the Soak Creek, Cranberry Creek and Little Whitestick.

[http://www.register-herald.com/archivesearch/local\\_story\\_137220413.html](http://www.register-herald.com/archivesearch/local_story_137220413.html)

### Elephants: Behind the Scene Experience



Barbara Broxterman, Agricultural Engineer, and four other natural horse relationist students, were able to get a "behind the scene" look at the managing/training techniques of the seals and elephants on May 21st., at the Pittsburgh Zoo. Barbara was in with the elephants (Callee, Nan and Moja) and discussed their behaviors, needs, and how they communicate with their manager, Willie. For more information go to <http://www.pittsburghzoo.org/zoo.asp?ContentID=486> and <http://www.pittsburghzoo.org/zoo.asp?SectionID=10>

Did you know that

- Elephants are the largest terrestrial animal and land-mammal on earth and are the second tallest.
- Elephants have knees on the front and hind legs.
- Elephants cannot jump.
- Air enters the body through the mouth, nose and forehead.
- Elephants tusks are exposed incisors.
- Elephants gestation period is 2 years.

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## Senate Resolution Shines Spotlight on the Importance of Soil

The Resolution (S. Res. 440) acknowledges the work of soil scientists and soil professionals to continue to enrich the lives of all Americans by improving stewardship of the soil, combating soil degradation, and ensuring the future protection and sustainable use of our air, soil, and water resources.

More details at:

<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2008/07/08/senate.resolution.shines.spotlight.importance.soils>

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=sr110-440>

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## Useful Links

### Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are an integral part of the urban/farm linkage and have continued to rise in popularity, mostly due to the growing consumer interest in obtaining fresh products directly from the farm. [Wholesale and Farmers Markets](#)

### Center for Absentee Landowners Website

This site is designed for people who own agricultural land in the United States, but do not live on or operate that land. It's for landowners who are interested in natural resources conservation and who want to learn more information about available programs, resources and support.

<http://www.absenteelandowners.org/>

[USDA Rural Development](#) web site

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## West Virginia's Civil Rights

### Women's Equality Day - August 26



Women suffragists marching on Pennsylvania Avenue; Capitol in background, March 3, 1913.

August 26 is designated as Women's Equality Day. The date commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, the Woman Suffrage Amendment, to the U.S. Constitution, which gave U.S. women full voting rights in 1920.

It took women a very long time to win voting rights; when Abigail Adams wrote her husband John in 1776, asking that the Continental Congress grant suffrage to women, she was ridiculed (<http://womenshistory.about.com/library/news/pr/blpr0008.htm>). The first major women's rights conference assembled in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 issued a Declaration of Sentiments ([http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage1848/a/seneca\\_declaratn.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage1848/a/seneca_declaratn.htm)) patterned after the Declaration of Independence. The passionate statement (which spoke of "this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation"), was overshadowed by the American Civil War. It was not until August 26th, 1920 that women could finally vote in national elections.

One Hundred Years toward Suffrage: An Overview

<http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/vfwhtml/vfwtl.html>

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## Voting in West Virginia

Visit [WV Votes.com](http://www.wvvotes.com) for answers to WV election-related questions like "am I registered to vote?", "where is my polling place?", or "how do I sign up to be a poll worker?" <http://www.wvvotes.com/>.



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## Meet . . .

**Penny Sheeler,**  
**Administrative Assistant, East Area**

### Familiar Name – New Position

I was asked to write a short biography of myself for the News & Views. My parents were born and raised in West Virginia. But, I was born and raised in Elyria, Ohio – which is about 30 minutes from the Cleveland/Lake Erie area. I joined the United States Air Force when I was 19 years old. I had orders to go to the Philippines, but traded to stay stateside (because of some guy I was dating at the time) and ended up in Minot, N.D. (I know, not a smart move). I met my future husband in Minot, got married and had two children, a daughter and a son. I served in the U.S.A.F. active duty for 6 years. We got to do fun things like shoot M-16's and have pretend emergency deployments, etc. I served during the 1st Gulf War. I was told I was next in line to go to the Iraq/Afghanistan area, but the war ended.

I got out of the military and ended up in Philippi, WV for 6 months. I had family there and needed to refocus and figure out what my next step would be. I then ended up in Lost Creek, WV for 6 months (we relocated because of my husband's work). We then relocated to Allentown, PA where I lived for 6 years and had the opportunity to be a stay at home mom (I really enjoyed having that time with my kids). I separated from my husband and moved back to West Virginia. This time I moved to Clarksburg, WV (really close to the Nutterfort/Stonewood area). I worked for Sears in the Parts and Receiving section for a while then I got a job at WVU in the Department of Anesthesiology as a Residency Coordinator Assistant. I loved the job, my supervisor, and working with the anesthesiology residents, but the pay left a lot to be desired.

So, I began applying for government jobs and was hired as the secretary for

Charlotte Elliott-Friend. I then moved to Marion County. After a year or so, I was then transferred to the WaterResources/Engineering Department where I was supervised by Louis Aspey & Dick Judy. I really enjoyed working at the State Office and getting to know everyone, and a little about their jobs. During this time, both of my children graduated from high school and my son is starting college this fall. I'm currently experiencing the unbelievable joy of being a grandmother, as I welcomed my first grandchild into the world three months ago.

I then applied for the position of Administrative Assistant for the East Area, and as you know, I got the job and I'm now working in Philippi, WV. I've come full circle to the point of when I got out of the military. I didn't think I'd ever wind up back in Philippi – but, here I am – go figure!



**Luke Hunter**

**District**

**Conservationist**

**Cross Lanes Field Office**

Luke Hunter is the District Conservationist in the Cross Lanes Field Office serving Kanawha County and the Capital Conservation District. Hunter is a 1982 graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in Forestry. His career with the agency started in Ripley, WV as a Soil Conservation Technician in 1985.

Hunter has seen many changes in agriculture and correspondingly within the agency and the services provided over his twenty three years in the field career. But, there has been one constant amid all the changes; applying conservation on the land his purpose and most certainly his passion to assist fellow resource managers. Hunter is anticipating the different and interesting challenges each day will bring in the chemical valley.

Hunter operates a family beef cattle farm with his wife and two children.

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**Jim Cooper**

**WesMonTy RC&D Coordinator**

On June 24th, Jim Cooper started as the new WesMonTy RC&D Coordinator in Philippi. While new to West Virginia, Jim is not new to RC&D serving as a Coordinator for the past 16 years in two Iowa locations. Prior to RC&D work, Jim was the Information Resource Manager for Iowa NRCS and also worked as a District Conservationist in two field offices.

A native Iowan, Jim holds both a B.S. and Master of Public Administration degree from Iowa State University in Ames. As Coordinator, Jim has worked on a variety of projects including a large switchgrass for biomass project, watershed project organization and financing, community infrastructure and business development. A career highlight was representing NRCS on a 2005 visit to Armenia, a former Soviet satellite bordering Iran and Turkey. While there, Jim presented information on renewable energy projects in Iowa and learned about rural development activities in Armenia.

Jim's partner, Dr. Carolyn Komar is a professor of Physiology at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg. He has one daughter, Evin Cooper, who lives in Kansas City and is recent graduate of Cleveland Chiropractic College. His personal interests include cycling, hiking and kayaking and is finding that West Virginia a great place to live.

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**Personnel Updates**

(Submitted by Karen Fitchett as of Aug 6, 2008)

Name	Action	Location
Adkins, Dustin	Reassignment, Soil Conservationist	Huntington FO
Bauerbach, David	Career Intern, Soil Conservationist	Parkersburg FO
Cooper, James	Reassignment, RC&D Coordinator	Philippi RCD
DeLaney, Debra	Temp Promotion, Off Auto Clk	State Office
Doerr, Diana	Promotion, Promotion Program Assistant	State Office
Duckworth, Brandon	Reassignment, Soil Conservationist	Gassaway FO
Fitzsimmons, Katie	Promotion, District Conservationist	McMechen FO
Gray, Dick	Temp Promotion, District Conservationist	Moorefield FO
Murphy, Matt	Career Intern, Soil Conservationist	Spencer FO
Sheeler, Penny	Promotion, Admn Off Asst	Philippi AO
Williams, Lonnie	Promotion to Rural Development	Morgantown RD State Office
Yost, Pamela	Temp Promotion, Economist	State Office
-	-	-
Broyles, Dewey	Spot Award, Soil Consv Tech	Union FO
Bush, Gary	Spot Award, Soil Consv Tech	Glenville FO
Nestor, Jared	Spot Award, Soil Conservationist	Glenville FO



O'Learn, Erin

Spot Award, Student Trainee

State Office Engineering

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## Phone Directory

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

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

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

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