

Volunteer Utilizes College Education to Help Improve Water Quality

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The job of conserving our natural resources cannot be done by one agency alone. Often times, we rely on volunteers help in reducing soil erosion, conserving our water and improving its quality, and developing pride in our country's natural resource heritage. For this reason, the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed the Earth Team Volunteer program.

Earth Team volunteers are an integral part of the conservation partnership and each member takes pride in the fact that they maintain and improve our natural resources and environment on private lands. Sandra Smith is a standout NRCS Earth Team Volunteer who assisted the Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District with a number of tasks for the South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed Management Project (SFWCP).

As a Geography student at the University of Arizona, one of Sandra's primary duties included learning and applying skills related to Geographic Information Systems and mapping. Utilizing her knowledge and skills, Sandra assisted with the mapping of various hydrologic features, soil properties including hydric and highly erodible soil types, location data from volunteer-led windshield surveys, and assorted data from IDEM's Office of Land Quality for each of the 11 subwatersheds of the South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed. Sandra also helped SWCD staff in the field collecting water quality samples from across the watershed. These water quality samples were used to evaluate E.coli loadings across the drainage area.



By utilizing Sandra's talents, the SFWCP was able to produce a detailed Watershed Management Plan that identifies critical areas within the watershed to focus on. This plan will be used by the Clinton County SWCD to obtain future funding for landowners living within the South Fork Wildcat Creek watershed. Funding will be used to install conservation practices within the watershed and aid in the improvement of South Fork Wildcat Creek and its many tributaries.

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