

CONSERVATION *Showcase*

Bloomsburg University, NRCS and the Columbia County Conservation District

Working Together to Educate our Youth

By Shannon Levan

Since 1997, the Bloomsburg NRCS Field Office along with NRCS Soil Scientists, in conjunction with Bloomsburg University professors, have been conducting a two-day soils field trip for the Bloomsburg University Soils class. 2013 was no exception.

For the first day of the field trip, Shannon Levan, NRCS soil conservation technician and BU alumni, who spearheads this project every year, along with former Supervisory District Conservationist and current ACES employee, Paul Yankovich, took the students to a farming operation in Columbia County where the farmer has been gracious enough to allow them to use his property for the last eight years.

The students got to see his Ag- chemical handling facility, drip irrigation, a series of terraces, diversions, grassed waterways, and stone- lined waterways, just to name some of the conservation practices NRCS has been involved in installing on the property.

On the second day of the field trip, NRCS soil scientist, Yuri Plowden, who became involved with the project three years ago, discussed the web soil survey. She also dug a soil pit to show the students the different soil horizons.

The Soils class at Bloomsburg University has had an increase in interest over the past few years and the field trip has become an event looked forward to by the professor as well as by Shannon and Paul. It has become such a beneficial event for the students that they will be implementing these field trips in both the spring and fall semesters beginning in 2014.



Due to the success of the relationships formed with BU through the soils field trips, students have also been given the opportunity to intern with the Bloomsburg NRCS Field Office and the Columbia County Conservation District. The relationships fostered between these agencies and the BU Geography/GeoScience Department have developed into a beneficial summer intern/ Earth Team Volunteer program in our field office since the late 1990's. This year's intern, Adam Diltz of Mifflinville, has helped with surveying, laying out strips, mapping, agronomic checks for reporting and gathering information for conservation plans among many other projects. Due to the great job these interns have done over the past few years, two of our interns have been hired as employees for the

Columbia County Conservation District and one for the Northumberland County Conservation District after their Earth Team Volunteer/ Summer Intern program was completed.



Bloomsburg University, the Bloomsburg Field Office and the Columbia County Conservation District look forward to educating our youth about conservation in the future through these successful partnering endeavors.

Submitted by Kris Ribble, Bloomsburg Field Office