

Congratulations 2008 National Earth Team Award Winners!

National Earth Team Volunteer Service Award - Chief's Cup

National NACD/NRCS Earth Team Award -

National RC&D/NRCS Earth Team Award -

National Earth Team Chief's Field Award -

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National Earth Team Individual Volunteer Award -

National Earth Team Group Volunteer Award -

National Earth Team NRCS Employee Award -

National Volunteer Coordinator Award -

National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2009



NRCS is proud of the dedicated Earth Team volunteers and staff who have committed their time and talents to conserving and protecting our natural resources.

CT NRCS Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Submitted by: Carol Donzella, State Volunteer Coordinator, Connecticut

By applying his unique gift of creativity at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, Earth Team volunteer Sal Donzella turned what might have been a routine exhibiting chore into a fun event that landed him a segment on a local TV news report.

In addition to greeting the many visitors to the event held at the Yale-Peabody Museum and helping them make mini soil profiles using the proposed State soil Windsor loamy sand, he also built a huge dream catcher for the event with a sign that read “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream...what’s yours?” He encouraged visitors to write their dreams on a slip of paper and attach them to the catcher. By the end of the day, the catcher was filled with dozens of multi-colored slips of paper that described dreams that spanned everything from wishing for peace on Earth, to wanting a real dinosaur for a pet. Both activities were a huge hit and attracted many visitors along with the local media -- including local TV news that did a segment highlighting Sal’s dream catcher and profile-making.

The annual event is a free, 2-day family festival sponsored by the Yale-Peabody Museum of Natural History in New Haven, Connecticut. It celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy of environmental and social justice. Organizations throughout the State are invited to participate and produce an educational activity for families with a lesson dealing with environmental or social justice. In addition to the many displays, hands-on activities; storytellers, dancers, singers, and drummers there is a poetry open mic where show-goers can read their original works.



Sal Donzella

Volunteer Management Tip from the National Volunteer Coordinator Award Winner - June Hogg, Richmond, VA

Submitted by: June Hogg, State Volunteer Coordinator, Virginia

According to a new Corporation for National and Community Service study, people who volunteer, spend about eight fewer hours a week watching television, which adds-up to more than 400 hours during the course of a year. The study also includes an analysis of how volunteers and non-volunteers spend their time. Using data from the Census Bureau, the study found that the largest difference was how much time was spent in a typical week watching television. Volunteers watched some 15 hours compared to 23 hours per week by those who don’t volunteer. One message that can be drawn from the study is that it



June Hogg, National Volunteer Coordinator Award Winner

isn’t as much about having the time to volunteer as it is about creating opportunities that motivate people to give their time. We need to make volunteering a welcoming experience, give the volunteers meaningful work, and invite volunteers with the message, “we are worth your time and effort. Become an Earth Team volunteer, get involved in getting conservation on the land, and you can feel that you are making a difference.”

It’s inspiring to think about the profound difference all Americans could make if they traded in just one hour of TV a week to volunteer.

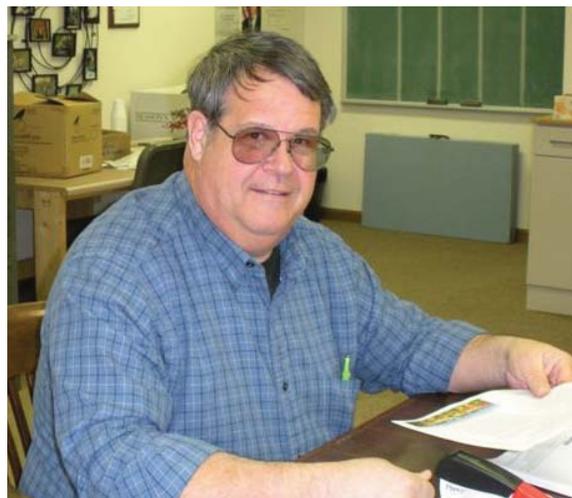
Retired NRCS Employee

Submitted by: Nancy Manion, State Volunteer Coordinator, Indiana

Last year, 31-year veteran Indiana NRCS area engineer Roger Roeske retired but has put his on-the-job volunteer experience of helping out at Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to good use by continuing to provide technical expertise and working at field day events. Averaging 20 hours per week, Roger has become invaluable to districts that are short-staffed by sharing his engineering knowledge, helping to assemble files, and folding brochures for various District programs.

Roger, who has been married for 35 years, has three children and three grandchildren, has a dry sense of humor that delights friends and co-workers. For example when someone asks how long he's been married he'll tell them "12,575 days."

Since retirement Roger has also kept busy taking care of his 95 year-old father-in-law, gardening, yard work, and creating homemade crafts. He is currently helping Cass, Miami, and Carroll, Indiana, Counties with engineering and field checks. "If I realized that retirement was going to be so busy, I would have stayed on the payroll with NRCS," he says with a grin.



Roger Roeske

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Helping You Help the Land!



Don't forget to submit your articles for the next issue of the VolunteerVoice. Please limit articles to a maximum of 3/4 of a page and send jpg photos in as a separate file. Please e-mail your articles and photos to venessa.homewood@ia.usda.gov
Deadline for article submission for the next issue is May 15, 2009.

Kansas Presents Cheyenne County Conservation District Supervisors with the 2008 State Earth Team Volunteer Group Award

By: Jan Klaus, State Volunteer Coordinator, Kansas

In fiscal year 2008, the five members of the Cheyenne County Conservation District board of supervisors contributed 76 hours of volunteer service -- well above and beyond what was required of their elected positions. Besides time spent representing their county at State and area meetings, the board members have participated in conservation education programs presented to the Cheylin and Saint Francis schools. Their presentations were in the classroom and as part of a sixth grade conservation tour. As farmers and ranchers, they were able to share with the children their "real life" experiences and commitment to conservation.

During the year, board members came in an extra day to specifically update a 15 year-old long range plan. In addition, individual board members have represented the district on related conservation boards and committees. These include the local Resource Conservation and Development advisory board and the recently formed Upper Republican River Basin Conservation Projects Alliance.

Individual board members hand delivered posters to the grade schools and Soil Stewardship materials to the county ministers. One board member visits directly with the local Ministerial Alliance each year.

In past years, when the district manager was on extended sick leave, board members filled in at the office.



Left to right: Spencer Schlepp, Roger Orth, and Lonnie Willis conducting spot check tours

They attended to district business and prepared for the upcoming annual meeting.

"Tree day" has become an annual event in which the board members take a leading role by driving to eastern Nebraska to pick up part of the trees, hand bagging individual orders, and distributing them to customers. This year they bagged and distributed nearly 3,400 shrubs and trees. Since 1984, the District has distributed nearly 137,000 trees and shrubs.

In 2006, the district board formed a partnership with county commissioners, via the county road supervisor, to help address roadside erosion. This has been a win-win-win situation with landowners correcting erosion problems, the county (and taxpayers) in turn, reducing costs for road repairs, and the Cheyenne County Conservation District reaching their resource protection goals.

Another unique activity started by the board is conducting spot check tours of practices cost-shared under the Kansas Water Resources and Non-Point Pollution cost-share program. Supervisors questioning if practices and grazing plans were being maintained for the required ten years now randomly select one contract from each year of the past ten and inspect the sites to see how they are functioning and being maintained. Any irregularities found are brought to the attention of the contract holder for correction.

The members of the Cheyenne County District Board have become very visible in their community. Visibility promotes acceptance to the concept of conservation and to the concept of volunteerism. They are well deserving of an award for a job well done.



Spencer Schlepp (with back to photographer), Randy Rueb (with pop can), left to right: Lonnie Willis, Clint Bursch, Roger Orth, Joan Gienger, Myra Hyde