NRCS VolunteerVoice
"The voice of the Earth Team"
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
First Quarter 2007

Note from Bonnie

FY06 was another outstanding year for the Earth Team. Over 38,000 volunteers donated approximately 995,000 hours worth more than $17.9 million. Earth Team volunteers continue to help accomplish the NRCS mission "Helping People Help The Land".

The Earth Team was given the responsibility to manage the "Walk A Mile In My Boots" program. This is a work-exchange program developed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The program was expanded to include the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2006. To date, nine exchanges have been completed. To learn more about this program or how you can participate go to www.walkamileinmyboots.org.

October 2006 was an exciting time for me personally, as I married Dennis Allely on the 21st. Thanks to all of you who remem-

So, as I start 2007 as Mrs. Bonnie Allely, I look forward to working with all of you. Some things you will see coming in FY 2007 are:

- A 3-Year Business Plan For Earth Team
- Improved changes and updates to the Earth Team Database
- Student Brochure
- Updated Earth Team Fact Sheets

As the holidays are fast approaching, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the National Earth Team/LANDCARE staff to thank all of you for your support of the Earth Team – the volunteer arm of the NRCS and LANDCARE – the NRCS publications and forms distribution center. We wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season!

Bonnie Allely

Inside...

Volunteer Stories from around the nation
page 2 - 8

Walk-A-Mile Goes to Washington
page 2

Did you Know?
page 6

VolunteerVoice subscription and submission information
page 8

Idaho

Gettin' Down an' Dirty in Idaho

By Leah Juarros *and* ***Bonnie Long***
Resource Soil Scientist *Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator*

Each year the Idaho FFA and 4-H clubs compete in a Land and Soil Career Devel-

in each region then go on to the State Finals in Burley, Idaho, with the top two state teams competing at the National Soil and Land Judging event in Oklahoma.

FFA and 4H members compete with each other in their ability to identify soil properties such as soil texture, soil depth, water movement and nutrient or organic matter needs. Five pits are dug for each competition; one is used as a practice test before the real competition begins. Another is represented as a home site

See Judging, page 2

Judging (from page 1)

and students must determine if the soils would support a homestead. Two pits represent irrigated land and one as dry cropland or rangeland.

In an effort to prepare all the test sites, coordinate with school schedules, and minimize travel time for the students

that need and get the test sites ready for the students.

These volunteers measure the test area, 100' square, and pound in stakes at each corner. Slope stakes are placed and the measurements recorded on the answer sheet. All of these activities take place the day before the competition, and when the students arrive in the morning everything is ready to go. The competition continues to be a success and something the

make this event possible.

Through a unique partnership with the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Walk-A-Mile in My Boots program has resulted in a number of exchanges between producers and NRCS. One of the most recent provided an opportunity for two ranchers from Utah to visit and work with NRCS National Headquarters leadership in Washington, D.C. Paul Leishman from Wellsville, Utah, and Dee Alan Waldron from Morgan, Utah, talked to NRCS Chief of

variety of other subjects with NHQ specialists.

Walk a Mile in My Boots provides government employees and producers with substantive, on the ground work experiences in each other's respective professions. Any producer or service employee may participate in the program.
More details at:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/volunteers/walkmile/walkamile.html

Wisconsin

Fox Valley Technical College Students Mark Storm Drains to Curb Water Pollution

By Betty Stibbe
Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator

participated in a community service project in Menasha near Appleton, Wis. The students worked September 6th, 13th and 18th to mark approximately 200 storm sewer inlets on city streets with "No Dumping, Drains to River." Their effort was part of an ongoing project to mark all the storm drains on Doty Island in Neenah/Menasha.

The students are here on a scholarship from Central America. They are sponsored in part by their country and the U.S. After their two year school program ends they must return home and perform two years of community service. All of the students are studying natural resources with many of them specializing in water management. Their skills will be very useful once they return home. District Conservationist Merrie Schamberger has been working with the students.

Oklahoma

Earth Team Volunteers and Puppeteers Offer Lessons in Conservation

By James D. Wood II
ASTC (FO) and Newkirk Field Office/Kay County Conservation District

Teaching school children the importance of conservation, not only in their own home and backyard, but how farmers are help-

reduction of soil erosion, no-till farming, the water cycle, water conservation and quality, and trees. The puppets' stories help keep the children connected to the farm, plus emphasize how even children can make a difference in protecting our natural resources.

Four more puppets and scripts were created by volunteer Susan Henning, now District Manager for the Kay County Conservation District. Hopper the Frog, Wiggleworm the Earthworm, Big Drop and the Little Drips, and Woody the Oak Tree now round out

up and take down the puppet stage. This past year, the puppeteers gave 20 shows at schools, library story hours, herb festivals, and summer fun days at a water park.

The puppets take on "real life" in the children's eyes. Their favorite is Hopper the Frog, who believes a wild animal should dress crazy and dance to the song "Wild One." But parents tell that he must be getting the message across as their children remind

South Carolina

Conservationists Build Dune Fence

By JILL COLEY
Charleston Post and Courier

How long does it take 26 volunteers to build a 500-foot sand fence on the beach?

About 10 minutes.

Representatives from Earth Team converged Aug. 16 near Station 21 for a blitz-krieg of coastal conservation.

Earth Team's volunteer coordinators were in the Charleston area for their east region conference.

"A lot of the time we're behind a desk," said NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Amy Maxwell. " We like to do a hands on project (during the conference) and get our hands dirty." This year, the Earth Team crew threw its energy behind Charleston County's Project Impact initiative, Build-a-Dune Project. The fence, comprised of posts and netting, traps sand that builds up over time into a dune system. The fencing is installed in a pattern that is conducive to sea turtle nesting. Sea oat, a plant that stabilizes the dunes, will be planted in the spring.

Secretary Merlyn Carlson, NRCS S.C. State Conservationist Walt Douglas, and NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster visited the Earth Team dune restoration project October 19, 2006.

So far, the effort has produced more than 2,600 feet of dunes on Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms.

The site of the new sand fence at Station 21 is only yards in front of another sand fence, now encased by a sand dune. Only the tops of the weathered, grey fence posts poke above the sand.

Joni Rennhack, who coordinates Project Impact, said the enhanced dune system provides protection for barrier islands and

Colorado

Volunteers -- Just ask and they'll lend a hand

By Colleen McCleary
Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator

One of the toughest problems facing conservation districts and

solutions may be just a step away...or down the street...or in a neigh-

suffer from the misconception that it's too much trouble. Here are

overall mission of NRCS. It does not have to be an NRCS project.

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unteers can perform any job that an NRCS employee would, from data entry to soil mapping.

When searching for volunteers, there are many sources to choose from, including: high schools; scout troops; churches; media;

Team, they must be signed up using an NRCS personnel form (NRCS-PER-001). The following information must be obtained from each volunteer: name and age; address; signature; telephone number; social security number; position applied for. The form must also show the date the volunteer will begin work and give a brief job description. Then an NRCS representative must sign and date the form.

time sheet or an Earth Team Time and Attendance form (NRCS-PER-004). Hours volunteered can be estimated by NRCS person-

other non-monetary awards are appropriate. That's all there is to it!

Colorado

Colorado Earth Team Welcomes ...

By Katherine Burse-Johnson
Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator

March 1996. He began his career as a WAE and now serves as a Soil Conservation

Winner in 1998 for a Living Snow Fence Project.

daughters, ages 28 and 21, and four grandchildren. For the past ten years, Ron has

Team is a worthy cause for all aspects of NRCS.

List Your Volunteer Opportunities at:

www.volunteer.gov/gov

Email ***alan.benge@ia.usda.gov*** for more information

Texas

Barnhart Named 2006 Texas Earth Team Volunteer of the Year

By Lori Valadez
Public Affairs Specialist

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

volunteer of the year. Barnhart was recognized at the annual state meeting of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Districts held in Arlington, Texas.

Barnhart, executive director of the Moore County Development Corp., volunteers at the High Plains Resource Conserva-

is a program administered by NRCS.

said High Plains RC&D Coordinator Thomas Reed. "Her invaluable time and resources have helped us accomplish goals not only in her home of Dumas and Moore County, but for the entire state."

is presented a plaque by Jerry Nichols, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation board member, at the annual meeting of the state's soil and water conservation districts in Arlington, Texas.

cil and serving on the budget committee. Barnhart is also zone 1 director for the Texas Association of RC&D Councils. In this capacity, she maintains contact with state and local RC&D councils and serves as a liaison with NRCS. Barnhart attends meetings of the Wes Tex and North Rolling Plains RC&D councils, as well as High Plains, and reports to the Texas Association of RC&D Councils board of directors at quarterly state meetings. She also serves on the awards committee for both the Southwestern States RC&D Association and the Texas Association of RC&D Councils.

Louisiana

Lake Providence Volunteer's Service Hits 6 Year Mark

By Vickie Fontenot
Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator

East Carroll Soil and Water Conservation District, Lake Providence, La. He provides assistance on conservation educational materials at local schools as well as the East Carroll Library. A volunteer since 2000, he provides clerical assistance, an-

articles to the newspaper. Lincoln is a regular

Along with his volunteering, Powell works at the local Delta Bank in Lake Providence, La.

NRCS **Helping People Help the Land**

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Minnesota

R.S.V.P. Volunteers Recognized

By Cheryl Mathias
Cottonwood SWCD

Cottonwood Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service would like to express their appreciation to volun-

Windom, Minn. has been able to implement numerous programs. Some of the projects they have helped with include bagging trees for Arbor Day, answering phones, producing newsletters, creating coloring books and delivering supplies to the exhibit hall for a water festival, map-

Louisiana

Retirement Doesn't Mean You Stop Contributing…

By Madeline Coco
District Secretary, Avoyelles SWCD, Marksville, La.

In Marksville, La., although you may retire from your career, this doesn't mean that you sit on the porch and watch the dust settle on the dirt road. If you are like

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tribute to the community.

(volunteering to serve his country) and Mrs. Flanders retired from the Marksville School System (volunteering her time to teachers and students). Both enjoy giving to the community. Over 100 hours were documented during the course of the project.

Earlier this year, Mr. and Mrs. Flanders assisted the Avoyelles Soil and Water Conservation District with the annual tree sale.

The couple repotted and nurtured these tender saplings through the winter and spring. In early spring, 2 truck loads of the green

Dr. Smith also challenged his students in the LSU Agriculture Department to pot other vegetation from their gardens to bring to

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lenge to heart. They delivered 87 River Birch, 40 Native Sweet Pecan, and about one dozen Saw Tooth Oaks.

Marksville, La. for their donation of containers for this project. The Earth Team, in turn, thanks the Flanders for their time and community spirit.

Did You Know?

55,477 Earth Team Volunteers donated 995,775 hours to NRCS during FY2006.
This time and talent is valued at more than $ 17,983,000.
A big THANK YOU to all of the Earth Team Volunteers who donated their time and talents to NRCS in 2006!

Louisiana

Earth Team Volunteers Assist with Forest Conservation Research

By Wayne Roberts
NRCS Monroe, La. Area Office

When Dr. Michael Blazier, Research Forester with the LSU Ag Center, and Wayne Roberts, Area Forester with NRCS, needed help with a special research project at the Calhoun Research Station in Calhoun, La., they knew they could count on NRCS Earth

with 23 volunteers and 210 volunteer hours.

This project was not a normal planting job either. The tree planting was in research plots on 12 acres that consisted of mix pine/oak planting at various spacing. Several subplots were within the given area.

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wood planting in each research plot. Surveying chains marked with ribbons were used to keep the exact spacing with each

dibble bars.

This type of tree planting gives the volunteers the opportunity to understand how forest research is a critical part of conserva-
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the development of mix pine/oak stands.

Louisiana

Volunteers Revisit, Re-vegetate and Restore Tarzan's Island

By Mandy York
District Conservationist, Franklin, La.

Avoca Island is the location of the original Tarzan movie. This beautiful Louisiana swamp, just south of Morgan City, is in the heart of Cajun land. The area consists of organic soils with stately bald cypress trees in their natural environment. Restoring these grand and fragile wetlands is one of the annual vegetative planting projects of St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation District and

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whips. The vegetation is also planted to prevent shoreline erosion protection as well as restoration of native species. These volunteers are to be commended for the dedication it took to get wet and dirty and work in the August heat at Avoca Island.

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publication that will be produced as an

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siding on the NRCS Earth Team website. Beginning with the fall 2004 issue, mass printing and distribution of paper copies ceased.

An online subscription form to the

news lists page at: http://news-source.nrcs.usda.gov/.

When the latest issue goes up on the NRCS Earth Team website, subscribers will receive an e-mail with a hyperlink to link directly to the publication.

Parting Shot ...

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

-- Muhammad Ali

Submissions to VolunteerVoice

john.gilman@ia.usda.gov

preferred. Slides and prints are accepted. If you are using a digital camera, remember to set the camera to the highest quality resolution.

present printing problems as they are not of high enough resolution to reproduce.

• Second Quarter 2007--Distribution March 2007. Deadline to submit: 3/1/07

• Third Quarter 2007--Distribution June 2007. Deadline to submit: 6/1/07

• Fourth Quarter 2007--Distribution September 2007. Deadline to submit: 9/1/07

Department of Agriculture."

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