NRCS VolunteerVoice
"The voice of the Earth Team"
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Spring 2006

Earth Team Volunteers - Helping People Help the Land

NHQ Staff

NRCS takes pleasure in recognizing and honoring its Earth Team Volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 23 – 29, 2006. In fiscal year 2005 more than 34,000 Earth Team volunteers nationally donated more than 938,000 hours to conservation. Across America, Earth Team Volunteers set the example as they lend their talents to NRCS and its mission, "Helping People Help the Land."

This year's NRCS National Volunteer Week theme truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help and to inspire others to serve. National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing an annual celebration of volunteering. Every president since has signed a proclamation promoting the week.

Note from Michele

April is the month where we take time out of our busy schedules and thank our volunteers and the staff who support and work with them. NRCS has been fortunate for more than 20 years to have had the opportunity to work with individuals who donate their time and talent. I have been very fortunate over that same time frame to have had the opportunity to work with volunteer coordinators who assume this position as a collateral duty. Many thanks to all of the volunteer managers! I hope you have a great National Volunteer Week (April 23-29, 2006) and I look forward to hearing about your celebrations.

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In addition to preparing for Volunteer Week, the Des Moines Office staff has been busy updating and revising all of the Earth Team material. The National exhibit and the bookmark have been completed and are available. The items listed below are at NHQ going through the approval process:

- Part 428 of the General Manual
- Updating all Earth Team Forms (to include the e-mail address on the applications)
- New Coordinator Guide
- Volunteer Supervisor Handbook
- Volunteer Orientation Guide

I hope to have all of this material available for distribution at the Regional Earth Team Training Conferences which are scheduled for:

West Region	May 22-25, 2006, Phoenix, AZ
East Region	August 14-18, 2006, Charleston, SC
Central Region:	August 28 – September 1, 2006, St. Charles, MO

Enjoy National Volunteer Week and I hope to see many of you at the regional meetings!

Michele Eginoire
National Volunteer Coordinator

Oklahoma

Debbie Eagle of Tulsa is the Oklahoma 2005 Volunteer of the Year

By Becka Redding
NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator

The Oklahoma State Earth Team Award winner is not your typical volunteer. What started out as a favor for a friend turned into a regular routine for Debbie Eagle in Tulsa County. Volunteering at the Tulsa Field Office has provided mutual benefits to Ms. Eagle, as well as the Tulsa County Conservation District and the NRCS.

Ms. Eagle has been volunteering at the Tulsa County Conservation District for nearly two years and works two or three days a week. On a typical day, she arrives at the office at 8:30 and fills the role most needed by the staff that day. She answers the phone, organizes mailings, sorts newsletters, and more recently, has been filling wild flower packets for conservation education events. Ms. Eagle likes meeting people and especially enjoys taking phone calls for the staff.

Through her work at the Tulsa County office, she has become one of the "family". Ms. Eagle says that the staff treats her very well and goes out of their way to make sure she and Ellie feel at home. One of her most prized possessions is a birthday card the staff gave her. She said that Kristi Taylor, the former Tulsa County Conservation District Manager, found a card in Braille, then signed everyone's name in Braille also. Ms. Eagle still has the card.

As Oklahoma's State Earth Team Volunteer of the Year, Ms. Eagle was presented a plaque engraved in traditional English, as well as Braille. She was especially pleased with the plaque and read it aloud during a presentation ceremony at the Tulsa field office on March 2, 2006.

Ms. Eagle plans to continue her volunteer work at the Tulsa field office, along with her faithful companion Ellie. The assistance she has provided has been mutually beneficial to the Tulsa County Conservation District and NRCS, as well as to Debbie. After all, she enjoys meeting people and the Tulsa field staff is one family she would not have come to know had it not been for her special friend and former Tulsa County Conservation District Manager, Kristi Taylor.

List Your Volunteer Opportunities at:

www.volunteer.gov/gov

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

California

Webmaster Lends Talents to AVRCD

By Elizabeth Lessick
California Area 4 Earth Team Coordinator

When the Antelope Valley Resource Conservation District (AVRCD) decided to update their website, volunteer Jim Heggem came to the rescue in a big way.

A retiree, Jim is a self-taught webmaster who also created and maintains websites for the local Boy Scouts and the City of Lancaster's Prime Desert Woodland Preserve. Jim spends many hours at the Preserve, volunteering his time as a Docent, providing trail maintenance, and editing the Preserve's newsletter. He has also developed publications highlighting the plant life and wildlife habitat found in the Preserve.

AVRCD partners with the NRCS Lancaster Service Center in promoting the conservation and management of local natural resources. Russell Almaraz, Soil Survey GIS Specialist at the NRCS Lancaster Service Center, reports, "The RCD's new website has been a big success thanks to Jim Heggem's talents, creativity, and volunteer spirit." This seems to be a win-win situation, with Jim Heggem saying, "I truly enjoy working with computers. It's rewarding to help an agency that cares about our environment. And I can help them from my own living room."

Jim's most recent upgrades to the RCD website include links to the agency's annual college scholarship application package.

Visit the new AVRCD website at www.avrcd.org.

Looking for a career after college can be a daunting task, not to mention acquiring practical experience in one's field. Nicole Heller, recent graduate of UC Santa Barbara (June 2005) with a degree in Geography and minor in History, tackled this issue by becoming an Earth Team Volunteer at the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) at the Lancaster Service Center in California. After graduation, Heller was eager to start her career but wasn't exactly sure where to begin.

"I'm interested in creating and working with maps, and studying the natural features and development of land," said Heller, "but getting your foot in the door is a challenge." Heller's Pastor put her in contact with Russell Almaraz, NRCS Soil Survey Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Specialist, who attends the same church. Russell invit co ledpmn ercaloorelcllialiur

Earth Team Volunteers Bring Smiles to Hurricane Victims

By Lynn Porter
Earth Team Coordinator, NRCS Jackson Field Office

In Mississippi date reference is made as either before Katrina or after Katrina. Before Katrina, libraries along the gulf coast celebrated the Christmas season by having children's programs. Children would come and celebrate by singing, snacking, reading stories, decorating and other festive activities. In Hancock and Harrison counties, along the coast of Mississippi, only one library was not completely destroyed.

After Katrina, Earth Team Volunteers from the Jackson Field Office were in contact with NRCS and local district offices on the coast inquiring what could be done in addition to the clean-up efforts. Cherie Schadler wanted to make sure the children of coastal counties of Mississippi still had Christmas…..BUT she needed help. That's when the Earth Team Volunteers stepped up to the plate and hit a grand slam!

Earth Team volunteers brought new blankets, gloves, socks and undergarments to the Jackson Field Office. Some collected money from their communities, churches and other organizations to purchase gift and phone cards. In addition to the items collected they agreed to make dozens of homemade cookies for the children who would attend "Christmas in Kiln" at the only library left in the county, which was in Kiln, MS. This would be an extra special treat since most of the hurricane victims were still living in tents. Earth Team Volunteers heated up their ovens and brought hundreds of cookies to the Jackson Field Office. The office was full of blankets, pillows, clothing and the sweet smell of homemade cookies the week before Christmas. On December 17th, 18 Earth Team members were at the office before 6:00 a.m. for the three hour drive to the coast. Since there were no other children's programs scheduled anticipation mounted. The spirit of the season flowed as Santa came in on a fire truck and carolers were singing. Earth Team members helped children visit Santa, handed toys out, wrapped presents that the children could "shop" for to give to their parents, served cookies and hotdogs, gave boxes of personal items to individuals, organized and distributed blankets to families and gloves, coats, socks to the children. Instead of the 200 children expected, "Christmas in the Kiln" grew to between 400 and 500!

Dozens of Earth Team members from the Jackson Field Office helped to cook and gather items, even if they couldn't travel to the coast. For the 18 Earth Team members who participated in the 16 hour day it was a blessing. Smiles from the children and expressions of appreciation from the adults were overwhelming. One volunteer will never forget when a teenage boy came up to her and asked "Mam' you don't happen to have a stick of deodorant available do you?" After standing in food lines and eating in massive tents, the homemade cookies were a special treat.

It was an Earth Team event that will never be forgotten by Earth Team members of the Jackson Field Office or those children who were able to forget about their problems from Hurricane Katrina for a day. Earth Team members wore festive Earth Team name tags provided by the NRCS State Office. When someone inquired what the Earth Team was about, a volunteer stated "Let me tell you about the Earth Team…"

The philosophy of NRCS in Mississippi is "Helping People Help The Land". Land devastated by Hurricane Katrina will take time to heal; but before we heal the land the Earth Team Volunteers were healing the spirits of the people; especially the children.

Utah

EWP Willow Planting Underway in St. George

By Ron Francis
Public Affairs Specialist

For the past several weekends, scores of volunteers have been assisting NRCS cut and plant willows for revegetation of flooded stream corridors in Washington County. Lee Woolsey, who coordinated the effort for NRCS, reported that nearly 12 acres of the flood plain were planted by 650 volunteers from the LDS Church, who live in the neighborhood where the flooding occurred last year.

The willows that take root and grow, will help stabilize the stream banks, provide needed wildlife habitat and improve the aesthetics for local residents. It is hoped the early establishment of willows will help compete with the invasive Tamarisk that existed prior to the flood. Many of the volunteers took time during their service project to pull small tamarisk plants that are now returning.

Families, armed with their own tools and prior instruction, invaded designated areas and planted both single and bunch plantings of willows, placing them about two-thirds below the ground into the water table. Volunteers, interviewed by Public Affairs Specialist Ron Francis, said they appreciated what NRCS had done so far to protect their homes. Many of the children planted their "own" willows and reported plans to return and see how they were doing. Blake Walbeck, on-site EWP coordinator, said the service project will help make a stronger stewardship connection with residents who now feel some personal involvement with the restoration work they have been watching for more than a year now. The accompanying photo shows the Scott Armour family planting willows near their home in the Shadow Creek subdivision.

Several NRCS employees were joined by employees from DWR, USFWS and St George City to help coordinate the huge volunteer project.

Nevada

Nye County Volunteer Takes on Weed Challenge

By Elyse Benson
Earth Team Coordinator

One of the key elements for getting a volunteer project completed is finding the right local leader. The Southern Nye County Conservation District found the perfect champion for tamarisk (aka saltcedar) removal throughout Oasis Valley, NV in Renie Younghans of Beatty, NV. This is an exceptional project because this is a battle against weeds that can actually be won. Since she accepted the challenge just over two years ago, she has managed the entire project by hiring contractors, explaining the issue to local inhabitants and planning groups, arranging for pesticide training classes, getting local residents to cooperate in the project, tracking crew progress, recording all grant match activities, monitoring results, writing reports and managing the budget. All the funding for the project work has been from grant awards from various sources. She keeps a sharp eye out for grants for weed control, and she collaborates with Elyse Benson, NRCS Las Vegas, in grant writing Renie also collected willow cuttings and native seed which were grown out by the Nevada Division of Forestry nursery for purchase by any resident who wants to replant after tamarisk removal.

In this short time she has received state and national recognition for her efforts. She was awarded "Weed Warrior of the Year' in Nevada in 2005, she did a presentation on her work at the Nevada statewide weed conference, and her work was presented at the weed awareness conference in DC last year. Not only does she provide many Earth Team Volunteer hours, but she also recruits new volunteers around town whenever she needs help. Within the past two years Renie has accomplished over half of the tamarisk removal in her valley. She truly represents the essence of the Earth Team Volunteer program and working in partnerships to accomplish the NRCS vision.

New York

Empire State Welcomes New Volunteer

By Karen Sullivan
Norwich Field Office

Cherie Sage is a new Earth Team Volunteer working out of the Lafayette Field Office in Onondaga Co., New York. Her volunteer work will help fulfill requirements for an internship she is completing through the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF). Cherie will be enrolling full-time at SUNY-ESF this fall as she pursues a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Biology. As part of her internship, Cherie will be spending up to 200 hours helping NRCS plan and implement conservation practices under the Farm Bill programs. She will be working with NRCS personnel in Onondaga County, and traveling with Area Biologist, Kim Farrell, to adjacent counties to assist with the Wetlands Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Cherie is married with two sons, 6 and 10 years old. Her older son has already expressed an interest in science and may be a future paleontologist. In her spare time, Cherie runs triathlons. She plans to compete in three triathlons this summer, including Skaneateles, Green Lakes, and Henderson Harbor. Cherie is currently enrolled at Onondaga Community College and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. We are glad to have such an enthusiastic volunteer on-board, and look forward to keeping her busy.

New Mexico

Golden Voice of Volunteer Headlines Public Service Announcement

By Cindy Nycz
Volunteer Coordinator

The golden voice of volunteer Tom Posey gave New Mexico's recent conservation planning a boost when he taped three public service announcements for the agency. The campaign was titled "Conservation Planning: Smarter Farmers-Wiser Ranchers", and advanced the need for monitoring, record keeping, and planning.

In the public service announcements, Posey urged farmers and ranchers to explore the choices their land gives them through conservation planning. He noted that it's not your granddad's ranch or your dad's farm … it's the same property but times have changed and it takes smarter farmers and wiser ranchers.

Posey is like so many of our volunteers in that he is related to NRCS staff. He is the husband of New Mexico's public affairs specialist, Barbara Garrett.

Did You Know?

The new per hour volunteer value for FY2006 is $18.06.

A big THANK YOU to all of the Earth Team Volunteers who donate their time and talents to NRCS in 2006!

Illinois

Schuetz receives 2005 Environmental Hero Award

By Yvette Dulle
Volunteer Coordinator

On Thursday, December 29, 2005, Lt. Governor Pat Quinn presented 2005 Environmental Hero Awards to, 13 citizens, cities, and groups in recognition of their commitment to providing and maintaining a healthful environment for this and future generations in Illinois. Glen Schuetz, USDA Earth Team Volunteer was one of the recipients of this award.

Glen Schuetz, a retired landowner, has put much effort into protecting the state's largest contiguous bottomland hardwood forest. In addition to implementing a number of conservation programs on his own land, including: the Conservation Reserve Program, Hole in the Doughnut, Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program and forest management plans, Glen is a board member with the Original Kaskaskia Area Wilderness and the Kaskaskia Watershed Association.

Glen has worked as a volunteer for the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. to improve wildlife habitat within Washington County, including performing prescribed burns on a number of landowners prairie restorations, as well as installing wetlands, native season grasses and bottomland forest seedlings.
Glen has also assisted researchers from the University of Illinois in studying the decline of neo-tropical songbirds within the Kaskaskia River corridor, being instrumental in the researcher's ability to gain access to private property within the corridor. Glen also worked with diligence to gain authorization for the Forest Legacy program within Southwestern Illinois. And he has also worked with the Washington County SWCD to obtain three C2000 grants to control garlic mustard, an invasive species, within Washington County.

Arkansas

"Field Service Center of the Year" Awarded to Star City

By Pat Hoeffken
Volunteer Coordinator

Assigning volunteers to jobs they like to do is the key to a successful volunteer program, according to Robert Hankins, district conservationist in Star City, Arkansas. Hankins is the proud recipient of the Earth Team Field Service Center of the Year Award for 2005. Ray Linder presented the award at a South Area meeting in Arkadelphia on December 1. Hankins reported three volunteers who worked a total of 1,064 hours in fiscal year 2005.

"We have two volunteers at the present time," said Hankins, "a Surveying Aide and a Community Relations Coordinator. The Surveying Aide helps our Soil Conservation Technician in surveying and staking ponds, land leveling, surveying irrigation ridges to lay poly pipe, and advising units of government on drainage and flooding problems. He has assisted in making maps and working with our poultry producers."

The Community Relations Coordinator helps organize meetings with officers and elected officials in Lincoln County. He is a district board member who volunteers in 'hands-on activities' that go beyond the job he is appointed to do. One of his main duties is the Service Center's Farm Safety Day. He organizes and chairs the planning meetings, recruits volunteers, takes forms to teachers to complete on who is coming, does the paperwork, takes Progressive Farmer shirts to the schools and distributes them to participating students, organizes participants into groups, sets up training sessions, and helps supervise 20 or more volunteers who work during the event. He also coordinates and implements Water Quality Monitoring Kit activities and ensures that results are posted on the appropriate website.

"As a volunteer, he performs hands-on activities that are not typically part of a board member's obligations," Hankins added. "Since our volunteers are between the ages of 65-70, they are glad to get the exercise and to work with other people. We try to make their job exciting as we can by using them on projects they like to do."

Tennessee

Earth Team Makes Operation Clean Xstream a Success

By Heather Connor
District Conservationist

The Earth Team in Smith County had the opportunity to put their energy to work at Cordell Hull Lake during Fall 2005. Cordell Hull Lake has 381 miles of shoreline, 2 campgrounds with 305 campsites and multiple legal and managed access points to its waters, but an additional 40+ access areas had been constructed illegally on the management areas by individuals for camping and access to the lake. Subsequently, many of these sites had also become popular dumping grounds containing everything from household trash, used appliances and tires to cans and bottles from illegal campers. The Smith County's Earth Team including their Conservation Youth Board and local 4-H joined efforts to help clean some of these sites up with a project they called Operation Clean Xstream.

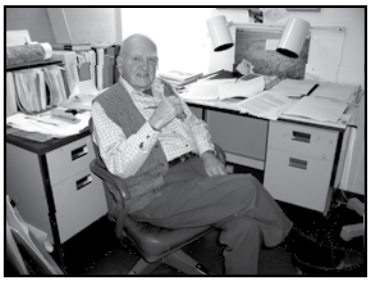
The team of over 20 volunteers picked up trash and hung bluebird and wood duck boxes along the wildlife management area. Cordell Hull's Resource Manager, Mark Herd and Ranger Travis Wiley took the volunteers out on their boat to hang the wood duck boxes and for many, it was their first boat ride. The group learned about the nesting habits of bluebirds and wood ducks and plan to revisit each of the boxes in the spring to clean them out for a new nesting season.

The Earth Team, TWRA, Smith County Soil Conservation District, USDA-NRCS, Smith County Conservation Youth Board, UT Extension, Smith County 4-H, and US Army Corps of Engineers-Cordell Hull were all involved in the project. Partners in a project such as this bring out the best in all those involved, giving a sense of pride to all the volunteers. An Earth Team volunteer can come with lots of energy and lots of expertise. This particular project awarded each member by teaching each other something new and hopefully giving an example to their community that can provoke others to take care of this and other natural resources in our communities.

Idaho

Meridian Volunteer Has Many Talents

By Bonnie Long
Earth Team Coordinator



Bob Layer has been an Earth Team volunteer for 12 years. He logged more than 700 hours of volunteer service last year and was once honored as one of six outstanding volunteers in the United States.

Bob works with planning and zoning departments and with contractors and developers regarding stormwater management. He is currently writing a history of the local reaches of the Boise River illustrating its past and present varied uses from mining, floating logs to sawmills, providing water for agricultural irrigation, noting recent provisions for wildlife habitat and recreational uses for fishing and rafting.

Indiana

Eclectic Crew Effectively Cleans Up

By Michelle Phillips
Program Assistant

Sycamore Trails RC&D in west central Indiana has a very active Fish & Wildlife Committee, which recently spearheaded a clean-up day incorporating Earth Team Volunteers. Fairbanks Landing Fish and Wildlife Area, located in southwest Indiana is a relatively new 8,000 acre recreational area, now managed by the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resource (IDNR)-Division of Fish and Wildlife. It was long an area where illegal dumping occurred on a regular basis, but now that the area is heavily used by outdoor enthusiasts, it was time to do some major tidying up.

This effort brought 58 local citizens, ages 7 to 73, together to clean up this piece of public ground on Saturday, March 4, 2006. Those age 14 and over were enrolled as an Earth Team Group for the day's event. Work teams included folks from Sycamore Trails RC&D Fish & Wildlife Committee, Sullivan County American Indian Council, Life in Fairbanks Township (LIFT), Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission, Indiana Horse Council, Outdoor Obsessions Hunting Club, IDNR, and Indiana Michigan Power (I&M). After an invigorating morning of cleaning up 150 cubic yards of trash, the volunteers were served lunch courtesy of I&M, prepared by the LIFT crew.

In addition to the volunteer work, a number of organizations made significant contributions to this cleanup. The Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff assisted in the recruitment of local volunteers and support. The IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife contributed equipment for the removal of large discarded items. Sycamore Ridge Landfill and Jamax Corporation provided assistance for the disposal of all materials collected from the area. Indiana Michigan Power provided financial support for supplies and lunch.

This great cooperative effort will provide a cleaner and safer environment to enjoy the natural resources in this Hoosier haven!

California

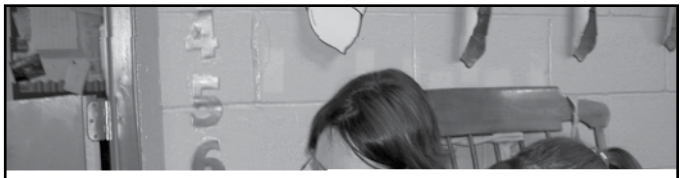
Earth Team Volunteers Help Out on the Trinity River

By Tiffany Riess
Area 1 Earth Team Coordinator

The last 3 years Earth Team Volunteers have participated in Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Annual Day on the River and the U.S. Forest Service's Trinity River Clean-up. Earth Team Volunteers joined in as safety kayakers, raft guides and environmental educators to assist in both events. State, local and federal agencies work together during the BLM Annual Day on the River to provide disabled children and their families a fun and relaxing float down the Trinity River. Volunteers picked up litter along the Trinity River, riparian areas, and Scenic Highway 299 during the U.S. Forest Service's Trinity River Clean Up.

Early Childhood Project Up and Running in Springfield

By Mary Giles
Education / Outreach Coordinator



Amy McKee, Earth Team volunteer and Ozarks Technical Community College student, reads a book she wrote and illustrated about the water cycle to children in a local preschool facility.

Preschool aged children in the greater Springfield, MO area are learning about water as a result of the Earth Team Early Childhood Education Project conducted through the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service. In September 2005, the South Missouri Water Quality Project partnered with students in two children's literature classes and a media class at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield. The students became Earth Team volunteers and provided age-appropriate learning experiences for children 3-5 years of age who attend preschool or childcare facilities within the Upper White River Watershed. The learning experiences introduced basic conservation concepts to these active, enthusiastic learners. Each literature student wrote and illustrated a story book related to water quality and then developed five supporting activities and games. Lessons were developed around a number of topics and included such things as the water cycle, the forms of water, pollution, conservation, erosion, and even creepy, crawly worms! A letter describing the lesson was sent home with each child following the presentation, along with a fun, conservation related activity sheet, and a fact sheet about the USDA-NRCS South Missouri Water Quality Project. The media students created a documentary video of the project which will be utilized in marketing the project and training future volunteers.

The Earth Team Early Childhood Education Project was developed by the staff of the South Missouri Water Quality Project, Ozark, MO as an outreach/education effort to reach multiple audiences within the watershed. Five specific audiences were targeted: Preschool-aged children, the children's parents, early childhood facility directors and teachers, college students, and college officials. It began as a pilot project in March 2005.

Earth Team volunteers provided 1,005 hours of service through the Early Childhood Education Project during 2005. Information was provided to 458 households located within Springfield and six surrounding communities.

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If you think this could benefit you and your office, email Alan Benge:

alan.benge@ia.usda.gov

to get started.

Texas

Temple Volunteer Lends Talents to Earth Team

By Norma Tucker
Earth Team Coordinator

Charles Damron began serving as an Earth Team Volunteer in 1992, one year after retiring from Scott & White Hospital in Temple where he had worked as a registration clerk for many years. He not only is a dedicated member of the Earth Team, he also serves as a volunteer to the VA hospital in Temple.

Charles' dedication to assisting the several sections of Administrative Services is almost legendary. For more than 12 years, he has been a regular member of this team offering a wide variety of volunteer assistance. He helps with the timely processing of payments related to all types of cost-share contracts. This includes getting payments ready for voucher examiners to audit, stamping the payments with the appropriate identifications numbers, and filing the payments and the contract folders. After the payments are certified, he keeps an accurate log of all the payments that are processed by Financial Management.

Chuck (as he likes to be called) assists other employee's throughout the state office with various duties including copying, file maintenance, etc. His work is very precise and he shows extreme conscientious attention to detail.

Chuck assists Human Resources by copying booklets, documents, assembles conference binders, labels folders, and files documents. He saves Human Resources many hours shredding obsolete HR sensitive files, documents, and reports, allowing the staff to work on higher priority issues. This consists of not only day-to-day shredding of documents, but also the clearing out of Fiscal Year disposition files which is very time consuming.

Chuck is creative, conscientious, courteous, and a highly valued volunteer who goes above the expectation of volunteer work. He not only spends his time in the office accomplishing valued output, but he also spends time outside the office devising ways for the agency to have a better safer work area. He routinely volunteers about 13 hours per week. In 2005, he worked nearly 700 hours, which is about one-third of a staff year.

Connecticut

Volunteer Helps Survey in East Windsor

By Carol Donzella
Earth Team Coordinator

Earth Team volunteer Katie DePietro volunteers on a project in East Windsor, Conn. DePietro provided assistance with surveying for a covered heavy use area that included animal waste storage. Katie is a freshman at the University of Connecticut and looks forward to volunteering whenever she gets a chance. Her enthusiasm and professionalism make her a great addition to the Earth Team in Connecticut.

Bits and Pieces

Boots are On the Ground

Congratulations to Yuma, Arizona farmer / Earth Team volunteer John Boelts and NRCS Resource and Development Coordinator Danny Markus for participating in the first ever NRCS Walk a Mile in My Boots work exchange.

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

Subscribe to VolunteerVoice

The VolunteerVoice is now an on-line publication that will be produced as an Adobe portable document (PDF) file residing 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 VolunteerVoice is available on the NRCS 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 ...

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. . ."

-- Anne Frank

Submissions to VolunteerVoice

Articles and photographs for publication should be e-mailed, via your State Volunteer Coordinator, to john.gilman@ia.usda.gov. If you prefer, copy can be mailed or faxed to NRCS Attn: John Gilman, 5140 Park Avenue, Suite C, Des Moines, IA. 50321, fax number (515) 289-4561. Please remember to include photographs to illustrate the article. JPEG images are preferred. Slides and prints are accepted. If you are using a digital camera, remember to set the camera to the highest quality resolution.

Submittal deadlines for 2006 editions of the VolunteerVoice are listed below. Please remember to submit stories as Word files and photos as separate files in JPEG or TIFF format. Photos embedded in word documents or submitted as webpages present printing problems as they are not of high enough resolution to reproduce.

- Summer 2006--Distribution July 2006. Deadline to submit: 6/15/06
- Fall 2006--Distribution October 2006. Deadline to submit: 9/15/06
- Winter 2006--Distribution December 2006. Deadline to submit: 11/15/06

For information about the Earth Team and the VolunteerVoice, go to www.nrcs.usda.gov, call 1-888-LANDCARE, or your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office listed in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture."

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