

FOCUS

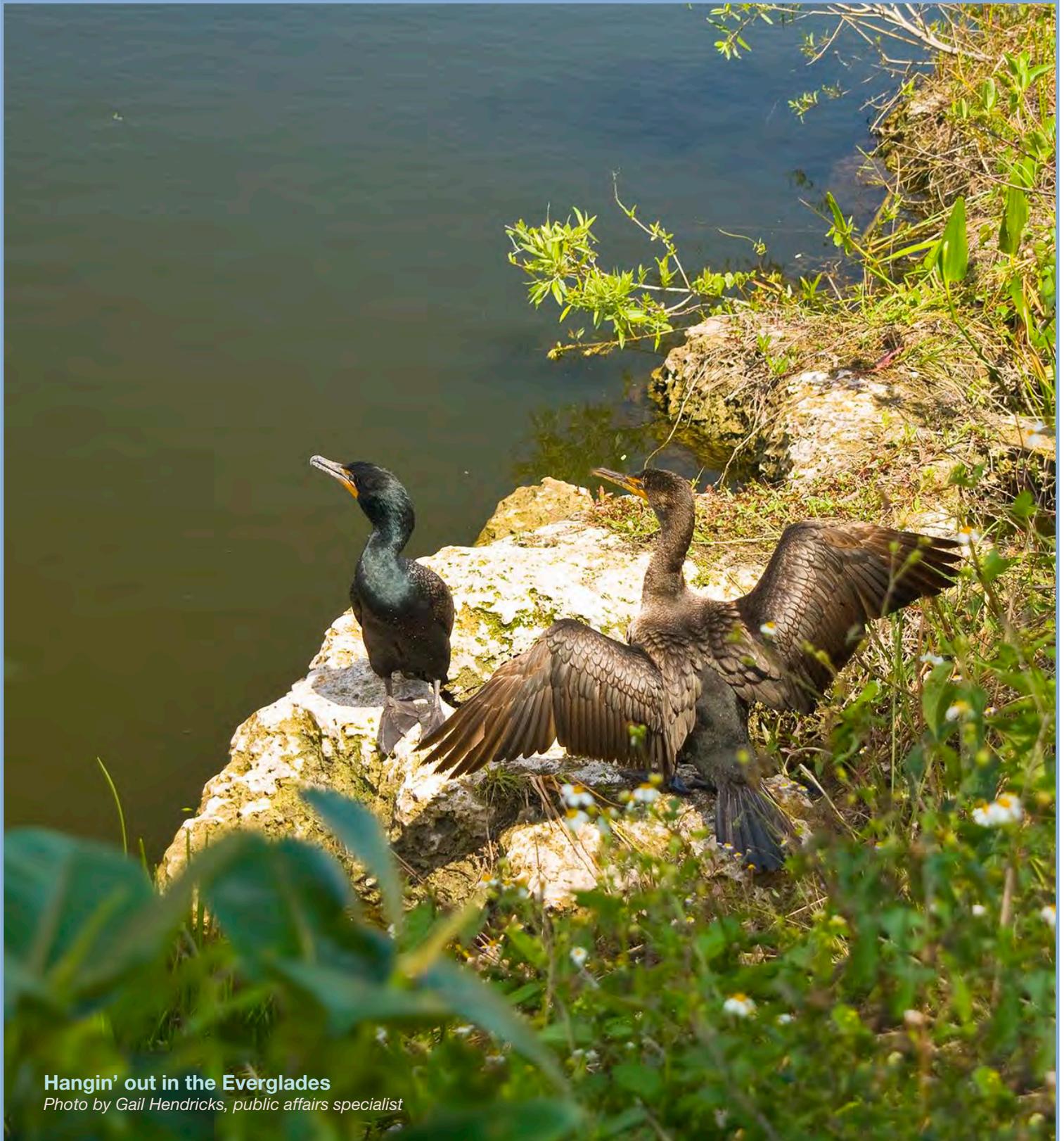
Florida NRCS Outreach and Conservation Updates



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Spring 2011



Hangin' out in the Everglades

Photo by Gail Hendricks, public affairs specialist

A Note From Your State Conservationist

Dear NRCS Florida Family,

This issue of FOCUS brings us into summer and through $\frac{3}{4}$ of our fiscal year. I would like to express my gratitude for all that you have accomplished so far this year. We should be finished obligating funds for EQIP and WHIP by the end of June and I know that is a big workload on most of our employees. I know you will continue with the Farm Bill program roll outs and also keep up the good work with conservation planning and working one-on-one with our farmers and ranchers. I want you to know that I value the work you are doing. Helping you succeed at your jobs and working to make your job easier is always on my mind.

Recently, I was asked to help mentor some candidates for the Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP) and the Business Management Leaders Program (BMLP). As I am sure you have heard, the ELDP is a major component in an agency-wide strategic approach to developing leadership talent for the future of NRCS. Florida has 5 employees in this great program; Donna Hopwood, district conservationist; Chris Menhennett, district conservationist; Chakesha Martin, district conservationist; Milton Martinez, MLRA Team Leader; and our newest employee Odessa Armstrong, programs specialist. The BMLP program is a two-year program that provides a combination of formal training with rotational work assignments for college students in the administrative fields. Florida has two working temporarily within the state. Jackie Flores is working with Chuck O'Rourke the district conservationist in Kissimmee and NaJenna Randall is in Milton with the district conservationist there, Trent Mathews. They are getting a taste of what NRCS field offices do on a daily basis. In talking with these exceptional employees I am encouraged about the future of our agency and the employees that will lead it.

Speaking of mentoring, I want to say a few words about Florida's mentoring program. First of all, I want to thank Paula Allen and Renee White-Leech for being coordinators and trainers of our state program. We recently had our first group of mentors and protégés go through training in Gainesville (see story on page 6). This is a fine group of employees who are volunteering their time to help their fellow employees. I have had several mentors throughout my career and as I mentioned earlier I am also serving as a mentor. I have found it to be a very rewarding experience and want to encourage any of you that are interested to apply the next time there is a call for volunteers. You won't regret the time you spend either as a mentor or a protégé.

Until next issue, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer with your family and friends.





Conservation Partners Celebrate Earth Day

By Gail Hendricks, public affairs specialist



Celebrating Earth Day provides us with the opportunity to underscore the significance of the work being done every day by our agency, through conservation planning and producer assistance to benefit the soil, water, air, plants and wildlife for productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

On a glorious spring day NRCS Florida invited our conservation partners, local school children and the public to join us in celebrating Earth Day. Partner organizations, including the Hernando County Friends of Native Plants Society, NRCS Mobile Irrigation Lab, Audubon Society, the Florida Division of Forestry and many others, set up exhibits with various conservation themes at the NRCS Brooksville Plant Materials Center (PMC). Our soils division was also on hand to demonstrate the NRCS Web Soil Survey.

The day began with a welcome from the NRCS Florida state conservationist Carlos Suarez (photo #1). Suarez pointed out that as a result of the success of the first Earth Day in 1970, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act became law, followed three years later by the Endangered Species Act. Next up was a People's Garden discussion with Dr. Mimi Williams, plant materials specialist. At last year's Earth Day event we started a small native wildflower and pollinator garden at the PMC and this year we added to it (#2) and added a vegetable plot featuring three different potato growing techniques. Each planting was also multi-cropped with cabbage, onions and peas. The school children had a ball digging up the potatoes (#3) that were planted earlier in the season by the PMC staff. All food harvested from the garden was donated to The Way Family Farm in Brooksville.

Demonstrations and discussions such as a Xerces pollinator study, wildflower information and giveaway (#4), bee habitat, long leaf pine restoration and the Melton family antique farm equipment went on throughout the day.

It was a perfect way to remind people that conservation is everyone's responsibility and "Every day is Earth Day."

Earth Day Event at West Gadsden High School

By Christopher L. Davis, soil scientist

On Earth Day several Area 1 NRCS employees had the luxury of sharing our professions with students at West Gadsden High School in Quincy, FL. Milton Martinez and I were promoting Soil Science, Andy Hopkin was promoting Grazing/Livestock and David Wigginton was promoting Engineering. Also joining us was Faith Eidse speaking on "Water Resources and Protection" from Northwest Florida Water Management District; and Cathy Hardin and Shawn Duggar speaking on "Careers In Forestry" from the Forest Service.



The event captured the attention of 450 students in grades 6 through 12. We had the opportunity to show the students hands-on what we do on a day-to-day basis. The students showed an interest in our tools and equipment, but they seemed to be more interested in the more technical things such as the laser level, GPS Trimble, and GIS on the Panasonic toughbook computer. This was a great opportunity to interact with local students in the Gadsden County Community.

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National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)

NARFE is solely dedicated to the preservation and improvement to health care and retirement benefits of federal employees, retirees, their spouses and survivors. NARFE is leading the fight in defending against attacks made to the federal employees and retiree's benefits. As a member in the NARFE association, there are a number of valuable benefits that you will receive, for example:

- A subscription to the monthly magazine focused on federal benefits, finances and other topics;
- Electronic alerts to legislation affecting your income, and health care security;
- Access to NARFE's Legislative Action Center, Weekly Legislative Hotlines and a wide variety of information available only to members via NARFE's website (www.narfe.org);
- Exclusive access to a set of easy-to-use online financial planning tools and seminar;
- Eligibility for college scholarships for your children and/or grandchildren;
- Discounts on hotels, cruises, vacation tours, car rentals, bankcards and more;
- Access to NARFE's expert staff of former U.S. Office of Personnel Management and Social Security Administration professionals.

If you would like to join the NARFE association, go to <http://www.narfe.org/departments/home/index.cfm> or call 1-800-627-3394.

Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE)

The Florida Chapter of the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees is recruiting new members. If you are about to retire consider joining the ARCSE. The purpose of the association is to keep retirees in touch with other retirees and to exchange experiences, ideas, and activities, and to alert members of retiree activities at local, state and national levels. They also encourage continued support of sound soil and water conservation programs carried out by NRCS and other agencies and keep retirees informed of current conservation legislation, budgets, and program changes. The membership year is the calendar year (January 1 - December 31).



There are several types of membership and anyone, active or retired, may belong. There is a complimentary membership for 1 year (Voting): No Dues. Anyone retiring or leaving NRCS after Jan. 1, 2003 is eligible. All that is required is to complete and submit an application form. For Normal membership (Voting) for retired (or retired former) SCS/NRCS employees the dues are \$18/yr.

For more information go to <http://arcse.org/index.html> or contact Mr. Ron Marlow, Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees, P.O. Box 7454, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7454, 703-503-9219, Email: arcse@cox.net.

If you know any retirees that wish to receive occasional emailed NRCS updates or the FOCUS newsletter have them send an email to gail.hendricks@fl.usda.gov and request to be added to the distribution list.

Field News

Alachua Field Office Blessed with Volunteers

By Kayla Milburn, soil conservationist trainee

At a recent FFA land judging contest in Alachua we were blessed to have several volunteers helping out. We had 4 sisters of Sigma Alpha, the professional agricultural sorority and another undergraduate student from the University of Florida in attendance.

The volunteers were able to help in setting up the field for the contest and grading score cards for the students. Each helper said that they enjoyed the experience and also seeing how involved NRCS is with our local FFA groups.

Since the contest, David Trenor has continued to volunteer at the Gainesville field office assisting in field visits for EQIP 2011 applications as well as help with day to day office duties. David has been a great asset to our office and we hope that he has gotten as much out of his time here as we have. We are so thankful for all of the help from our volunteers and hope to see them back in the months to come!



Volunteers from left to right: Jenna Eckerson, Caroline Roper, Avery Sams and David Trenor

EWP Funding Assists with Flood Damage

by Brian McGraw, district conservationist

After heavy rains and flooding conditions from the March 2009 flood caused severe erosion to local streets the City of Blountstown requested Emergency Watershed Protection program (EWP) assistance from the Blountstown NRCS Field Office. The structure on West Sherry Street, in downtown Blountstown, was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's. The Damage Survey Report (DSR) for West Sherry Street also included stabilization to the Lake Hilda dam and spillway. The small lake provides recreation and aesthetics to the downtown area, but also serves to improve water quality as a flood control and settling basin for the large Sutton Creek watershed. The water that passes through Lake Hilda's spillway flows into the historic Apalachicola River. The watershed of the lake and creek includes thousands of acres; including cropland, forestland, recreation, and urban lands.



During construction



After construction

Through EWP funding the project included stabilization to road/culvert erosion, replacement of the concrete spillway, and instillation of geotextile and granite rock riprap. The construction also included improvements to the dam's drainage structure and stabilization to the dam. Due to erosion from the storm, the road and structure could have been lost if EWP funding wasn't available.

Construction was completed in November 2010 by a local contractor and the City of Blountstown. The City Manager/Council, as well as local citizens are thrilled that NRCS was able to assist the city with EWP funds and technical assistance to stabilize the road and structure. Local residents are very glad to be able to once again travel on West Sherry Street between a large residential area and Highway 71.



Florida Graduates 1st Class of Mentors

By Paula Allen and Renee Leech, Mentor Coordinators

On Tuesday, April 26, 2011, State Conservationist, Carlos Suarez welcomed Florida's first class of Mentor's participating in the National Mentor-Protégé program. Mr. Suarez applauded the employees for volunteering their time and talent to move the Agencies' Strategic Plan forward in valuing the skills and knowledge of each employee and transferring this knowledge to the next generation of NRCS employees. This will be accomplished through the pairing of Protégés and Mentors.

The mentors participated in 16 hours of training that took place in Gainesville and were joined by their protégés at the end of the first day. On day two of the training each Mentor and Protégé received a personal profile assessment (DiSC) that will help them as they develop their relationship over the next year. Ed Wright, former NRCS Employee and a current Earth Team volunteer, delivered the specialized personality assessment to the group. Mr. Wright has always been a champion of NRCS employee development and of the Mentor-Protégé relationship. His contribution to this program is invaluable.

The participants were guided through the process of developing a Career Plan with the help of Co-trainers, Renee Leech and Paula Allen. The Mentor-Protégés have signed an agreement to participate in this program for the next year and have concurrence from their supervisors to devote time needed to be successful in the program.

If you are interested in future participation in the program please speak to your supervisor then contact Renee Leech or Paula Allen for more information.

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Speaks to Group in Tampa

by Gail Hendricks, public affairs specialist

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack gave the keynote address March 4, 2011 at the 16th Annual Commodity Classic in Tampa, Fla. The audience consisted of more than 4,500 farmers, federal and state government employees, producers and commodity group representatives. In his remarks, the Secretary commended American farmers, ranchers and producers for helping to lead the United States' economic recovery by shattering agricultural trade records, creating jobs at home and ensuring affordable food for U.S. families.

NRCS Florida was also represented at the Commodity Classic March 3 – 5. Employees staffed a national exhibit and talked to participants about farm bill programs. Jeff White, former Area Conservationist for Area 3, Ken Lackmann, Area Resource Conservationist and Gail Hendricks, Public Affairs Specialist assembled the booth, assisted with handing out brochures and answering questions. They also had an opportunity to meet and speak with Secretary Vilsack when he visited the booth. The secretary and his wife spent 15 - 20 minutes with the employees and enjoyed looking at the handouts and exhibit and talking to the employees.

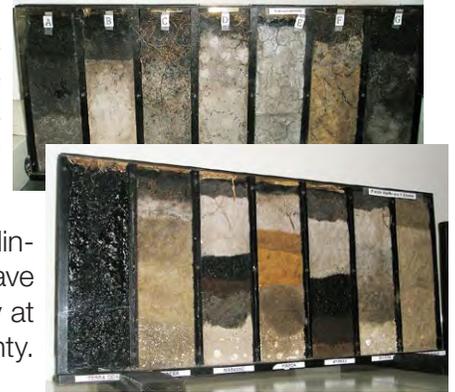


L-R - Gail Hendricks, Ken Lackmann, Sec. Vilsack, Carlos Suarez, and Jeff White.

Kevin Sullivan Bequeaths his Soils Displays to Area 4

By Elwood Holzworth, soil conservation technician

For the past fifteen years I've had the pleasure of walking by the two soils displays (right) that Kevin Sullivan built shortly after arriving in Vero Beach as the Area 4 Soil Scientist. The two displays have provided numerous opportunities to give cooperators in the office a clear picture of what their soils look like from the surface down.



Kevin has also used these displays at various workshops from wetland delineation to hydric soils indicators. In reaching out to area youths the displays have been used at many Envirothon team trainings and competitions, most recently at the Florida State Envirothon held at Jonathan Dickinson State Park in Martin County.



Kevin (left) will leave behind his beloved soils displays when he leaves for Washington in July to assume his new State Soil Scientist duties. While he will be missed, the soils displays will remain as an asset to Area 4 offices. Kevin asks that they be handled with care.

Blackwater SWCD Hosts 2011 State Land Judging Contest

by Trent Mathews, district conservationist

Blackwater Soil and Water Conservation District had the privilege of hosting the State Land Judging Contest held on March 25, 2011 at the University Of Florida Research Center in Milton, Florida. There were approximately one hundred and forty students from thirty-five counties throughout Florida that participated. The winners were: FFA Senior Division-Fort White from Lake City; FFA Junior Division-Bethlehem High School from Holmes County and 4-H Senior and Junior Division-Manatee County 4-H Club.

The Land Judging Contest is a long standing tradition in the State of Florida and teaches the importance of land characteristics, conservation practices and home site evaluation. Teams evaluate the site (photo right) on such criteria as: soil depth and thickness; surface texture; soil permeability; percentage of slope; land capability and recommended land treatments and fertility.



The Blackwater SWCD Board would like to thank Santa Rosa County Farm Bureau, Farm Credit of Northwest Florida, Three Rivers RC&D Council and University of Florida-West Florida Research and Education Center for their sponsorships in help making this day a success.

Jupiter Environmental Academy Prevails at 2011 Florida Envirothon

By Laura Fincannon, Palm Beach SWCD

Students from Jupiter Environmental Academy took first place after a day of challenging tests at the Florida Envirothon held at Jonathan Dickinson State Park, April 30th. The Shrub Patrol team coached by adviser Phil Weinrich will represent Florida at the National Canon Envirothon July 24 – July 29th at Mt. Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. Back in 2009 Jupiter Environmental Academy also represented Florida at the national event with team Elementz, who placed 6th over-

all and took home over \$8,500 in scholarship prizes.

Second place in the State competition went to St. Lucie County students, followed by students from Miami-Dade County in third place. Likened to an environmental Olympics, teams are tested in five different categories including Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife, and this year's Current Issue - Salt and Fresh Water Estuaries.



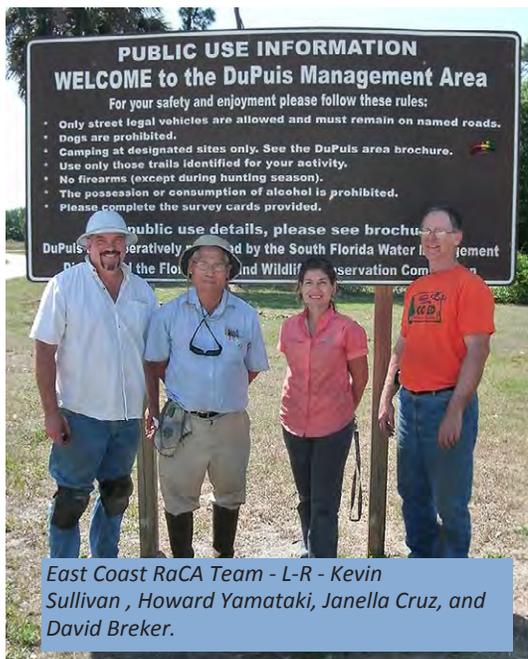
First place winners left to right: Becky Meiser, Elizabeth Isner, Stephanie McCrate, Veronica Gall, Shayna DeRuysscher, Phil Weinrich, Advisor (center, back)

Florida RaCA Details

By Howard Yamataki, MLRA leader, MLRA SSO 15 – 8 Fort Myers

The word “Detail” is one which all Soil Scientists understand within the context of Soil Survey. In December 2010, an opportunity was offered for Soil Scientists to be part of a soil sample collection “detail” for the Rapid Carbon Assessment (RaCA) project. In Florida, progressive Soil Surveys were conducted within the counties, but the RaCA project is composed of collecting soil samples from sites over a large area. The MLRA 15 – 8 Fort Myers Soil Survey Office (SSO) was charged with collecting samples on 66 sites in 17 counties.

On January 3, 2011, I requested two soil scientists be assigned from northern states for winter detail. Later that month I was notified that two would arrive for duty February 28 and conduct field work until March 25. The goal for the detailed persons was to collect samples from 19 sites across St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach Counties. David Breker – Resource Soil Scientist from Forman, North Dakota and Janella Cruz, Soil Scientist from Rapid City, South Dakota, were chosen to assist me.



During their 4 week tour they worked with me out of the Fort Pierce and Royal Palm Beach NRCS Field Offices. I referred to us as the East Coast RaCA Team. I also designated Martin Figueroa – Senior Soil Scientist and Sherlynette Perez-Castro – Soil Scientist, in the Fort Myers SSO as the West Coast RaCA Team. Communication and coordination between the teams was an important part of maintaining consistency in processing documentation of each site which is composed of at least 20 samples per site.



Janella had limited experience in sampling of sites but she adapted quickly and provided the team with her skills in use of the Geographic Positioning System (GPS) device. David had no experience in sampling of sites. He had, however, received in-house training from North Dakota staff prior to his detail. He also had skill and knowledge of the new Trimble GXT which was an important part of navigating to various map units. Each of these field tools also required access to the Graphics Information System (GIS) within the local Field Offices. The east coast team sampled 21 RaCA sites which was two more than my projected goal.

One of the initial steps for collecting samples was gaining permission to access private and public lands. Because of the nature of the RaCA, local NRCS Field Offices were an extremely important part of sample collection and permit processing. No less than seven people were involved in this process, which began weeks before the tour by the East Coast Team. During sample collection, staff members also served as guides, introduced collectors to landowners and provided sampling assistance.

In the field, assistance from the local Area Resource Soil Scientist, Kevin Sullivan was important. Kevin provided technical assistance to the sampling team and helped coordinate key personnel from the field office. Other Soil Scientists assisting field collection were James Mason, MO 15 RaCA Coordinator from Soil Survey Office 15-4 at Auburn Alabama and Greg Brannon, Data Quality Specialist from the regional office, MO -15. They supplemented or stood in for me.

This detail had many variables proceeding and during actual field collection, but somehow everything worked out. I often refer to myself as a “Lucky Guy” because many new programs, events, and initiatives have worked out for the best in my career of nearly 40 years. RaCA is another.

Plant Materials Center News

WHIP Benefits Wildlife and Longleaf Pine Restoration

By Michael Bush, biologist and Mimi Williams, plant materials specialist

Once common in the vast expanses of mature pine forests that covered much of the southeastern coastal plain, the red-cockaded woodpecker is now a federally listed endangered species. Today, the birds' preferred habitat -- the longleaf pine ecosystem -- has been eliminated from 97 percent of the lands it once occupied. During FY 2010, Florida NRCS was able to make great strides in helping private landowners sustain, enhance, and restore longleaf pine forests; mainly with funding provided through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program's (WHIP) Southeastern Forestry Initiative and the Longleaf Pine Initiative. In all, Florida NRCS and our partner biologists at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) have worked together to address resource concerns associated with longleaf ecosystems on 7,660 acres throughout the historical range of this habitat. This conservation effort covers 20 counties in Florida. It will assist landowners in increased planting of longleaf pine on 2,900 acres over the next four years through 56 contracts totaling \$760,607 in financial assistance. On acreage where longleaf pine existed but proper management was needed, planners assisted landowners to develop conservation plans and cost-share contracts to manage these pine stands with practices such as prescribed fire and brush management. These conservation measures will provide great wildlife benefits and increase the economic outlook for private foresters for years to come.

An example of the collaborative efforts in Florida is one landowner who recently purchased land in Wakulla County for the purpose of retiring to Northwest Florida. After signing up for the WHIP program he met with NRCS and FWC representatives. Once he heard the advantages of being able to burn as early as the first year after planting, the improvement to wildlife habitat and the opportunity to restore an important native habitat, the landowner decided to replant his site with a low stocking density of longleaf pine at 300 trees per acre and began a regular burn cycle. The advantage of his plan is that it promotes native groundcover while restoring longleaf pine to a site that was previously converted to a commercial plantation of loblolly pine. He has now convinced a friend to plant longleaf on his tract of land at a low density and that landowner is now signed up for the 2011 WHIP program.

Another example is at the Brooksville Plant Materials Center (PMC). The Brooksville PMC is situated on about 140 acres of federal land that historically has been predominantly a longleaf pine ecosystem with small inclusions of hard wood hammock. For almost 30 years, prior to the PMC being established in 1967, fire had been excluded from the management of the property and hardwoods encroached over the whole tract. As part of a major land clearing operation to establish a new 13 acre seed production field, the Brooksville PMC is in the process of restoring about 100 acres to its original longleaf pine savanna ecosystem. Phase one, which involved hard wood removal and initial herbicide treatments to control invasive species, was completed in 2010. Phase two will include herbicide treatments to control hardwood re-sprouts with long leaf pine planting scheduled for January 2012.



Quick Learners!

by Mimi Williams, plant materials specialist

Researchers at the University of Florida Honey Bee Research and Extension Laboratory approached staff at the Brooksville Plant Materials Center (PMC) in 2010 for help in establishing pollinator habitat for *Operation Pollinator*, a 5-yr cooperative study sponsored by the National Fish and Wildlife Federation and Syngenta. Their first planting was pretty fair as evidenced by the plants in the photo above left. But see what a little practice can get you! The photo on the right above shows gaillardia, phlox, and coreopsis broadcast planted in 2011.



Recently, Steve Boetger, state agronomist, and I, had an opportunity to see this pollinator work and also work funded in the Gainesville area by a national Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) from NRCS awarded to the Xerces Society. The tour of these projects was sponsored by the Native Pollinators in Agriculture Working Group (<http://www.agpollinators.org>), a grass-roots effort by leaders in the agricultural sector to ensure long-term profitability and sustainability of agriculture.

The 2011 goal of the Working Group is to disseminate success stories on using native pollinators and to encourage federal, state, and local conservation agencies to support programs that promote pollinator habitat. Members of the Working Group that were on the tour included Rudy Rice, Chair and long time dairy and grain farmer from Illinois; Ernie Shea, Working Group director and former Asst. Agriculture Secretary; and Ray Beck, Director of Conservation and Resource Development for the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation. The tour ended at one of the blueberry farms owned by Alto Straughn of Windsor, FL, who is also a member of the Working Group. Mr. Straughn is well aware of the importance of pollinators to agriculture because production from his fields accounts for one-third of the annual blueberry crop in Florida. Mr. Straughn's farm serves as a research site for pollinator plantings and native bee nest habitat (pictured right).



LANDCARE Changes Name----Now NRCS Distribution Center

The "Native Bees" 2011 Pollinator Poster

Join the Conversation about **Native Bees**

What's the buzz?

North America has over 4,000 described species of native bees that pollinate wildflowers and crops. From the tiny Perdita to the substantial carpenter bee (Xylocopa variegator), these local pollinators are hard at work in the rural landscapes of gardens, farms, forests, grasslands, and urban and wild lands. Unfortunately, several species of native bees are showing alarming signs of decline. Learn more about these colorful pollinators and how you can support them at www.pollinator.org

--One of 19 posters available free of charge!

LANDCARE, the National Publications and Forms Distribution Center, has changed its name to the NRCS Distribution Center. The name is new, but you still get the same great conservation publications, forms and exhibits for **free** by calling 1-888-526-3227; visiting our new one-stop shop NRCS SharePoint, <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/directory/exhibits/default.aspx>; or viewing our traditional website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/distributioncenter.



Photo Contest



2nd place - **Carlos Javier Torres**, Civil Engineering Tech, WRP TEAM -- *Barred Owl (Strix varia) shot at the Stokes WRP.*



First Place - **Wayne Wiggs**, Soil Conservationist, Bartow FO -- *Sunrise on the Turkey Creek WRP.*

3rd place - **Chris Sheahan**, Soil Conservationist, PMC -- *Gaillardia flower.*



USDA Advises on Discrimination Cases

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials were in Florida in April publicizing the new USDA program to address discrimination claims by women and Hispanic farmers. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Fred Pfaeffle, spoke with farmers in Kissimmee and south Miami-Dade County about the program.

During the meetings farmers were given information on how to apply for a settlement if they can prove they were denied a loan or received unfavorable terms because of discrimination.



Nga Watts, acting area conservationist (in the white shirt), represented NRCS and Carlos Suarez at the Kissimmee meeting.

Employee News



Ed Wright, left, is given a retirement congratulatory letter from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack by Carlos Suarez during his farewell dinner.



Tessa Chadwick, left, and Yvonne Magnuson hug at their joint farewell party at the State Office.



The NRCS family lost a beloved former employee on May 19th. Clarence Maura, retired Brooksville Plant Materials Center Manager passed away. Above is a picture taken at our Earth Day event at the PMC in April. It was the last time many of us saw Clarence. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Personnel Actions

February - April

New/Promotions/Changes

- 👤 Andy Hopkin, Reassigned to 454 series, Rangeland Management Specialist, Marianna AO
- 👤 Zakia Williams, Promotion, Natural Resource Specialist, GS-401-11, Easements-SO
- 👤 J'Que Jones, Promotion-Career, Engineer, GS-890-7, Plant City SC
- 👤 Beverly Jamerson, Promotion-Accretion of Duties, Prog Specialist, GS-301-11, Programs-SO
- 👤 Christopher Halfpap, Promotion - Career, Soil Con Technician, GS-458-06, RPB SC
- 👤 Dan Schabilion, Promotion-Career, District Conservationist, GS-457-12, Wauchula SC
- 👤 Amy Moore, Promotion-Career, GS-457-7, Soil Conservationist, Palmetto AO

Leaving/Retired

- 👤 Ed Wright, Retirement, ASTC (EASM), SO
- 👤 Yvonne Magnuson, Detail to NEDC, Secretary, SO
- 👤 Tessa Chadwick, ASTC Operations transfer to NRCS Illinois

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars

- ✓ June 14 -- Flag Day
- ✓ June 20 - 26 - National Pollinator Week
- ✓ July 4 -- Independence Day
- ✓ August 12 - 13 -- AFCD Annual meeting
- ✓ Sept.- 15 – Oct. 15 Hispanic Heritage Month
- ✓ Oct. – Disability Awareness Month





Tips for Overcoming Your Fear of Public Speaking

1. Remember: Your audience wants you to succeed; they are almost always on your side.
2. Think of public speaking as an opportunity--not a chore.
3. It isn't a speech, It's an opportunity to share information you have with those who have an interest in it.
4. Assume you will do all right, and you probably will. Assume you will fail, and you probably will.
5. Know your subject well and thoroughly prepare yourself to talk about it.
6. Control nervous responses: Quaking hands--use them constructively with natural gestures and props, Quaking voice--take a deep breath or a sip of water.
7. Channel your nervousness into enthusiasm; if your nervousness is apparent, joke about it to ease the tension.
8. Rehearse and time your speech (with a friend, tape recorder, and/or mirror).
9. Dress at least as well as you think your audience will. Looking more casual than your audience will work against your self-confidence and detract from your credibility.
10. Have a written outline handy in case your mind goes blank.
11. Fake eye contact if you must (look at hairlines or mouths instead).
12. Have a glass of water handy. You can't talk well when your mouth is dry, and your audience will notice.
13. Don't sweat small mistakes--everyone makes them, even experienced broadcasters.
14. Afterwards, ask selected listeners for sincere feedback. People don't usually like to force it on you, but they like to be asked. Then attempt to incorporate this feedback into your next speech.
15. Seek out and accept every opportunity to speak before an audience. It does get easier over time--and for many, even enjoyable.



The Original NRCS Fleet

This truck was used in Wisconsin in 1933 when the Soil Erosion Service was in the Department of Interior, before we became the Soil Conservation Service in 1935.

Don't Forget to Submit Your Photos for the Next Photo Contest

The contest is open to all employees of Florida NRCS and SWCD staffs. Submissions should be digital pictures at least 150 ppi. Photos must be taken in Florida and should include one or more of the following elements: soil, water, air, plants, animals, and/or employees. They can not be photos previously used by NRCS. When submitting photos include your name, contact information, and detailed information about the photo and subject matter (location, name, title, date taken, event, etc.) See rules sheet for more information.



Send questions, comments or contributions to:

Gail Hendricks
FOCUS Editor
NRCS Public Affairs Staff

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P.O. Box 141510
Gainesville, Fl. 32614

gail.hendricks@fl.usda.gov

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