

## Marion County Students Learn about Trees

As the days start to warm and trees begin to bud, thoughts turn to spring-except in Marion County, where thoughts turn to the 4th Grade Tree Poster Contest. This year heralds the seventh year that the Marion County Soil Conservation District (SCD) has sponsored the contest. Early each spring, poster boards and information on the benefits of trees are distributed to the 400 fourth graders across Marion County. This event is funded through the SCD's annual Tree Day sale of ornamental and fruit trees.

The theme each year is "What Trees Mean To Me". The response from the students has been tremendous with about 350 posters turned in each year. These young minds are focused, at least for a few hours, on the significance that trees and their many by-products play in our everyday lives. This experience also opens their eyes to the beauty of nature that they often take for granted.

NRCS District Conservationist, Dewitt Simerly, and SCD Office Manager, Chris Gass, can't wait to see what new ideas the children come up with each year. The students are very creative and their ideas are often quite humorous.

Each class winner receives a special dark green t-shirt with a picture of an animated earth planting a tree in the ground with the caption "Help Our Earth – Plant A Tree". Each school winner also receives \$25 with the county winner receiving \$50.

The Marion County Soil Conservation District believes that each child that participates is a winner, and that each of us will reap the rewards of this conservation program for generations to come.



*Poster winners from Whitwell*



*Class winners from Jasper Elementary*



*Poster winners from South Pittsburg with County Winner in Center*