



NRCS Alabama Current Developments

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From the State Conservationist - Gary Kobylski

"That which we persist in doing becomes easier, not that the task itself has become easier, but that our ability to perform it has improved." – Ralph Waldo Emerson



As the air cools and the days shorten, we are able to take a look back at the past fiscal year. As I reflect, I can proudly say that all of our performance goals for Fiscal Year 2008 were met and exceeded. Alabama NRCS employees continue to excel and I appreciate the dedication and hard work each of you endeavor to perform.

As we look back at the job we've done, let's also look at where we can still improve. Making it a habit to think not of how well we have done but how we could do better will lead us to consistent improvements in our ability to serve the people of Alabama and this great nation.

During this holiday season, we should all give thanks for the great opportunities we have been given. I wish each of you and your family safe, happy, and healthy holidays. I know there are great things in store for us.

Keep up the great work and hold on to your passion for "Helping People Help the Land!"

NRCS Recognizes Poarch Band of Creek Indians for Conservation Partnership

On December 3, members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians met in Auburn for an informational meeting between the Tribe and NRCS. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is the only federally recognized Indian Tribe in the state of Alabama

State Conservationist (STC) Gary Kobylski presented Chairman Buford Rolin with an oil painting of Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve in recognition of the Poarch Creek Indians' commitment and dedication to conserving natural resources in partnership with Alabama NRCS.

The portrait was painted by Tribal member Lori Sawyer and depicts Magnolia Branch and life on the reservation near Atmore, Alabama. Sawyer's painting won national recognition and was used for the National NRCS 2006 American Indian Heritage Month Poster.



Chairman Buford Rolin is presented an original oil painting of the NRCS 2006 American Indian Heritage Month Poster by STC Gary Kobylski.

Bay Minette DC Larry Morris Named 2008 Jerry L. Johnson Award Recipient

By Julie B. Yates, Director of Communications, Marketing, and Outreach, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Larry Morris, District Conservationist with NRCS, Bay Minette, Alabama, was honored at the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Annual Meeting as the recipient of the Jerry L. Johnson Award for excellence in public service through family, employment, profession, and community. Morris was selected for his contributions to community through volunteer work and church activities, and for his leadership in soil and water conservation activities in Alabama. The award carries a stipend of \$1,000 which is donated to a charity of the recipient's choice in their honor.

Morris is actively involved in the First United Methodist Church of Bay Minette, the Gulf Coast Clean Water Partnership, Weeks Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee, Baldwin County Cattlemen's Association, and the Soil and Water Conservation Society. He has also been actively involved with C.A.S.T. for kids, an organization that enables disabled and disadvantaged children to be paired with volunteers for a day of fishing.

Morris is a life-long conservationist and true steward of the land. He lives by the agency's motto of "Helping People Help the Land." The landowners and farmers in Baldwin County have great respect for his knowledge and expertise. The fruits of his career are visible throughout the county in the form



District Conservationist Larry Morris was nominated for the Jerry L. Johnson Award by co-worker Rhonda Bryars. (l to r) Lance Morris, Rhonda Bryars, Leila and Larry Morris, and Kane Morris.

of conservation, and wildlife and forestry practices which have been applied on the land.

Much like Jerry Johnson, for whom the award is named, Larry Morris is a man of integrity who makes a positive impact on those he comes in contact with.

The Jerry L. Johnson Award was established in 2005 and is funded by the Bradley/Murphy Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Trust.

The selection committee is comprised of representatives from the Bradley/Murphy Trust, the Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, AACD, and NRCS.

TSP Named Southeastern Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Kenneth Johnson of Andalusia was recognized by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) as Wildlife Biologist of the Year. Johnson works with NRCS as a technical service provider (TSP) through a cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and serves as Supervising Wildlife Biologist with ADCNR's Wildlife Habitat Improvement Unit.

As a TSP, Johnson assists landowners participating in Farm Bill programs with developing wildlife management plans, installing conservation practices, and developing wildlife habitats.

He is a certified Wildlife Biologist and received his bachelor's degree in Wildlife Sciences from Auburn University. Johnson has worked with ADCNR since 1974.

SEAFWA recognizes one person from its 17 member organizations once annually as the Wildlife Biologist of the Year, the association's most prestigious wildlife award.

"I am delighted and honored to receive this award," said Johnson. "It is meaningful because it came from the SEAFWA, the very people that I have worked with and identified with for the last 35 years."

Johnson will retire from the ADCNR on January 1, 2009.



Johnson (center) with ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director Corky Pugh (left) and ADCNR Wildlife Section Chief Gary Moody (right)

Congratulations Retirees!



Outreach Coordinator Andrew Williams will retire on January 2, 2009, after 34 years with the NRCS.

Crenshaw County District Conservationist Jack Jones retires after 41 years of service, effective January 2, 2009.

State Resource Conservationist Bill Hughes finishes 34 years with the NRCS with his retirement on January 2, 2009.

Ala-Tom RC&D Coordinator Norman Burton will retire on January 2, 2009, after 33 years of service.



Lowndes County Soil Conservation Technician Bobby Gates will retire on January 2, 2009, after 43 years of service.



North Team Administrative Coordinator Regina Lumpkins retired on August 1, 2008, after 32 years with the NRCS.



Dallas County Soil Conservation Technician James C. Reeves concludes 30 years of service with the NRCS with his retirement on January 2, 2009.

Thank you for your contributions to the success of the Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Earth Team Volunteers Honored During AACD Annual Meeting



The Cullman County SWCD received the Alabama Earth Team NACD Partnership Award.



Ben Burton of Lee County was recognized as the Alabama Earth Team Individual Award winner.



The Tombigbee RC&D was recognized as the Alabama Earth Team RC&D Partnership Award recipient.



The Sumter/Marengo Water Festival Group received the Alabama Earth Team Group Award.

Williams Honored by Indian Affairs Commission



Eloise Josey, Executive Director of the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission, recognizes NRCS Outreach Coordinator Andrew Williams for his years of service assisting with tribal concerns and issues.

Alabama Nominees for Lloyd Wright Small Farmer Award Place Second Nationally

Roy and Barbara Shipman of Barbour County were selected earlier this year to represent Alabama

as nominees for the Lloyd Wright Small Farmer Award. The award is given by the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees.

The Shipmans placed second in the competition and were recognized at an awards luncheon on December 9 in Atlanta, Georgia.



Barbara and Roy Shipman on their farm near Clio.

Clear Water Alabama Field Day Highlights Erosion and Sediment Control Practices

By Matthew D. Collins,
Communications Specialist,
NRCS, Auburn, AL

The Erosion and Sediment Control Partnership held its 2008 Clear Water Alabama Field Day in Bessemer. Held on September 18, the site visits included stops at the Colonial Promenade Shopping Center of Bessemer, Jess Lanier High School construction site, and the Cedar Creek and Tannehill Preserve subdivisions, both of which are former golf courses in the process of being transformed into residential space. The site visits highlighted several erosion and sediment practices that minimize the ecological impacts from property development.

The Tannehill Preserve subdivision visit showcased its low-impact planned urban development that preserves wildlife habitat as well as soil and water quality. Bottomless culverts were installed to allow roadways to pass through the development without adversely affecting the ecology of the streams. The roadways are also narrower than standard public



Field day participants sit atop one of the bottomless culverts at Tannehill Preserve.

roads, and where sidewalks are present, they are built only on one side of the road.

Field day participants also visited the site of a bottomless culvert in a different setting at the



Earl Norton of the Alabama SWCC explains the conservation practices put to use at the Colonial Promenade Shopping Center in Bessemer.

Colonial Promenade Shopping Center in Bessemer. At one of the back entrances to the shopping center, a bottomless culvert is being used in conjunction with a stilling basin and sediment barrier for a discharge pipe to preserve the stream running next to the shopping center. The culvert's innovative design allows traffic to use the entrance over the creek without disrupting the creek's ecosystem. The sediment barrier and stilling basin for the discharge pipe filters and slows the discharge flow from the shopping center's drainage. The discharge may then enter the creek without having a negative impact on the flow of the creek.

At the future location of Jess Lanier High School, presenters discussed the use of erosion control practices on construction sites. Examples of hydro mulch, erosion control blankets, and turf reinforcement mats were shown to field day participants as presenters explained their proper installation and usage. The erosion control practices were also tied into discussions of permanent seeding practices and pest controls issues to consider when establishing a permanent grass or vegetative cover.

The Clear Water Alabama Field Day included many presentations from private firms working with erosion and sediment control practices as well as representatives from the Alabama Department of Transportation, Auburn University, the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and NRCS.

New Sediment Basin Demonstrated at Field Day

by Perry Oakes, State Conservation Engineer, NRCS, Auburn, AL

As part of this "roll-out" effort at the recent Clear Water Alabama Field Days, a sediment basin was designed and constructed with new technology. The new basin design utilizes skimmer, baffle, and polyacrylamide technology developed through research at North Carolina State University.

This basin was the first built in Alabama that utilized the new technology. Several NRCS employees were involved in the design, layout, and construction of the basin.

Construction on the demonstration basin was completed just a few days before Tropical Storm Fay brought over six inches of rainfall to the area. The basin performed perfectly, with turbidity levels reduced more than 95 percent.

Look for these type basins to soon be used on construction sites in Alabama and remember that NRCS played a big part in demonstrating this technology.



NRCS personnel assist in the construction of the sediment basin demonstrated at the Clear Water Alabama Field Day.



The sediment basin at Cedar Creek subdivision filled to capacity after the heavy rainfall from Tropical Storm Fay. The difference in turbidity is visible as the water flows from the inlet off to the left of the picture to the skimmer at the right.

USDA Secretary Speaks at Federation of Southern Cooperatives Anniversary

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Alabama NRCS state and field staff attended the Federation of Southern Cooperatives 41st Anniversary on August 15 in Epes, Alabama. Staff members were able to meet and greet existing and potential new customers interested in USDA programs. Alabama NRCS staffed a display and discussed items of interest with participants at the event.

Ed Schafer, Secretary for the United States Department of Agriculture, spoke about the new Farm Bill and how the Federation took a very active roll in its development. The Secretary mentioned that though the Federation's roots may be in the south their leadership was felt on the national

level through farm policy and programs, perhaps more than ever with the 2008 Farm Bill. Schafer stated that improving programs and support for small, limited resource, and beginning farmers/ranchers has been a priority of the administration.

Schafer also mentioned the Small Scale Farmer Initiative, which was implemented in 2005. He talked about the success stories of this program and how it brought cost-effective conservation practices to the underserved producers.

Secretary Schafer gave a brief overview of the new Farm Bill. He said, "As conservationists with Alabama NRCS, we all have shared beneficial and successful stories on how the Initiative Program enhanced producer's operations statewide. During this event, one of our technical service providers shared with me the success story of an EQIP contract. To make it brief, this

client installed micro-irrigation through funds received through EQIP. His production level has increased and he now hires labor to keep up with the harvest. My heart as a conservationist was overjoyed to hear the story. Job well done my fellow conservationists. Working together we can make a difference."

In his closing comments, Schafer said, "The opportunity is there, but we must push harder and find more creative solutions to make the opportunities of this nation available to everyone."



Agricultural Outreach Liaison Alice Love with Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer.

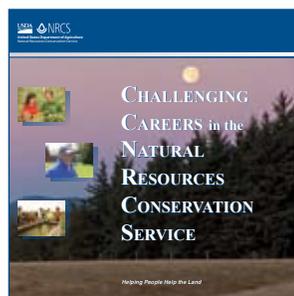
Alabama NRCS Employee Highlighted in National Brochure

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs Assistant, NRCS, Auburn, AL

It is exciting when you know someone who receives national attention. We felt that way when James Currington, District Conservationist in Geneva County, was featured in the new NRCS Challenging Careers brochure.

The Careers brochure briefly describes the agency history, mission, goals, employee benefits, volunteer program, and in more detail, the conservation career opportunities in NRCS along with images and quotes by eight employees serving in the various disciplines, including James Currington on page 6.

If you have not seen a copy of the brochure, check it out on the national NRCS website at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/employment.html



"My greatest reward with NRCS is to see the smiles on producers' faces when they get approved for conservation practices...I believe this is the true meaning of the NRCS Mission Statement—Helping People Help the Land."

*James Currington
District Conservationist
Alabama*

Geneva County District Conservationist James Currington is featured in the "Challenging Careers in the Natural Resources Conservation Service" brochure.

We have a limited supply of the brochure at the state office. Field offices may order larger quantities from LANDCARE (1-888-LANDCARE) at no charge.

James Currington and Terry Williamson were the Alabama featured employees for the new "Conservation - Our Purpose...Our Passion" national campaign. The information is now on the Alabama NRCS site:

www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/news/ourpurpose/employees/index.html

UPRM Students Learn About Career Possibilities with NRCS

By Evelyn Bostick, Human Resources Assistant, NRCS, Auburn, AL

The 2008 Puerto Rico Career Fair at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez (UPRM) was held September 24-27. Over 105 companies recruited UPRM students on Friday and Saturday. Eight NRCS employees and two UPRM student volunteers who were former NRCS student trainees made up the NRCS Recruiting Team.

Civil Engineering student Coralís Conty, student trainee from Wisconsin; and Omayra Ortiz, agronomy and soils student volunteer, who served as an Alabama student trainee during summers of 2006 and 2007, volunteered to scan resumes and transcripts.

Seventy-two students majoring in the areas of agronomy, horticulture, soil science, and engineering were interviewed.

Three presentations were conducted Wednesday and Thursday for engineering and agricultural science students. The presentations provided the students information about the NRCS mission and



The NRCS Recruiting Team (l to r): (front row) Manuel Matos, Area Resource Soil Scientist, Recruiting Team Leader, Minnesota; Evelyn Bostick, Human Resources Assistant, Alabama; Emily Bonilla, Soil Conservationist, North Dakota; David Drewry, Civil Engineer, Georgia; Brunilda Velez, Program Specialist, Wisconsin; (back row) Pete Bostick, Alabama Earth Team Volunteer; Omar Vega, GIS Specialist, Minnesota; and Carlos Morganti, State Agronomist, Puerto Rico.

promoted NRCS career opportunities.

The team members also distributed booklets about the more than 50 UPRM graduates and students that work for NRCS. The Communications, Marketing, and Outreach staff (formerly Public Affairs) in Alabama assisted in creating and producing the booklets.

Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences Region III Career Fair

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Region III hosted its annual workshop at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. The theme for this year's workshop was "Expanding Our Horizons, Embracing the Challenge and Preparing for the Future."

MANRRS was established in 1982 by a graduate student at Michigan State University. This individual had a vision to develop

a support network in the field of agricultural sciences. This network has grown into 6 regions, with more than 70 chapters, 1,200 members and over 25 supporters and sponsors, including NRCS as well as other USDA agencies and organizations. Region III MANRRS consist of nine chapters across the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

University students from several states were present to seek employment opportunities. Agricultural Outreach Liaison Alice Love met with students who expressed a desire to become a member of the Alabama NRCS team.

Lenora Haynes, USDA Liaison

at Tuskegee University, gave a presentation and demonstration on how to use the job search options on the USDA website. She gave student's specific information relating to completing an application online. Examples of wide and limited vacancy announcement searches were demonstrated. Haynes also presented each chapter an information package about her demonstration on using the USDA Job Search website.

The MANRRS National 24th Annual Career Fair and Training Conference is scheduled to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, March 26-28, 2009.

CIG Sorghum-Sudan Grass Evaluation Field Day

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison, NRCS, Auburn, AL

On July 24, Tuskegee University hosted a second field day at the Sundown Ranch in Perry County, Alabama. This field day was a continuation of the Sorghum-Sudan grass evaluation using chicken litter under irrigated conditions. The demonstration was funded through the Alabama NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant Program (CIG).

The demonstration showed the use of chicken litter, also called broiler litter, on Sorghum-Sudan Grass. It is indicated that mixing Sorghum-Sudan grass with chicken litter has a high nutrient value, but testing is needed prior to feeding the grass to livestock.

Using boiler litter is an effective and environmentally friendly method of recycling essential nutrients. Prior to application, litter and soil analysis



The field day demonstrated the use of broiler litter with a micro-irrigation system that could be easily moved to irrigate many areas.

should be conducted to determine the fertility level of the soil and nutrient content in the litter.

For the demonstration, excess litter was spread on Jacob Waddy's vegetables at a rate of ten tons per acre. His vegetables are grown using micro-irrigation at a watering rate of six hours per zone twice a week. With the added litter, Waddy noticed an increase in plant (corn) height. No fertilizer was added to the irrigation system due to safety concerns, specifically the potential of over fertilization.

At the demonstration, conservation partners gave brief comments. Ben Moore, Alabama NRCS Conservation Agronomist, assisted with the evaluation, addressing agronomic issues. Andrew Williams, Alabama NRCS Outreach Coordinator, worked with Dr. Rhoden from Tuskegee University to show how forages could be beneficial to small farm operations. Jeff Allred, Alabama NRCS North Team Resource Engineer, spoke about irrigation systems and the importance of filters and fertilizer applicators attachments.

State Technical Committee Meeting

The State Technical Committee met at the state office in Auburn on August 21 and received overviews of some of the financial assistance and Farm Bill programs offered by NRCS.



State Resource Conservationist Bill Hughes speaks to the State Technical Committee.

NRCS staff informed the committee of how unusual FY2008 was for some Farm Bill programs with the delay in the passing of the 2008 Farm Bill. Despite the unusual circumstances, Alabama received a record setting \$15 million in EQIP funds and obligated over 1,700 contracts.

The EQIP Forest Health Initiative (FHI) was introduced to Alabama this year, which encourages landowners to manage and improve woodland areas. NRCS also received record numbers of applications for CIG. Two national CIG's have been approved, and \$90,000 set aside for two more state CIG's.

Committee members were given an overview of the technical service providers program and how it facilitates cooperative efforts between partner organizations. It was suggested that a spring meeting be planned to update the committee on new Farm Bill rules that are still being developed.

Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee Named Conservation Organization of the Year

By Annette Spivey, Soil Conservation Technician, NRCS, Alexander City, AL

In August, the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee (CCFPC) received one of the most prestigious awards presented by the Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF) at the AWF Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards Banquet when the committee was named Conservation Organization of the Year. Eleven members of the CCFPC attended the event.

The CCFPC is composed of agency personnel, private consultants, and private landowners, all concerned with conserving the natural resources of Coosa County.

The committee promotes forestry and natural resource conservation through annual conservation and forestry education tours, updating and distributing its Multiple-Use Managers Guide for landowners, working with potential TREASURE Forest (TF) candidates, hosting annual TF landowners' banquet, promoting conservation



Members of the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee: (l to r) (front row) Doug McConnell, Sara Baldwin, Joel Glover, Raymond Shaw, Annette Spivey, Ericha Nix, (back row) Brian Walker, Blake Kelley, Tom Reichert, Andy Baril, and Roger Vines

education, and distributing resource information to schools.

The award commended the CCFPC and Coosa County for having the largest number of TREASURE Forests in the State of Alabama. At the time of the award presentation, Coosa County had 105 landowners participating with a total of 32,317 acres of certified TREASURE Forests.

Diamond "S" Farm Demonstration Tour

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs Assistant, NRCS, Auburn, AL

A farm tour was held at the Thornton Stanley Diamond "S" Farm in Morgan County on October 8. The tour highlighted a 40 acre Fescue and Bermuda pasture that Mr. Stanley subdivided into nine paddocks using high-tensile electric fencing.

Water troughs were installed in each paddock, allowing cattle to travel less than 600 feet to water from anywhere in the paddock. These travel paths help evenly distribute the cattle manure, thus reducing the need for commercial fertilizer. The system also helps reduce soil erosion and nutrient rich runoff from entering the streams that run through the area.

A single water reel traveling gun uses water from four small reservoirs to irrigate. The reservoirs and livestock water troughs

are supplied by a common pipeline from two wells.

Additional practices used on the farm, such as heavy use treatment area, stream crossings, fencing, watering troughs, pasture planting, exclusion fencing, water wells, and pest management, were designed and installed according to an NRCS conservation plan.

Mr. Stanley's irrigated managed grazing system was established using 319 Program Demonstration funds from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and technical assistance from Brian Brown, Project Leader of the Catoco Creek Watershed Project, and the Morgan County SWCD/NRCS staff.

The event included speakers from Morgan County SWCD, Morgan County Commission, Flint



Thornton Stanley and Assistant State Conservationist for Programs Steve Musser with the aerial view map of Stanley's grazing plan.

Creek Watershed Conservancy District, EPA, ADEM, NRCS, Alabama Clean Water Partnership Tennessee River Basin, and the Catoco Creek Watershed who helped to inform the attendees about the technical aspects of the system.

The tour concluded with a lunch provided by the Alabama Farmer's Federation and prepared by the Morgan County Cattleman's Association.

Bullock County Group Hosts Youth in Agriculture Workshop

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison,
NRCS, Auburn, AL

The Dynamic Women Leadership Development of Bullock County, Alabama, hosted a Youth in Agriculture Workshop on July 19, in Union Springs, Alabama. The purpose was to educate area youth in agricultural entrepreneurship. Representatives from various areas of conservation were available for this event.

Attendees ranged in age from eight to fifteen and were familiar with farming operations, specifically vegetables and livestock.

Alice Love represented Alabama NRCS as one of the guest speakers at the workshop. Love informed the youth of the importance of preserving our natural resources through being good stewards of the environment. The youth were informed of USDA-NRCS conservation practices that could be used in conjunction with projects established through the Farm Service Agency Youth Loan Program.

Many of the attendees had participated in 4-H projects, such as raising goats and vegetables. The youth were also introduced to rabbit and earthworm production and were shown many ways to be innovative in the arena of agriculture.

An on-site demonstration informed participants on how to start an incubation unit for earthworm production. Materials used for this demonstration were very simple and inexpensive.

Alabama A&M Small Research Center Hosts Youth and Women-In-Agriculture Workshop

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison,
NRCS, Auburn, AL

Alabama NRCS Staff Alice Love and Andrew Williams participated in the Youth and Women-In-Agriculture Workshop in Birmingham, Alabama, in June. This workshop was hosted by the Alabama A&M University Small Research Center and included agencies and organizations targeting women and youth in various areas of agriculture and agribusiness. Presenters discussed items such as estate planning, grant writing, marketing, and government programs and other topics that were beneficial to attendees.

Alabama NRCS personnel staffed a display highlighting programs and the new Farm Bill. During the panel discussion session, the staff presented detailed information about the programs offered through USDA-NRCS.

Participants learned about eligibility and criteria for easement programs such as the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). Educational materials were provided to participants at the NRCS display along with contact information for Alabama NRCS/SWCD offices.

Autauga Committee Receives Award



The Autauga County Natural Resources Committee (former County Forestry Planning Committee) received the 2nd Place State Natural Resource Council Award. The award was presented at the regional landowner forest tour event October 1st in Conecuh County.

Forestry Field Day Held in Clay County

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs Assistant, NRCS, Auburn, AL

A Regional Forestry Field Day was held in Clay County on Saturday, October 18 at the TREASURE Forest of John Osborn, the winner of the 2007 Helene Mosley Award. Jerry and Genelle Brown were the hosts for the field day in Goodwater, Alabama. The attendees loaded on trailers to proceed to the first stop on the field day tour.

Forestry consultant Lehman Bass discussed forest management and the advantages of thinning, burning, and pest management. The Osborn TREASURE Forest was a prime example of what good forest management should look like.

The attendees then met with Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Wildlife Biologist Joel Glover to view an excellent wildlife management food plot.

Tallapoosa County Narcotics Task Force representative John McKelvey presented a "Danger in the Woods" demonstration. McKelvey displayed common household products that, if found in the woods, could indicate the presence of a methamphetamine lab.



John McKelvey from the Tallapoosa County Narcotics Task Force shows field day participants what materials could indicate the presence of an active meth lab.



Field day participants were able to ride between many of the demonstration sites in trailers provided by the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee, the Alabama Farmers Federation Forestry Committee, and others.

Some of the items displayed were pill blister packages from over-the-counter cold, diet or allergy remedies; empty containers from white gas, ether, starting fluids, lye, drain openers, paint thinner, acetone, and alcohol; packaging from Epsom or rock salt; and other items.

McKelvey strongly advised that if these items are found in the woods, that you leave the site at once and report it, noting that some meth labs have to be handled by hazardous material clean-up teams.

After the walk back through the woods, the attendees reloaded the trailers and rode down the county road to the next site to view some newly planted longleaf pines. Consultant Forester Earl Smith talked with the group about longleaf pine management.

The next stop was at a country church where local researcher Don East gave a presentation about the Native

American history of the area. The program ended with presentation of awards for the 2008 Helene Mosley winner, Tree Farmer of the Year, National 4-H Forestry Judging Team, and the Alabama Farm of Distinction.

The day's events ended back at the Brown farm for a barbecue lunch and door prizes. The event was sponsored by the State Tree Farm Committee, the Alabama Natural Resources Council, and the Clay County Forestry Planning Committee.



John Osborn (second from left) walks with field day attendees between stops on the field day tour.

New Smithsonian Exhibit Includes Alabama State Soil

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison, NRCS, Auburn, AL

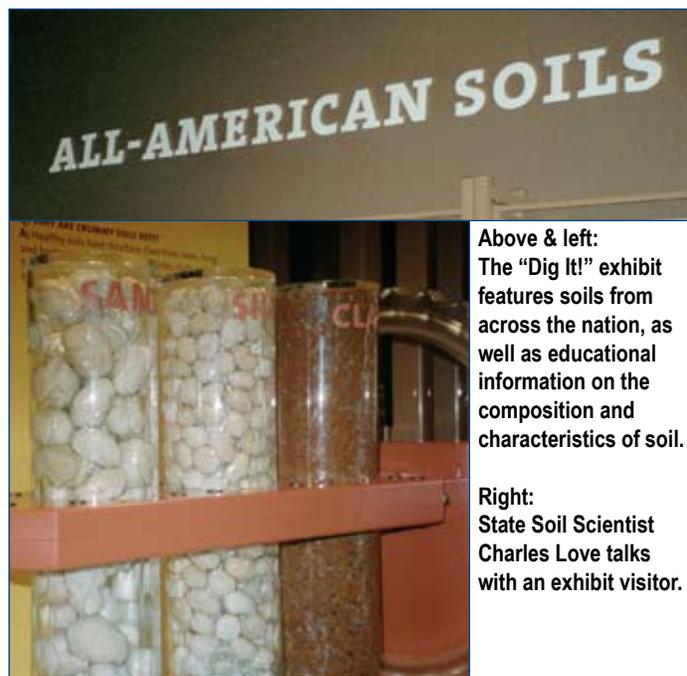
The Alabama State Soil monolith is on exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. The "Dig It!" exhibit, which includes soil monoliths from all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, will be on display until January 2010 before traveling to ten museums across the country through 2013.

The soil monoliths illustrate to museum visitors the immense variety and make up of soils across the nation.

"Bama" Soil was officially designated the state soil of Alabama by the State Legislature on April 22, 1997. It is present in 26 counties across western, central and southern areas of the state, making up more than 360,000 acres.



Bama Fine Sandy Loam was officially designated the state soil of Alabama by the State Legislature in 1997.



Above & left: The "Dig It!" exhibit features soils from across the nation, as well as educational information on the composition and characteristics of soil.

Right: State Soil Scientist Charles Love talks with an exhibit visitor.

Blount County SWCD Hosts FFA Land Judging Contest

By Mark Butler, Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator

The 2008 Blount County land judging contest was held at the farm of Mr. Thomas Baty on September 30. Five FFA teams took part in the event: Appalachian High School, Cleveland High School, J.B. Pennington High School, Locust Fork High School, and Susan Moore High School.

The teams met at Locust Fork Park for lunch, furnished by Blount County SWCD, and enjoyed a short time of fellowship before going to the Baty Farm. The teams judged four sites in the competition: forestland, pastureland, cropland, and home site. With the help of employees from SWCD, NRCS, and the Alabama Forestry Commission, the contest went smoothly. Appalachian High School finished in first place, Cleveland High School in second, and Susan Moore High School finished in third.

District 4 County Commissioner Waymon Pitts and the Blount County Commission prepared the competition sites, and Resource Conservationist Tracy Cole served as the competition's judge.



The Blount County SWCD held the 2008 FFA Land Judging on Tom Baty's property in Locust Fork. Five schools participated in the event. Appalachian High School won first place. Cleveland High School won second place. Susan Moore High School won third place.



NRCS Personnel Help Make 2008 Heart of Alabama CFC a Success

The Heart of Alabama Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), which serves 15 east Alabama counties, received generous support from NRCS employees this year. A goal of \$4,283 was set for the NRCS offices in its area, including the state office. At the CFC's end, NRCS employees had given almost double that amount, with more donations still coming in.

CFC kicked off at the state office with a presentation by Allison Wetherbee, Director of Public Relations for Camp ASCCA. State office employees also held a silent auction, which earned an additional \$278 for CFC.



Allison Wetherbee receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Gary Kobylski for her presentation at the state office CFC kickoff.

Technology Training Workshop

By Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison, NRCS, Auburn, AL

A Technology Training Workshop was held at the Enterprise-Ozark Community College, July 17-18, for landowners in south Alabama. The event was hosted by Alabama NRCS and Geneva County SWCD, in cooperation with Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program.



Alice Love instructs a participant during the Technology Training Workshop at the Enterprise-Ozark Community College.

The workshop was held to enhance the attendees' awareness of computer technology. Thirty people received training free of charge. The training ranged from very basic knowledge of logging-on to using search engines and viewing websites. Participants also learned about a record keeping program developed by the Clemson University Extension Service, email accounts, and other computer tasks.

The NRCS national website was also viewed and discussed. Participants were shown how to connect to NRCS state-specific websites as well as how to access county-specific information.

SWCD/NRCS Field Offices Work Together to Promote Conservation at the North Alabama Fair

By Etta Mask, DAC, Colbert County SWCD, Tuscumbia, AL

Colbert, Franklin, and Lauderdale Counties SWCD/NRCS partnered in staffing a booth at the North Alabama Fair. From September 15 to 21, volunteers from the three counties gave their time to promote SWCD/NRCS programs.

About 100 families visited the booth each of the seven nights of the fair. Volunteers gave out candy and informational handouts and answered questions from the fair attendees. The booth also featured drawings for door prizes.



The SWCD/NRCS display at the North Alabama Fair.

NRCS/SWCD Participate in Covington County Fair

By Joshua Elliott, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, Andalusia, AL

The Covington County NRCS/SWCD personnel staffed a booth at this year's Covington County Fair. The exhibit featured pictures of activities from around the county as well as general information about the agency and conservation practices.

The booth was a great opportunity for the Covington County SWCD and NRCS to educate the fair patrons both young and old alike of the importance of conserving natural resources. The booth included conservation comic books, SWCD informational handouts, and copies of the district's newsletter.

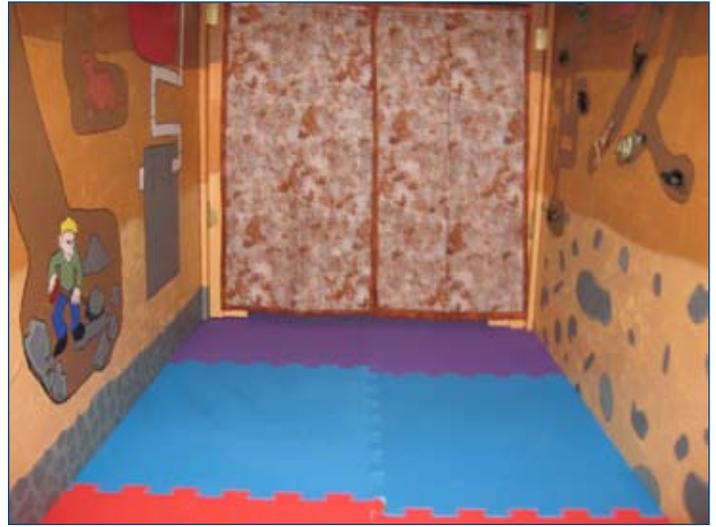


The 2008 Covington County fair was a success, hosting over 20,000 people during the week long event. The Covington County SWCD/NRCS booth received a blue ribbon for its division.

Blount County SWCD Fair Booth Features New “Soil Tunnel”



The Blount County SWCD added a new feature to their 2008 fair booth. This year's booth included a soil tunnel that educates young and old alike on soil and its properties.



Inside the soil tunnel are illustrations of soil layers and items that might be found in the soil, such as roots, tunnels, bugs, and animals. The soil tunnel will be used for educational opportunities throughout the year.

Lauderdale County SWCD/NRCS Host FFA Land Judging Contest

By Renea Dyer, District Conservationist, NRCS, Florence, AL

The Lauderdale County SWCD and NRCS held the annual Land Judging Contest on District Supervisor R.L. Behel's farm on Highway 43 in Greenhill, Alabama.

Four schools took part in the career development event. The participating schools were: Lauderdale County High School (LCHS), Lexington High School (LHS), Rogers High School (RHS), and Florence Freshman Center (FFC).

School Results

1st - Florence Freshmen Center

2nd - Rogers High School

3rd - Lauderdale County HS

Individual Results

1st - Austin Jordan (FFC)

2nd - Zack Walton (LCHS)

3rd - Leonard Lowe (FFC)



(l to r) Zack Walton (2nd place individual LCHS), Austin Jordan (1st place individual FFC), Leonard Lowe (3rd place individual FFC), and Brenda Hand (District Administrative Coordinator).



(l to r) Agriscience Teachers Dan Williams (LHS), Barry McCafferty (RHS), and Gregg Tanner (LCHS), District Supervisor R.L. Behel, and Agriscience Teacher Matt Ball (FFC).

Personnel News

Promotions

Suzanne Baucom, Secretary, Decatur, AL to
Administrative Coordinator, Decatur, AL
Matt Copeland, Soil Conservationist, Cullman, AL to
Soil Conservationist, Moulton, AL
Joshua Elliott, Soil Conservationist, Andalusia, AL
Blake Garner, Soil Conservation Technician,
Camden, AL
Daniel Goins, Soil Conservationist, Athens, AL to
Soil Conservationist, Cullman, AL
Tammy Hussey, Administrative Coordinator, Troy, AL
Amber Johnson, Soil Conservationist, Bessemer, AL to
District Conservationist, Jasper, AL
Carolyn King, Soil Conservation Technician,
Bay Minette, AL
Lawrence McGhee, Soil Scientist, Auburn, AL to
MLRA Soil Survey Leader, Auburn, AL
Anthony Keith Peters, Soil Conservation Technician,
Ozark, AL
Deryl Sharp, Soil Conservation Technician,
Huntsville, AL
Leon Wages, Soil Conservation Technician,
Andalusia, AL

Accessions

William T. Smith, Civil Engineer, Alabama Air National
Guard, Montgomery, AL to Assistant State
Conservation Engineer, Auburn, AL

Reassignments

John Burns, Soil Scientist, MLRA, Auburn, AL to
Soil Scientist, MLRA Soil Survey Office, Auburn, AL
Sylvia Long, Soil Survey Project Leader, MLRA Soil
Survey Project Office, Tuscaloosa, AL to Soil
Scientist, MLRA Soil Survey Office, Auburn, AL
Alice Love, Soil Conservationist, Program Services Staff,
Auburn, AL to Agricultural Outreach Liaison,
Communications, Marketing, and Outreach Staff,
Auburn, AL
James Mason, Soil Survey Project Leader, MLRA Soil
Survey Project Office, Hayneville, AL to Soil
Scientist, MLRA Soil Survey Office, Auburn, AL
Teresa Paglione, Archeologist, Program Services Staff,
Auburn, AL to Archeologist, Resource Conservation
Staff, Auburn, AL
Jeff Thurmond, Wildlife Biologist, Resource
Conservation Staff, Auburn, AL to Wildlife Biologist,
Program Services Staff, Auburn, AL
Andrew Williams, Outreach Coordinator, Program
Services Staff, Auburn, AL to Outreach Coordinator,
Communications, Marketing, and Outreach Staff,
Auburn, AL

Interns

Latravis Brazil, Soil Scientist, Soil Survey Project Office,
Normal, AL, Alabama A&M University

Calendar Notes

• January

Additional WRP Workshops to be held in Hartford and Montgomery

NRCS will hold additional WRP workshops in Hartford, Montgomery, and other locations beginning in January. Dates, times, and additional locations will be announced later. Visit the NRCS Alabama website for more details:

<http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp>

• Continuous Program Sign-ups:

WHIP

State Conservationist Gary Kobylski has announced a continuous sign-up for WHIP. Interested landowners should contact their local NRCS Field Office for more information or to begin the sign-up process.

EQIP

State Conservationist Gary Kobylski has announced a continuous sign-up for EQIP. Interested landowners should contact their local NRCS Field Office for more information or to begin the sign-up process.

• Next Issue

The deadline for items for the next edition of *Current Developments* is January 16. Early submissions are encouraged and appreciated, and potential online success stories and news releases are welcome for submission anytime.

Public Affairs is now Communications, Marketing, and Outreach (CMO), but the staff may still be contacted with questions or submissions by email through ug-AL-nrcs-publicinfo.

NRCS Alabama Current Developments Fall 2008

Gary Kobylski
State Conservationist

Julie Yates
Director of Communications,
Marketing, and Outreach

Fay Garner
Public Affairs Assistant

Matthew D. Collins
Communications Specialist

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Partners Recognized for Cooperative Effort on Little New River Site #2 Repair

Last year, much work was done to repair the watershed structure at Little New River Site #2 in Marion County. Damage to the drainage system had caused water levels behind the dam to rise beyond safe levels, and action was required to prevent a catastrophic failure of the structure. Debris blocking the drainage riser was removed in September of last year, restoring the water behind the structure to a safer level.

Additional repairs have since been made to the structure to ensure its proper function. Thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Marion County SWCD, the Marion County Commission, and the technical assistance of NRCS personnel, the principal spillway riser was repaired before any catastrophic failure took place.

On Tuesday, August 26, State Conservationist Gary Kobylski and State Conservation Engineer Perry Oakes meet with NRCS personnel, representatives of the Marion County SWCD, and Marion County Commissioners to thank them for their efforts



(l to r) Marion County SWCD District Administrative Coordinator Kelly Sumarel, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (North Team) Judy Hill, State Conservationist Gary Kobylski, State Conservation Engineer Perry Oakes, Marion County District Conservationist Wade Hill, and Marion County Soil Conservation Technician Pamela Skidmore.

to resolve the safety issues with the site. Kobylski also presented the partners in this project with Certificates of Appreciation for their contributions to the repair efforts. The site has been returned to a safe condition thanks to the joint action taken by all groups involved.



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

P. O. Box 311

3381 Skyway Drive

Auburn, AL 36831-0311

1-800-342-9893