

NOPBNRCSE



"The Alabama Link"

February 2007

NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the President of the Alabama Chapter

Since this is my first address of the year, I would like to say "Happy New Year" to all.

As we enter upon a new year, I cannot help but to reflect on 2006. Last year was a year of ups and downs for the Alabama Chapter. Most notable, in May of 2006, we lost one of our most beloved, faithful members, Mr. Sebastian Thomas. We still miss his physical presence terribly, but his spirit continues to live in all of our hearts.

In December 2006, we had the retirement of Mr. Johnny Trayvick from NRCS. Johnny has been and is one of the most outspoken advocates of the Organization. His dedication and activism within the Organization has been unparalleled. Congratulations on your well deserved retirement!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And we look forward to your continued support of the Organization and the Alabama Chapter.

The Alabama Chapter had many accomplishments in 2006. Here are a few of those accomplishments:

- The Alabama Chapter awarded the Alabama Chapter Annual Les Hilliard Scholarship of \$500 to Keshia D. Williams, a Senior attending Tuskegee University.
- The Alabama Chapter published three newsletters.
- Held the Alabama Chapter Annual Meeting in Clanton, Alabama: THEME "Back to the Basics – Living Off the Land."
- In conjunction with the Black Emphasis Program Manger, for Black History Month, held

a Luncheon to celebrate Black History Month. *Theme: Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social and Civic Institutions.*

- We increased membership by 25%.
- The Alabama Chapter has nominated Mr. Jacob Waddy for the 2006 LLOYD WRIGHT SMALL FARMER AWARD. Mr. Waddy received 2nd Place.
- Mr. Andrew Williams received a Professional Achievement Award for outstanding work in Outreach from the National Organization.

I wanted to say "Thank You" to all of the members and supporters of the Alabama Chapter of NOPBNRCSE. It has been my pleasure to work with such a dedicated and hard working group of people. You have made it very easy for me to serve as President.

Now, we look to a bigger and better 2007. We must build upon our successes of 2006 on into 2007. Let's continue to be innovative thinkers, planners, and motivators.

As always, continue to network and communicate with each other.

Christopher Ford
Alabama Chapter President



INSIDE

Meetings

Small Farmer Award

Black History Program

Scholarship Program

Membership

Quotes-African Americans

Being Black in the Work Force

Birthdays

Meetings

NOPBNRCSE Annual Training Conference

The 14th Annual Training Conference of the NOPBNRCSE was held December 4-8, 2006, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Conference was held at the Westin Hotel and Resorts with more than 300 registrants eager for a week of training and networking.

The theme for the week was: *“Crossroads of America: Embracing Challenges, Promoting Change, and Encouraging the Production of Fuel, Food and Fiber.”* Those in attendance for the NOPBNRCSE conference and EEO training from Alabama were Christopher Ford, Phillip Slater, Johnny Trayvick, Andrew Williams, April Hill (EEO training) and Winford Andrews (EEO training).



The training and networking opportunities provided at the conference is unprecedented. At the conference, all employees have access to meet and converse with NRCS Leadership, including Chief Lancaster, Regional Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, and a host of State Conservationists. The networking capabilities at the conference are limitless. In addition to networking, diversified training at the NOPBNRCSE conference focuses on producing well-rounded NRCS employees. Training offered at the Conference were classes on Protracts, Civil Rights in Program Delivery, Market based Conservation, and Energy – Harvesting from the Land. However, in addition to basic conservation training sessions, there were courses in Mentoring, Ethics, Rhythm of Life, Public Speaking, Eating our way to Health and Independence, and Managing Multiple Projects. The NOPBNRCSE training is beneficial, not only to the overall Agency goals, but personal development as well.

Other events on the agenda for the Conference included The Annual Lloyd Wright Black Farmer Award Luncheon, Annual Pearlre Reed Recognition and Award Banquet, Field Tour, the Fashion and Talent Show, and the Live Auction.

If it is afforded, I would highly recommend anyone, especially employees with less than 5 years experience, to attend the NOPBNRCSE training conference. You will not be disappointed!!!!!!!

*Submitted by:
Christopher Ford
Alabama Chapter President*

2006 Lloyd Wright Small Farmer Award



Jacob Waddy grew up on a small farm in South Perry County. He was one of nine children. His parents managed 175 acres of row crops and livestock.

At the age of 20, Jacob began his own farming operation where he operated the family farm and other rented properties. He worked off the farm as well as in the vegetable canning and processing and the steel production industry for about 11 years.

In 1985, he started a contracting business with McMillan Blodel planting trees, painting boundary lines and other general forestry work. At this point, he was involved very little in production agriculture.

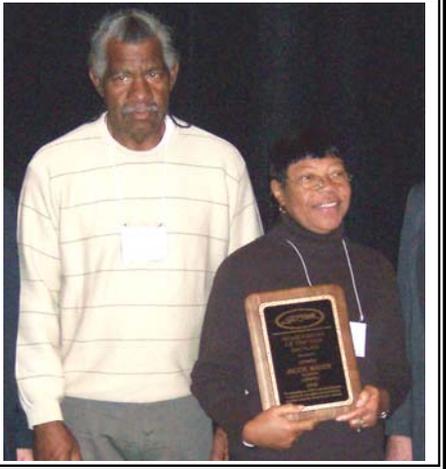
In 1995, Jacob was approached by Andrew Williams of NRCS to start a demonstration farm in the Black Belt to encourage small farmers to diversify their operations to possibly increase profitability. At this point, various partnerships such as the ALA-TOM RC&D Council, Heifer International, Tuskegee University, Alabama A&M University, and the Alabama Department of Ag and Industries came together to make this a reality. As a result, a 43 acre farm was identified on Highway 80 approximately four miles east of Uniontown, AL, as the proposed demonstration site.

The first step Jacob and partner Virginia Fikes took was to contact the NRCS Office in Perry County and develop a conservation plan for the farm. They have worked together and implemented such conservation practices as rotating grazing, vegetable production using plastic mulch and drip irrigation, woodland grazing, pasture poultry, rabbit production, meat goat production and marketing.

In 2006, the Alabama Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) nominated Jacob Waddy for the Lloyd Wright National Small Farmers Award. Jacob and Virginia were the runner ups for this award.

NRCS in Alabama wanted to further recognize Jacob and Virginia for their achievements in soil stewardship small farm preservation work that they have accomplished down through the years.

**Jacob
Waddy
and
Virginia
Fikes**



**2nd Place Winners of the NOPBNRCSE
"Lloyd Wright Small Farmer Award"
December 2006
Indianapolis, Indiana**

**PICTORIALS:
Sundown Ranch, Uniontown, AL**



**Submitted by:
Andrew Williams
State Office, Auburn, AL**

Black History Program

A Black History Program was sponsored by the State Office on February 22, 2007, in observance of "Black History Month". The theme for this year's celebration was "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the America".

Mr. Gray Kobylski, State Conservationist, welcomed everyone and gave a deep heart-felt history lesson on vital roles that Blacks played in propelling America to prominence and helped mankind worldwide. I would like to thank Gary for the extensive research on Black History.

Pastor Clifford Jones reflected back on his childhood in Mississippi, the struggles he encountered, and how Blacks have risen to challenges against great odds.

The keynote speaker, Pastor Lacomia M. Harris, Demopolis, Alabama, was introduced by Andrew Williams. As Pastor Harris started to speak, he pulled two stones from his pocket and calmness came over the room; all attention was focused on the stones. He used the stones as a reminder of how we came over, referring to the Children of Israel, who were destined to the Land of Promise, while crossing over to the promise land, they were told to reach down and pickup a stone to always be reminded of how you got over. The speaker was well received by everyone.



Pictured L-R: Herbert Ross, Pastor Harris, and Gary Kobylski.

We closed by holding hands singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing", the National Negro Hymn, words by James Weldon Johnson. Immediately following, we enjoyed a scrumptious meal. We all regained a full appreciation of the history that was never taught, but impacted us all in a direct or indirect way.

**Submitted by:
Herbert L. Ross
Black Emphasis Program Manager**

Scholarship

THE LES HILLIARD SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Scholarship Committee of the Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE is pleased to announce the 2006 "Les Hilliard" scholarship recipient.

Mr. Joe J. Owens, III, a native of Rouge Mont, NC, and a student majoring in Animal Science at Tuskegee University is being awarded a \$500 scholarship by Ms. Lenora Haynes, Liaison at Tuskegee. Congratulations Joe and keep up the good work.



The Les Hilliard Scholarship program is designed to provide a one-time monetary payment to a student pursuing a degree in agriculture, nature resources, and related sciences.

Donations for the Les Hilliard Scholarship are always welcomed and accepted. Anyone wishing to make a donation should contact:

Shirley Hall-Cole, Chairperson
Les Hilliard Scholarship Program
USDA-NRCS, State Office
3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn, AL 36830
Phone: 334-887-4546

Membership

The Alabama Chapter is still extending an invitation to anyone to become a member of our State Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE.

You must be a member of the National Organization to become a member of the State Chapter. National dues are \$45 and State dues are \$35.

Remember – membership is open to all persons.

Membership applications are available online under the Alabama Chapter's website or you may contact:

Herbert L. Ross, Chair, Membership Committee
USDA-NRCS, State Office
3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn, AL 36830
Phone: 334-887-4585

Black History Month Quotations

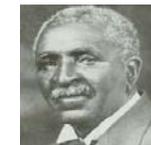
"If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world and it stands in danger of being exterminated."

- Carter G. Woodson



"Fear of something is at the root of hate for others, and hate within will eventually destroy the hater."

- George Washington Caver



"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

- Martin Luther King



"We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends."

- Mary McLeod Bethune



"Each person must live their life as a model for others."

- Rosa Parks



"Do not call for black power or green power. Call for brain power."

- Barbara Jordan

