



NRCS Alabama Current Developments

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From the State Conservationist - Gary Kobylski

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 became law on May 22, and even though the Farm Bill is still in the rule making phase, we are already preparing for the changes that are to come. While many NRCS programs have been reauthorized through 2012, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), there are also several revisions and amendments which will affect how we carry out our mission.



A part of the changes in the new Farm Bill is the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) within EQIP, which replaces the Ground and Surface Water Conservation Program. AWEP will promote ground and surface water conservation and improve water quality, both of which are of great importance in light of the drought that continues to affect much of Alabama and the Southeast.

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer has also announced that the new Farm Bill includes \$200 million in additional funding available through EQIP. This increase in funding will enable NRCS to work with more farmers and landowners in increasing and ensuring environmental quality throughout the state of Alabama and across this great nation.

As we reach the dog days of summer and look forward to the cooler evenings of the approaching autumn, it is my hope that you all take a little time to enjoy the blessings we have and appreciate the great opportunity we have been given to serve the American people by ensuring the future quality and availability of our nation's natural resources.

Aging Watershed Structures

Over 100 watershed structures (dams) were constructed in Alabama between 1960 and 2001. These structures are extremely important to Alabama's rural economy, but many watershed dams in Alabama are nearing 50-years old and have significant rehabilitation needs. Some even pose a threat to public safety.

NRCS staff conducted meetings throughout the state to educate sponsors, county engineers, and county commissioners on the need for maintenance and repair of aging watershed structures.



Watershed structures are extremely important to Alabama's rural economy.

Seeking Program Improvements

By Alice Love, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Assistant State Conservationist for Programs Steve Musser and State Office staff met with District Conservationists (DC's) from across the state to brainstorm on new ideas to enhance program delivery for EQIP and WHIP in Fiscal Year 2009.

The Programs staff sought input on issues such as batching dates, ranking tools, cost-share types, cost lists, practice restrictions/concerns, and the allocation process. DC's shared ideas they felt would be beneficial in working with clients during the EQIP and WHIP signups. The goal was to provide a user friendly tool for field office staff and clients.



Alabama NRCS state staff met with field office staff from across the state to talk about program delivery.

CIG Field Day

By Alice Love, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

More than 40 people attended a field day at the Sundown Ranch in Perry County, Alabama. The event focused on a CIG Project that NRCS awarded to Tuskegee University to evaluate Sorghum-Sudan Grass using Poultry Litter under Irrigated Conditions.

Tuskegee representatives conducting the demonstration were Dr. Errol G. Rhoden, D. Jannette Bartlett and Mr. Victor Khan, with assistance provided by Mr. Jacob Waddy, operator of the Sundown Ranch. One of the demonstrations focused on the use of winter wheat and poultry litter. The next crop to be introduced into the project will be Sorghum-Sudan Grass. Staff from Tuskegee University plan to host another public field day.

Conservation agencies and partners in attendance included representatives from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), NRCS State Office and Perry County Field Office, and ALA-TOM Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council. Each representative had the opportunity to inform participants of programs available through their agency.



Representatives from conservation agencies/partners spoke at the CIG field day.



CSP training also included field demos to inform field staff about what to look for when signing up clients.

Upper and Lower Choctawhatchee River Watershed Conservation Security Program (CSP)

By Alice Love, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

A two-day training workshop was conducted for NRCS field staff involved in the 2008 CSP signup in the Choctawhatchee River Watershed. This workshop covered the CSP Self-Assessment Workbook, Eligibility Tool for various land uses in the watershed, and the CSP Matrix.

NRCS employees participated in a field demonstration to gain a better understanding of the criteria needed to perform onsite investigations with potential clients. Field discussions covered specific items to address with clients in order to gain a better understanding of their farming operation.

SWCS Annual Meeting

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs
Assistant, Auburn, AL

The annual meeting of the Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) was June 11-13 at Auburn University (AU). President Steve Musser introduced Bill Ham, Mayor of Auburn, who welcomed the 125 registered members.

This year's meeting, entitled "Our Changing Landscapes," featured speakers from across the nation. On Thursday the presenters spoke about the changing landscape of erosion, climate, bio-energy, highway development, forestry, and surface water. On Friday the speakers informed the group

about the implications of water use laws, wetland mitigation banking, and water conservation guidelines.

The changing landscape around the Auburn area was highlighted during the field tour. Participants boarded luxury buses and visited engineering and environmental sites at AU's Research Park, Turf Unit, and Beef Teaching Unit, as well as Town Creek Park, Randle Farms, and construction sites at Bent Creek Road, Tiger Town, and White Oaks Subdivision. Engineering stops included erosion and sediment control, storm water management, and subdivision development. Environmental stops included water quality research, invasive weeds,



Equipment demonstration at Randle Farms.

stream restoration, research projects at AU, and sustainable fruit, vegetable, and livestock production.

During the two-day meeting the members enjoyed a catfish dinner, a barbeque lunch, a reception with exhibitors, and a silent auction to benefit the AU student chapter of the SWCS.

If you would like to become a member of the Alabama Chapter of the SWCS, contact a member or visit the website at <http://www.alchapterswcs.aces.edu/>.



Town Creek Park stream restoration.

Lee County Native Wins ACDEA Scholarship

Della Stabler of Lee County was the Alabama Conservation District Employees Association Scholarship winner. Della will attend Southern Union State Community College and plans to major in Biosystems Engineering.

Throughout her high school career she was dedicated to community service projects, international studies, and academic pursuits of the highest possible quality.



Della Stabler (center), with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Stabler.

Alabama Incentive Awards Committee Established

By Lawrence McGhee, MLRA Project Leader, NRCS, Auburn, AL

NRCS has established an Incentive Awards Committee. Assistant State Conservationist-Operations Zona Beaty serves as senior advisor, with Human Resources Officer Paul Swenson serving as staff advisor.

The Incentive Awards Committee held its first meeting on May 13 at the Central Team Office in Bessemer, Alabama. Lawrence McGhee was appointed chairperson of the committee. April Jones volunteered to be the reporter with Eddie May assisting in that position. Zona Beaty officially charged the committee to develop a comprehensive incentive awards program for NRCS in Alabama. The committee's objectives are:

- Redefine the current awards process
- Provide guidance to supervisors on recommendation and approval of awards, and
- Develop an Incentives Awards Handbook for NRCS in Alabama.

The committee thoroughly discussed General Manual 360, Part 414, NRCS Employee Recognition Program. The group talked about the different types of awards available to employees. They concluded the meeting by agreeing to solicit opinions and suggestions from colleagues in the field about the current awards program. The committee compiled and discussed these comments at a teleconference held on July 1.

Currently the Incentive Awards Committee is developing a draft copy of the Alabama Incentive Awards Handbook and compiling a comprehensive list of recommendations to present to the State Conservationist and the Leadership Team.

All NRCS employees are encouraged to direct questions, comments, or recommendations to committee members in their discipline or to their work area representative.

Outreach: Computer Training Provided to Customers

By Alice Love, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

A computer training course was recently held at the Wesley University Library in Livingston, Alabama. This outreach activity was a collaborative effort between the National Association of Conservation Districts and Natalie Twyner who is a consultant/trainer. Seven people participated in the training course which was free to individuals interested in enhancing their computer skills. Local community-based organizations worked with Alabama NRCS staff and Twyner to make the general public aware of this service.

The skill level of participants varied from first-time computer users to those with a knowledge of computer basics. One-on-one training was provided to each participant. Topics included how to access the USDA and Energy Estimator websites and how to use Google to search for specific information.

Twyner works with groups desiring to learn or enhance their computer skills. Clients must furnish a location with computer access. Classes are limited to ten people per session.

For more information, contact Andrew Williams 334-887-4521 or Alice Love 334-887-4550.



Trainer Natalie Twyner prefers small groups so she can give one-on-one computer training.

Alabama Incentive Awards Committee members:

District Conservationists
 Greg Dansby-West
 April Hill-Central
 April Jones-East
 Shawn Manning-North

Engineer
 Randall East

Soil Scientist
 Lawrence McGhee

RC&D Coordinator
 Eddie May

Civil Rights Committee
 David Elliott

Soil Conservation Technicians
 Carolyn King-West
 Annette Spivey-Central
 Leon Wages-East
 Deryl Sharp-North

State Office
 Kim Pridgen
 Rick Zellmer

Assistant State Conservationist-FO
 Ben Malone

Advisor
 Zona Beaty

Staff Advisor
 Paul Swenson

Outdoor Classroom Certification

By Terry Williamson, DC, Pickens County, AL

Pickens County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and NRCS staff were on hand at the dedication of the Carrollton Elementary School Outdoor Classroom (OC). This is the only school in Pickens County, and one of only 17 in Alabama, to be certified as an official Alabama Outdoor Classroom School. In addition, the school was certified as an official National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat.

The dedication ceremony included comments from the school's principal and the OC project co-leaders, as well as representatives from the Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF), the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES), and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR).

The Carrollton Elementary School's OC site currently includes a greenhouse, aquatic study area, butterfly garden, weather station, raised bed gardens for vegetables and flowers, a bird habitat area, and a



A butterfly garden at the Carrollton Elementary School Outdoor Classroom.

tree nursery. These areas provide students opportunities to observe nature first-hand. In the near future, the school also plans to develop a nature trail.

Funding and support for the project was provided by the Tombigbee RC&D Council; Pickens County SWCD/NRCS; West Alabama Bank Adopt-A School Partner; Carrollton Elementary School PTSO; Brown's Nursery; as well as the AWF, ACES, and ADCNR.

RC&D Grant Helps Teach Teachers

A grant from Mid-South RC&D Council gave 40 teachers first-hand experience and supplies to explore new ways to get students outdoors for real-life connections to science such as geology and the study of water.

The workshop entitled "Exploring Alabama's Living Streams," was sponsored by in-kind donations from the Lee County SWCD/NRCS, cooperative partners, the community, and local government agencies. The teachers got their hands dirty digging for fossils. They waded into a flowing stream to seine and study invertebrates and fish. The teachers became certified to do bio-assessments of streams.

Participants received supplies to take back to the classroom, such as a 2-way microscope, bug magnifier cubes, forceps,



Teachers receive hands-on experience in outdoor teaching.

and insect trays. The workshop helped equip seventh grade teachers with knowledge of life science and the resources needed to teach water quality and quantity issues using school grounds as outdoor classrooms.

The target schools were Opelika Middle School, Drake Middle School, and Trinity Christian School. This workshop allowed teachers not only to gain knowledge for themselves, but also instructed them on how to make learning fun and interesting for their students.

Autauga County Forest Field Day

A forest field day for all fifth graders in Autauga County was held at Martha Hughes TREASURE Forest.

Six educational stations were used to teach students about natural resources. Around 817 students participated.



Alabama State Food and Agriculture Council Outreach and Working Group

By Alice Love, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

The Alabama Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) Outreach and Working Group includes conservation partners from throughout the state. The purpose of this group is to collaborate and share agency information with conservation partners on addressing the needs and concerns of limited resource producers.

The group discussed training Alabama farmers to grow non-traditional vegetables and produce. EQIP presently has cost-share funds for micro-irrigation (drip irrigation) targeting limited resource producers. ACES representatives discussed adding timers to micro-irrigation practices to help farmers control water.

Goat producers are gradually increasing in the state of Alabama. Workshops are being held to address various issues related to goat production.



The Alabama FAC Outreach and Working Group group discusses the possibility of Alabama farmers growing non-traditional vegetables and produce.

Other activities discussed by the State FAC Outreach and Working Group:

- **Black Belt Prairie (SAFE) Habitat Initiative-** available through CRP in certain Alabama counties.
- **Memorandum of Understanding between Tuskegee University and Native/Hispanic Communities** to include these groups in outreach efforts.
- **Sign-up for livestock and crop disaster programs.**
- **CSP sign-up for the Choctawhatchee River Watershed.**
- **A-Plus Marketing Cooperative-** a new organization in Alabama to address marketing issues for small ruminants. The cooperative is organized in four quadrants in Alabama (NW, NE, SW, and SE) to better serve producers throughout the state.

Conservation Practices and Research Committee Holds Summer Meeting in Auburn

The Conservation Practices and Research Committee recently held their summer meeting in Auburn. The first day was spent discussing various topics from Agricultural Energy Production and Soil Sustainability to Alabama Alternative Fuel Projects.

The second day was a field tour of the Conservation Tillage Lab and Randle Farms located in Lee County, Alabama. Participants experienced a vegetable production system using high-residue cover crops along with new technology.

Randle Farm is being used as a demonstration site for a 2007 Conservation Innovation Grant received by Auburn University. The project is designed to demonstrate on-farm conservation technologies and their impact on cash crop yield, soil quality, and farm profitability.



Frank Randle talks to the group about his farming operation.

Restoring Town Creek

By Heidi Richards, Coordinator,
Cawaco RC&D, Birmingham, AL

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management awarded a grant to the city of Jasper and the Cawaco RC&D Council to help restore Town Creek. The creek now has more pools and swift-flowing areas in the urban stream and an enhanced floodplain. A stormwater wetland was established as a learning environment for Maddox Middle School.

A portion of Town Creek was channelized about 40 years ago. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), channelization interrupts a stream's natural flow by making it straighter, filling it, or altering its width or length. EPA reports that streams often experience an increase in bank erosion and flooding and a decrease in water quality and species diversity after channelization.



The wetland will improve the water quality in Town Creek because stormwater that once ran from the school parking lot into the stream will now be diverted into the wetland.

The restoration effort at Town Creek is aimed at returning the stream to its original form. Boulders and log structures were added along the stream to improve oxygen levels, nutrient quality, and to prevent excess sediment from entering the stream.

A stormwater wetland was constructed near Maddox Middle School to help improve the water quality of the creek. Stormwater that ran into the stream from the

school parking lot is now diverted into the wetland before draining into the creek. The wetland provides educational opportunities because of the diversity of plant and animal life that exists there.

The stormwater wetland includes plants, insects, frogs, salamanders, and turtles. It will be a hands-on learning laboratory for the school children to experience nature in a natural environment. More planting along the creek's banks will take place in the fall.



Left: Though cogongrass resembles Johnson grass, its off-center midrib vein is a unique feature that sets it apart in visual identification.

Below: NRCS and members of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding to educate, train, and share technology between partners and the general public on cogongrass.



Task Force Declares War on Cogongrass

Alabama NRCS, along with 21 other government agencies, organizations, and educational institutions, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding effectively declaring war on cogongrass in Alabama. These 22 organizations form the Cogongrass Task Force, whose goal is to control, suppress, or eradicate this pest species from the state of Alabama.

Cogongrass is a perennial non-native invasive weed, also known as "Japanese bloodgrass" and "Red Baron grass". It was first introduced into Alabama in 1911 as a packing material in cargo from Asia. Though it is still sold as an ornamental plant elsewhere, such sales are illegal in Alabama.

Cogongrass is capable of choking out competing plant life, leaving no food for wildlife and even crowding out seedling trees. To complicate matters, cogongrass cannot be controlled or eliminated by prescribed burning.

"Cogongrass is everyone's problem," according to State Forester Linda Casey. "This partnership brings all stakeholders together to eliminate this destructive weed."

Women Forest Landowners: Sharing Educational Goals Through Partnerships

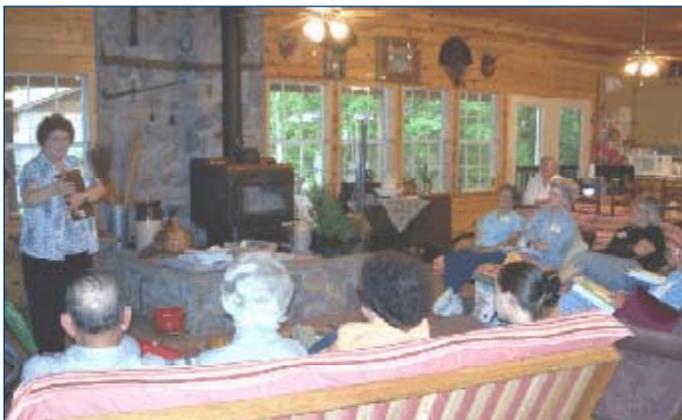
By NRCS DCs Detra Boutwell and Joyce Nicholas and SWCD DACs Chasity Pettis and Bridget Cain

When Bibb County, Alabama, TREASURE Forest Association member Romaleta James approached us about hosting a forest landowners seminar for women, we went into the planning mode. Successful, informative, and fun describes the three one-day events held in Monroe, Conecuh, and Escambia Counties. Although each event was similar, through the cooperative planning of representatives from each county, there was plenty of variety.

The event targeted women who are often less involved in the daily operations of the management of their forestland property. Topics included:

- “What do I do now that Daddy’s gone?”
- “How do I choose a contractor to harvest my timber?”
- “How timber management fits into estate planning.”

The seminar locations were selected from local forest landowners, adding a personal touch to each event. In Monroe County, Ms. Virginia Taylor hosted the one-day event at her locally well-known family home, the Hybart House in Monroeville. In Conecuh County, Mrs. Carol Ryals of Repton graciously hosted the event at her family cabin located within a well-cared for forestland. Dr. Bernard (Bert) Eichold and his wife Carolyn hosted the Escambia event at their lodge in the community of Nokomis. Each of these landowners have been actively involved with their respective SWCD/NRCS field offices and displayed



Romaleta James, TREASURE Forest state committee member, addresses attendees.

sincere desires to not only properly care for their land but also to share the beauty of these locations with others.

Despite torrential rains, the Conecuh event had one hundred percent attendance of those pre-registered. The outdoor events planned for the day were moved indoors, and the learning went on!

The Escambia event was held on a Saturday to accommodate week-day working participants. Each event included local women forest landowners sharing their own



Hostess Carol Ryals receives a handmade bowl made from “trash wood” (non-merchantable timber).

stories. One story was that of Jill Earp (Escambia County) who had to take on the task of resolving the family estate as a teenager, and began managing the land while in college.

The three events had a combined total of 34 women, along with grandchildren and some spouses.

The Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Society provided some funds for the events, and the participants paid a registration fee to offset the costs. Local businesses gave other support including door prizes that varied from plants and herbicides to hand sprayers and even rocking chairs.

Each participant received a notebook filled with information about SWCD/NRCS and how we can assist them in their conservation concerns. They also received basic training of forest measurements, and a handy pocket reference book to identify trees.

In addition to the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association, specialists from local partnering agencies provided a diverse group of speakers. Speakers included representatives from the Conecuh, Monroe, and Escambia Counties ACES, the Alabama Forestry Commission, Forestry Planning Commissions, and FSA. Earth Team Volunteers also provided assistance.

In all, over 30 partners pulled together to conduct the three events. This is a perfect example of what partnership can accomplish – Helping People Help the Land!



Since Conecuh County's outside activities were rained out, Monroe County DC Joyce Nicholas used her arm to demonstrate how to measure tree diameter.

Alabama NRCS Staff Host FFA Land Judging Workshop

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

More than a dozen agriscience teachers from across the state spent three days in July with staff from the Alabama NRCS office in Auburn in a workshop put together by Future Farmers of America (FFA) Education Administrator Troy Newton.

While much of the workshop was devoted to the clarification and updating of rules for the Land Judging Career Development Event, the workshop was also a valuable opportunity for the teachers to spend time with NRCS staff who assist with the event.

State Staff Forester Tim Albritton, East Team Resource Soil Scientist Bob Beaty, and Conservation Agronomists Eddie Jolley and Ben Moore held demonstrations on the different areas of the land judging event. The agriscience teachers in attendance used the demonstrations as a chance to discuss how the event could more closely reflect contemporary practices.

This was also a chance for them to pick up ideas on how to better instruct their students



Ben Moore explains cropland maintenance and erosion control practices.

on the skills needed for the event.

The Land Judging Career Development Event is meant to be more than just a competition, it also serves as a learning opportunity for the students involved. "If you understand land judging, you'll never buy a bad piece of land," said FFA Education Administrator Troy Newton at the opening of the workshop.

Shane Bryan, agriscience teacher at Falkville High School, saw the workshop as beneficial to all involved.

"This event evolves with changes and trends over time," said Bryan. "Some of the same principles are there, but at the same time the way we manage the land is different than it was, say, twenty years ago. Understanding how the NRCS staff set up the event is beneficial to us, but from what I gathered, it was even more beneficial to them to understand our thought process and how we train these students."

The workshop also came at the end of Troy Newton's tenure with the FFA. After 40 years of service to the FFA, Newton retired on the first of August.



Bob Beaty demonstrates soil evaluation techniques.

Welcome Back to Alabama!



Zona Beaty has returned from Georgia to the State Office in Auburn as Assistant State Conservationist for Operations.

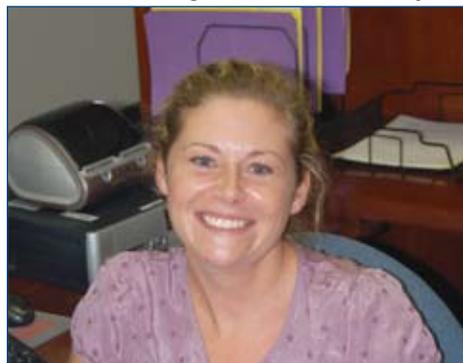
New Faces at the State Office



Felicia Glasco joins the Management Services Staff as a Procurement Technician. Her primary responsibilities include micro purchasing as well as serving as the mail and supply clerk.



Matthew Collins joins the Public Affairs staff as a Communications Specialist while he works on his master's degree at Auburn University.



Allison Mackey joins the administration staff as Secretary for ASTC Zona Beaty and State Resource Conservationist Bill Hughes.

Asian American/ Pacific Islander Month Presentation

Sue Daniel, Asian American/Pacific Islander (AA/PI) Special Emphasis Program Manager, spoke to State Office employees during AA/PI month about the origin and history of tea. After the presentation, everyone enjoyed refreshments of hot tea and cake.



WRP Workshops Held

Jeff Thurmond and Jim Schrenkel hosted three workshops across north Alabama to inform landowners and tribes about the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). WRP is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance and financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. Approximately 70 people attended the three sessions which were held in Lauderdale, Lawrence, and Marshall Counties.



University of Puerto Rico Student Interns with Bay Minette Field Office

Olgamarie Toledo served as Student Trainee (Agricultural Engineer) in the Bay Minette Field Office this summer. While in Alabama, she learned about surveying and pond and terrace layouts. She also assisted in designing a siphon system. Olgamarie has since returned to the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez to complete her studies.



Olgamarie Toledo with West Team Resource Engineer Randall East.

DAC Widner Honored by ACDEA

Deborah Widner, District Administrative Coordinator (DAC) from Cullman, was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for Alabama at the Alabama Conservation District Employees Association (ACDEA) Workshop/Meeting in April in Auburn. She will compete for the national award at the Southeast Conservation Districts Association meeting in November in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.



DAC Deborah Widner received the ACDEA Distinguished Service Award.

Personnel News

Promotions

Chris Ford, Resource Soil Scientist, Decatur, AL to MLRA Soil Survey Project Leader, Normal, AL
Jason Gardner, District Conservationist, Auburn, AL
Michael Gunn, District Conservationist, Linden, AL to Livingston, AL
John Harris, District Conservationist, Autaugaville, AL
Don Nelson, Soil Conservationist, Clayton, AL to District Conservationist, Clayton, AL
Joyce Nicholas, District Conservationist, Monroeville, AL to Mobile, AL

Accessions

Michael Flynt, Soil Conservation Technician, Centre, AL
Blake Garner, Soil Conservation Technician, Camden, AL
Felicia Glasco, Procurement Technician, Auburn, AL
Christopher Joe, Soil Conservationist, Auburn, AL
Allison Mackey, Secretary, Auburn, AL
Rory Stephens, Soil Conservation Technician, Tuskegee, AL
William Ray, Soil Conservation Technician, Talladega, AL

Reassignments

Pam Skidmore, Soil Conservation Technician, Russellville, AL to Soil Conservation Technician, Hamilton, AL. Duty station is Russellville, AL with responsibilities in Marion, Winston, and Franklin Counties.
Kent St. John, Soil Conservation Technician, Gadsden, AL to Soil Conservation Technician, Bessemer, AL
Trent Mathews, District Conservationist, Mobile, AL to District Conservationist, Milton, FL
Wade Williams, Soil Conservation Technician, Eutaw, AL to Soil Conservation Technician, Livingston, AL

Interns

Latravis Brazil, Soil Survey Project Office, Normal, AL, A&M University
Matthew Collins, Communications Specialist, Auburn, AL
Olgamarie Toledo-Leon, Bay Minette, AL, University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

Retirement

Regina Lumpkins, Administrative Coordinator, Decatur, AL

Calendar Notes

• Sept. 3 & 10, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Alabama Certified Burn Manager Continuing Education Workshops

Sept. 3 at the Alabama Power Company Conference Center, US 31 South, Clanton, Alabama.

Sept. 10 at the LBW Community College Conference Room, Hwy 84 East, Andalusia, Alabama.

For more information, contact Kent Hanby at hanby@charter.net or 256-825-8593.

• Oct. 7-10

Alabama Certified Burn Manager Certification Course will be held at the Fayette County Alabama Cooperative Extension System Office, 650 McConnell Loop, Fayette, Alabama.

Students must pre-register for the course by sending a \$50 registration fee to Alabama Certified Burn Manager Certification Course (check made payable to AL CBM Course), c/o Kent Hanby, 431 Dogwood Trail, Dadeville, Alabama.

All students are expected to review the material at www.pfmt.org/fire in the history, science, and behavior sections. There will be a pre-study test on the first day of the course. All courses begin at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. daily. On the first day students should arrive by 7:30 a.m. to check in.

For more information, contact Kent Hanby at hanby@charter.net or 256-825-8593.

• Next Issue

The deadline for items for the next edition of *Current Developments* is October 1. Early submissions are encouraged and appreciated.

To submit content, or for more information, contact the Public Affairs staff at ug-AL-nrcs-publicinfo.

NRCS Alabama **Current Developments** **Summer 2008**

Gary Kobylski
State Conservationist

Julie Yates
Public Affairs Specialist

Fay Garner
Public Affairs Assistant

Matthew D. Collins
Communications Specialist

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Celebrating Earth Day 2008



Earth Team Volunteers help clear a prehistoric rock formation in Chambers County on Earth Day.



Colbert and Lauderdale Counties visit Wilson Park in downtown Florence for the Shoals Earth Day celebration.



Lee County educates fourth graders at Kiesel Park in Auburn.



Jefferson County celebrates "Earth Day in the Gardens" at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.



Cullman County celebrated with Wal-Mart's Garden Center "going green."



Mobile County celebrated Earth Day at St. Mary's Catholic School.



Covington County worked with Straughn Middle School students to create Earth Day displays for the school's main hall.