



NRCS Alabama Current Developments

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From the State Conservationist - Dr. William Puckett



Thank you all for the warm welcome I've received since returning to Alabama. I am grateful for the opportunity to work in this state and with the Alabama NRCS staff again. Since April, I have traveled over 20,000 miles meeting with NRCS staff, conservation partners, and federal, state, and local agencies.

I am extremely proud of the conservation efforts of the NRCS staff and conservation partnership. The work you do is visible throughout the state. FY-2009 was a very challenging year with implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill. However, each of you rose to the challenge by obligating an astronomical amount in contracts and easements: AWEF-\$1.58M, CSP-\$2M, EQIP-\$12.3M, FRPP-\$540K, GRP-\$768K, WHIP-.2M, WRP-\$20.2M, EWP-\$3.2M, EWP Downed Timber/Debris Removal-\$3.3M, Floodplain Easements-\$2.3M, and Watershed Operations-\$430K. Thanks to all of you for the work you do on the landscape.

As we approach the holiday season, I encourage each of you to relax and spend some quality time sharing with family and friends. I wish you and your family peace, joy, and happiness throughout the New Year.

RC&D Coordinator Charlie Meek Receives National Award

Northwest Alabama Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator Charlie Meek received the Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator Award. Meek was recognized on June 17 during an awards banquet at the National Association of RC&D Councils National Conference in Albuquerque, NM.

He joins two other recipients from the southeast who were recognized. Wendy Crager of Rolling Hills RC&D Council in Georgia was recognized for Outstanding Performance by a Council Member, and Nancy Lazenby of Southwest Mississippi RC&D Council was honored as Outstanding Program Assistant.



Charlie Meek (c) receives the Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator Award at the National RC&D Councils Conference.

Mobile County SWCD Beach Restoration Field Trips

By April Griffin, District Administrative Coordinator, SWCD, Mobile, AL

The Mobile County SWCD recently sponsored two beach restoration field trips for local high school students. Approximately 30 students from Bryant Career Technical Center planted sea oats on the east end of Dauphin Island on April 24. Students from Baker High School came out to plant sea oats on May 5.



Students from Baker High School planted sea oats on the east end of Dauphin Island.

Since 2006, the Mobile SWCD has sponsored a total of seven field trips involving over 500 elementary, middle, and high school students. Students get to enjoy time away from the classroom while learning about beach restoration.

The planting locations were provided by the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board.

RC&D and SWCD Weeks Held in September

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

By joint resolution of the state Legislature, September 14-19 was Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Week and September 20-26 was Alabama Resource Conservation and Development Week.

Both conservation groups were recognized for their efforts to preserve, restore, and improve Alabama's natural resources. Alabama's SWCDs were specifically recognized as the only local units of government in the state charged with conserving Alabama's resources, while the RC&D councils were commended for their efforts to develop and improve the state's natural and human resources.

Both resolutions were introduced by State Senator Roger Bedford of Russellville, a member of the State Senate's Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee.

American Indian Program Delivery Initiative Partners Meet in Atmore

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

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians and NRCS hosted the Southeast American Indian Workgroup's American Indian Program Delivery Initiative (AIPDI) May 17-20. The AIPDI was hosted on the Poarch Band of Creek Indians reservation near Atmore, Alabama. The workgroup, consisting of federally recognized Tribes and federal agencies across nine southeastern states, presented information on federal program available to Tribes and discussed the needs and concerns of the Tribes represented.

Tours of the Poarch Creek Indians reservation showcased conservation efforts being carried out by the Tribe

with technical and financial assistance from NRCS. The Tribe also maintains the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve, which includes facilities for outdoor recreation.



Poarch Creek Tribal Elder Billy Smith and NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett overlook Magnolia Branch on the Tribe's Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve.

As a token of appreciation for hosting this year's program, Alabama NRCS presented Poarch Band of Creek Indians Chairman Buford Rolin with a framed reproduction of a 1733 French map printed on canvas. The map shows locations of Indian villages during the French occupation of the region.



NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett (r) presents Poarch Band of Creek Indians Chairman Buford Rolin (l) with a gift in recognition of the Tribe's hosting the AIPDI.

City of Ozark Uses EWP Assistance to Repair Road Damaged by Erosion

A rainfall event on March 28 led to a gully washing the soil out from under a road near Carroll High School in Ozark. The damage (pictured below) also exposed a water line running parallel to the road.

The City of Ozark was able to take advantage of financial assistance made available through the Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) to help fund repairs to the roadway and underlying embankment.

The city received notice to proceed on April 6. The work was completed by April 16. Seventy-five percent of the construction cost was covered by NRCS through EWP.



Above and below: The embankment next to the roadway was repaired and improved drainage was installed to prevent future damage from erosion.



Above: The damage to the road near Carroll High School is visible behind the water line that was exposed. The water line itself required additional support from a second pipe until repairs could be made



Below: A crew works to install drainage to prevent future erosion.



The City of Ozark was able to complete the necessary repair work within ten days of receiving notice to proceed. The repairs restored the road to its previous condition and the improved drainage is designed to prevent erosion from leading to a similar situation in the future.

Alabama NRCS Awards CCPIs and CIGs

CIG Awarded to Alabama Mountains Rivers and Valleys RC&D Council

Assistant State Conservationist for Technology Shannon Weaver (seated left) and Bill Latimer (seated right) sign the Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) awarded to Alabama's Mountains Rivers and Valleys RC&D Council to research and demonstrate systems for collecting and using rainfall runoff from the roofs of poultry houses. Standing are (l to r): Dr. Gene Simpson, Paul McCaleb, Ken Taylor, and Mike Roden.



ACES Awarded CIG and Signs CCPI with NRCS

Dr. Paul Mask (seated left), Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) Assistant Director for Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources, and State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett sign the CIG awarded to ACES and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) with ACES and NRCS. Both the CIG and CCPI promote precision agriculture practices. Standing are Shannon Norwood (l) and Amy Winstead (r).



Alabama Sustainable Ag Network Awarded CIG

Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (ASAN) Executive Director Karen Wynne (seated left) and NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett sign the CIG awarded to ASAN to support demonstration of irrigation systems for Small Scale and Limited Resource farmers. Standing are Lynne Young (l) and Euneika Rogers-Sipp (r).



Alabama Forestry Commission Signs CCPI with NRCS



Alabama Forestry Commission's State Forester Linda Casey and State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett sign the CCPI Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners in Alabama's Black Belt region.

LRLEAN Signs CCPI with NRCS to Promote EQIP & WHIP



Limited Resource Landowner Education and Assistance Network (LRLEAN) President Jerry Lacey (seated left) and Assistant State Conservationist for Technology Shannon Weaver (seated center) sign the CCPI between LRLEAN and NRCS. The CCPI will promote participation in EQIP and WHIP by limited resource farmers. Joining them are (standing l to r) Tim Boyce, Dr. Coleman Christian, Dr. Buddhi Gyawail, James Malone, John Curtis, Dr. Rory Fraser, and (seated right) Edward Davis.

Coosa Valley RC&D Grant Funds Community Health Project

By Eddie May, Coordinator, Coosa Valley RC&D, Oxford, AL

Quality of Life Health Services, Inc. (QOLHS) secured funding from the Coosa Valley RC&D Council to help Talladega area residents. Half of the grant will be used to assist uninsured patients in Talladega with prescription drugs, while the remainder will be used to support health screenings and outreach efforts in Talladega County.

State Senator Jim Preuitt and State Representatives Steve Hurst and Barbara Boyd assisted in securing the grant. The project is designed to reach out into the community and be proactive in the early identification of chronic illnesses that can be managed and/or prevented as well as help

patients by assisting in obtaining physician ordered medications.

The "Reach-Out" grant represents the first opportunity that QOLHS has worked on a project with the RC&D Council. The project is designed to assist more than 1,500 Talladega County residents.

"The Council was formed in the 1960's and provides technical and financial assistance to government agencies, schools, and other community based groups in addressing community needs," said Eddie May, RC&D Coordinator.

In addition to this project, QOLHS has been working in the Talladega County area since March 2005.

Preuitt, Hurst, and Boyd praised the efforts of the organization because of the hardship placed on many area families in paying for prescription medicines.

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives 42nd Anniversary

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

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives held its 42nd Anniversary August 13-15. The celebration started with an Honoree's Reception at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute on the morning of August 13. The Estelle Witherspoon Lifetime Achievement Award Dinner and Program was held that evening to honor the 2009 recipient of the award, Congressional Representative Barbara Lee. Lee's career includes accomplishments which have impacted various social areas.

The event moved to the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Training and Research Center in Epps, Alabama, August 14-15. These two days consisted of educational workshops, displays, and presenters targeting concerns of rural America. Among the guest speakers were Dr. Joe Leonard, USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development Dallas Tonsager. Ben Malone, Alabama NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations-Central Team, was among local USDA managers serving on a panel discussion to address participants concerns relating to various USDA programs. NRCS Agricultural Outreach Liaison Alice Love was among other conservation partners displaying USDA information targeting underserved groups and individuals. More than 400 participants from various states took part in the event.

NRCS Exhibits at Annual Buckmasters Expo

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

For the first time, Alabama NRCS staff set up a display at the Annual Buckmasters Expo. This year's event was held August 14-16 at the Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center in Montgomery. The exhibit was an opportunity for NRCS to connect

with an audience that might not be reached by traditional means. Twenty thousand people were expected, but event officials said the crowd exceeded their estimates.

NRCS was one of three USDA agencies vying for landowner's attention. NRCS personnel from across the state helped staff a display that highlighted financial assistance programs available to help landowners manage

wildlife habitat, and WRP, which helps protect and restore degraded wetlands.

Many people stopped to ask about the NRCS programs and services mentioned on the display. NRCS bags filled with program information were available.



District Conservationist Sutton Gibbs and Wildlife Biologist Jeff Thurmond talk to Buckmasters Expo attendees.

MLRA Staff Develop Soil Monolith For George Washington Carver Museum

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

Dr. Walter Hill, Dean of Tuskegee University's College Of Agricultural, Environmental and Natural Sciences, envisioned showcasing the works of Dr. George Washington Carver. This goal is proudly demonstrated in the George Washington Carver Museum located on the campus of Tuskegee University.

Alabama NRCS State Soil Scientist Charles Love along with Project Leaders Lawrence McGhee and James Mason met with Hill to share the vision of capturing Carver's contributions to soil science through a soil exhibit.

In viewing Carver's work on "Paint Pigments From Alabama Clay," Alabama NRCS Major Land Resources (MLRA) staff selected the Hannon Series as an excellent soil to demonstrate this because of its high clay content and color. The Hannon Series is dominant on the Tuskegee University campus and within Macon County. Based on the history of the locations where Dr. Carver performed his studies, it proves to be a likely choice to support "Paint Pigments From Alabama Clays."

The MLRA staff developed an 8"x36" Soil Monolith of the Hannon Series to be included as part of the soils exhibit. Visitors will be able to view the actual A, B, and C horizons of the Hannon Series.



The Hannon Series Soil Monolith developed by the MLRA staff.



MLRA Staff discuss ideas for the soil monolith exhibit at the George Washington Carver Museum at Tuskegee University.

State Office Staff Kicks Off Recycling



NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett announced the kickoff of the NRCS state office recycling campaign on June 24. The campaign is initially aimed at recycling white office paper that would normally be put in the garbage. Recycling bins were placed throughout the building to collect the paper.

"Just by recycling white paper alone, we could keep hundreds of pounds of paper out of the landfills each year," said Puckett.

Plant Identification Training For NRCS Employees

By Eddie Jolley, Conservation Agronomist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

NRCS employees from across Alabama participated in plant identification training May 26-29 in Cullman, Clanton, and Luverne. NRCS State Staff Forester Tim Albritton, Jimmy Carter Plant Material Center Manager Mike Owsley, and NRCS Conservation Agronomist Eddie Jolley conducted the training sessions.

The sessions focused on trees and herbaceous plants that are common to the particular training sites. The training team used existing plant information sources, as well as plant specific photographic identification guides.

Employees learned various ways to identify plants, as well as interesting facts and uses for the plants. In addition, guidance was provided on how to collect, preserve, or photograph plants for identification.

As a result of the training, employees earned four hours of CEU credits toward the Certified Conservation Planning CCA requirements or earned 10 points toward recertification of their pesticide applicator permits. Many employees expressed how beneficial this training was and inquired about future training sessions.

Micro-irrigation Workshop held at Geneva County USDA Service Center

By Janie Howell, District Administrative Coordinator, SWCD, Geneva, AL

On March 11, a micro-irrigation workshop was held behind the USDA Service Center in Geneva. The workshop was sponsored by NRCS, Geneva County SWCD, Southern States Cooperative of Geneva, and the Geneva County ACES office. SWCD purchased a Raised Bed Mulch Layer in 2008 and purchased the plastic mulch lifter and planter equipment in 2009. This equipment will help farmers in Geneva County and surrounding counties to complete micro-irrigation practices under their EQIP contracts as well as other practices on their farms.

Geneva County SWCD Chairman W. M. Donnell welcomed everyone to the demonstration. NRCS District Conservationist James Currington introduced Agronomists William Birdsong and Brandon Dillard and Horticulturist Neil Kelly with ACES. These specialists shared information on how to grow the best possible plants under plastic. Geneva County NRCS Soil Conservationist Zach Adams shared additional opportunities available to Limited Resource farmers. The Geneva County SWCD provided the land for the demonstration behind the Service Center.



Plastic being laid before planter starts putting out vegetable plants.

All of the equipment used in the demonstration is available for rent by calling (334) 684-2235 ext. 3. The District also has a no-till planter that can be rented. All of this equipment is designed to conserve soil and water in production agriculture.



Farmers get a good look at new planting equipment during the demonstration.

Randolph County Farm Day

By Craig Johnston, District Conservationist, NRCS, Wedowee, AL

The Randolph County Alabama Farmers Federation Young Farmers Association hosted its 4th Annual Young Farmers Farm Day on April 23.



Students at the Randolph County Farm Day learn about the functions of watersheds and the flow of water pollutants.

Fourth-graders from Woodland, Wadley, Wedowee, Handley, and New Hope Christian Schools attended.

Randolph County SWCD/NRCS staff presented the Enviroscope to more than 350 students and adults. The Enviroscope is an interactive learning tool that helps build understanding for the importance of water conservation, water pollution, the water cycle, and how to protect our resources.

NRCS staff demonstrated how watersheds function, how point source and non-point source pollution occurs, and how to prevent water pollution. Students rotated among stations and learned about rain and followed potential pollutions path from their communities to nearby water bodies such as Lake Wedowee.

The Enviroscope model was an exceptional demonstration tool and received outstanding reviews from the audience.

The annual Farm Day also included various demonstrations such as butter churning, a mobile dairy demonstration, maroinvertebrates, an Alabama Power demonstration, water sampling, and beekeeping.

Coosa Valley RC&D Provides Grant for Local Plasticulture and Micro-irrigation Demonstration

By Thomas McDaniel, District Conservationist, NRCS, Talladega, AL, and Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Rev. Sherman Green feels the need to be concerned with health, education, and the all around well-being of the community, in addition to tending to spiritual concerns. He worried that too many generations have lost the knowledge of where food comes from.

In early January, Green came to the ACES office in Talladega to ask if there were any programs available to help the younger people of the community understand how to plant, raise, harvest, and care for vegetables. Extension Coordinator Wanda Jurriaans went over many options and opportunities with him. During this discussion, she talked about plasticulture and the benefits of raising vegetables on plastic. She also discussed the opportunity to assist him with getting a plasticulture system through a grant from the Coosa Valley RC&D Council.

Jurriaans assisted Green with preparing and submitting the educational grant to the RC&D Council for approval. The community garden received funding by agreeing to serve as a demonstration site to help educate the public. The education programs included learning about growing nutritious food to encourage good eating habits, strategies for marketing excess produce, and educating youth and adults on the value of the land.

With the grant approval, Jurriaans and Green went to work. Green contacted the City of Talladega to arrange for water to be provided to the site, and Jurriaans contacted Coosa Valley RC&D Project Coordinator Eddie May, RC&D Plasticulture Coordinator Jeff Colvin, and NRCS District Conservationist



District Conservationist Thomas McDaniel and RC&D Project Coordinator Eddie May prepare the demonstration garden.

Thomas McDaniel to assist in setting up a demonstration of the project.

The RC&D Council purchased a bedder/mulcher in the late fall of 2008 to assist the eleven counties within the RC&D Council. On February 26, the demonstration was held. May provided an introduction to the demonstration. Colvin talked about the bedder/mulcher and demonstrated how to connect all the filters, fertilizer canister, pipeline, and the drip tube. McDaniel talked about plasticulture and drip irrigation, the importance of water, and the drought which affected the area from 2005 through 2007.

About 50 people from six counties came to the event. There was much discussion and tremendous interest was shown by the attendees. Green said he believed the demonstration was a great success. Several in attendance discussed the possibility of using the processes demonstrated in their own gardens.

AAMU Youth Entrepreneurial and Agribusiness Development Day

By Elicia Chaverest, Small Farmer Resource Center, Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical College, Normal, AL

Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University's (AAMU) Small Farmer Resource Center

held its Youth Entrepreneurial and Agribusiness Development Day on May 30. The day was filled with children and adults learning about agriculture, rural entrepreneurship, and the various career opportunities in agriculture and related fields.

Over 60 youth, adults, and extension personnel attended the event at John Hayden's Farm, located in Lisman, Alabama.

The event included Hayden's farm and garden, and Margaret Mazikowski's value-added demonstration on goat milk lotion.

Program speakers included Gretchen Thomas from FSA, Chuck Quinn from the AFC, NRCS District Conservationist Greg Dansby, and Dr. Taylor Byrd from AAMU.

WRP Workshop Held in Geneva

By Janie Howell, District Administrative Coordinator, Geneva County SWCD, Geneva, AL

An area Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Workshop was held on March 19 at the Geneva County Farm Center. The workshop was open to all landowners and farmers interested in WRP. The Geneva County SWCD/NRCS and ALFA Insurance sponsored the event.

WRP is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance and financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. Wetlands provide valuable habitat for waterfowl and many other wildlife species.

NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs Steve Musser and Resource Conservationist John Curtis presented information on the program and held a question and answer session.



Resource Conservationist John Curtis and Assistant State Conservationist for Programs Steve Musser discuss WRP with interested applicants at the area meeting held in Geneva County.

Madison County High School Students Attend Ag Appreciation Day

By Kathy Walker, District Administrative Coordinator, Madison County SWCD, Huntsville, AL

High School Senior Ag Appreciation Day was held on April 21 at the AAMU Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station. The event was a cooperative effort of the Madison County SWCD/NRCS, the Cattleman's Association, Madison County CO-OP and AAMU.

Students were informed about agriculture-related career opportunities. The students also observed a demonstration on how to judge cattle. They learned from local farmer Robert Taylor what to look for when choosing healthy herd cows and bulls. Some of the students participated in a tractor driving competition between the schools.

The Madison County CO-OP furnished lunch for the students and workers. Madison County SWCD furnished snacks and drinks. NRCS District Conservationist Anthony Hudson, Soil Conservationist Joyce Lane, and Kathy Walker, Madison County SWCD DAC, participated in the program.



Nearly 100 students from four county high schools participated in the Ag Appreciation Day at the AAMU Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station.

Lauderdale County NRCS/SWCD Participate in FAWN Program

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

The Lauderdale County SWCD/NRCS field office presented a station on soils at the annual Forestry Awareness Now (FAWN) Program at Joseph Wheeler State Park in eastern Lauderdale County. Local county school children learned about soil formation, causes of erosion, and how erosion may be prevented.

The two-day event had seven different stations that helped educate the children on various environmental issues such as tree identification, soils, and history. The students enjoyed being outside at the park and learning about everyday surroundings and how to conserve natural resources.



Soil Conservation Technician Penny Everitt teaches students at FAWN about soil formation and erosion prevention.

Lauderdale County Beef Field Day

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

The Lauderdale County Cattleman's Association hosted the annual Beef Field Day on April 25 at Greg Hamner's farm in eastern Lauderdale County. NRCS District Conservationist Renea Dyer was on hand to discuss EQIP with local producers, including the new organic farming initiative, and to answer questions about rotational grazing, pasture planting, watering systems, and stream bank stabilization.

The host of the event, Greg Hamner, is a graduate of Auburn University and is part owner of the company Seed Farms. The event was held in his newly built hay storage barn. Other speakers included the ACES Regional Extension Agents Gerry Thompson and Amy Winstead, Joe Dickerson from the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, and ACES County Extension Coordinator Randall Armstrong.



NRCS District Conservationist Renea Dyer at the local Beef Field Day in Lauderdale County.

Youth Learning in the Garden

By Janie B. Howell, District Administrative Coordinator, SWCD, Geneva, AL

Anyone driving down the Goat Hill Road on June 3 wondered what was going on in the garden across from the Wiregrass Farmers Cooperative (WFC). Thirty youth and children and ten leaders were having a Youth Garden Workshop. Youth showed up from as far as Missouri, Barbour County, Mobile, Dothan, Opp, Geneva, and Samson.

The WFC youth took advantage of the demonstration garden to learn how to maintain a garden by preparing the soil, planting the vegetables, removing weeds, fertilizing, watering, and picking vegetables.

The youth were taught the difference between vegetables and weeds to help keep the garden

healthy and growing. Demonstrator Melissa Baxley and WFC President Frank Petty pulled up and named common weeds and grasses growing in the garden.

The youth gathered onions, peppers, tomatoes, and eggplants. Many of the youth were not familiar with the vegetables grown locally in Geneva County, such as sweet corn, okra, purple hull peas, zucchini, crook neck squash, black-eye peas, butterbeans, eggplants, tomatoes, and onions. The vegetables harvested will be sold and the proceeds reinvested in the WFC.

Following the garden work, everyone met in the classroom and heard from Baxley, NRCS District Conservationist James Currington, FSA County Executive Director Jason Padgett, and Alabama



Sustainable Agriculture Network Grass-roots Coordinator Euneika Rogers-Sipp. The youth were given information on organically grown vegetables, USDA programs, and marketing.

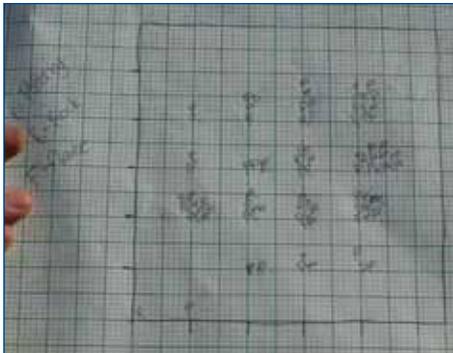
Youth working in the garden. Proceeds from produce harvested is reinvested into the garden.

Students Take Part in Archaeological Collection at Tukabatchee

By Teresa Paglione, Cultural Resource Specialist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

In January, Alabama State Archaeologist Stacye Hathorn and NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist Teresa Paglione organized an archeological field trip for Tallassee's Southside Elementary School's Talented and Gifted (TAG) students. Along with staff members of the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC), the students were supervised in a controlled surface collection of a small area within Tukabatchee, a historic Creek Indian site on the Taylor Farm in Elmore County.

The students learned how to identify artifacts as well as the importance of context – that is, exactly where the artifacts were found. After surveying in a grid with twenty-foot square units, they collected all the artifacts within each square and placed them in several bags identifying their location. The artifacts they collected included Creek pottery, daub/fired clay, trade beads, fire cracked rock, arrowheads, flakes, hammerstones, glass, teeth, bone, and shell.



Piece-plotting the locations of artifacts within a unit.



TAG students identifying and counting artifacts gathered from the Tukabatchee site.

With the help of archeologists from the AHC, the students identified and classified the types of artifacts. They then created a table and graphs that represented activities associated with certain types of artifacts and made maps showing the locations of these activities. For instance, fire-cracked rock meant hearths or fires for cooking. The intense heat sometimes fractured and broke these rocks. Even in the disturbed contexts on the surface of a perennially plowed field, the artifacts still told a story about Tukabatchee.

A month after their field investigation, the students gave a presentation at the Current Research in Alabama Archaeology Public Forum at the Department of Archives and History. Their presentation included graphs, maps, and photographs of artifacts identifying activity areas and even the probable location of a Creek Indian's house.



TAG students from Southside Elementary, Tallassee, at the Tukabatchee Creek Indian site.

Blount County Groundwater Festival

By Merry Buford, District Conservationist, NRCS,
Oneonta, AL

This year, Blount County held its first Groundwater Festival since 2004. Fourth grade classes in the county were invited to attend the event. Activities included the Edible Aquifer and the Rainstick.

The Edible Aquifer teaches students about the importance of groundwater and how it can be polluted. It is not only a learning experience, but the students get to eat what they create! The aquifer is built with gummy worms to represent life, ice cream to represent soil, clear soda to represent water, and various sprinkles to represent pollution. A straw is added to represent how we get groundwater from wells for public consumption.

The Rainstick teaches students what types of precipitation we have and how the Earth's water is a nonrenewable resource. The students get to build and decorate their own Rainstick while hearing a story about a little boy that learns the importance of water. The students are able to explain what their decorations symbolize and how that relates to the story they heard.

Following the activities and lunch, the students watched a magic show by Steve Trash. Trash's magic show explains a little more about conservation while entertaining the students. He also helped present the winners of the t-shirt contest. This year the winner was Lilly Patterson of Locust Fork Elementary School. Lilly received a gift card along with the honor of having her art work printed on all the t-shirts for the festival's attendees.

The 2009 Blount County Groundwater Festival was a success because of the help and support of all the volunteers and the people that worked diligently behind the scenes as well as the support of numerous sponsors.



Fourth graders work on their Rainsticks at the Blount County Groundwater Festival.

CIG Clover Demonstration Held Near Elba

By Eddie Jolley, Conservation Agronomist, NRCS,
Auburn, AL

Over 40 producers as well as NRCS and ACES staff attended a clover demonstration field day on April 30 on the Terry Calhoun Farm near Elba. The field day was held to show producers and agricultural professionals how selected clovers perform in grazing systems on Coastal Plain soils.

The field day was part of an organized effort through a CIG with the Alabama Cattlemen's Association to demonstrate effective use of clovers in grazing systems on Coastal Plain soils.

Clovers are a very important component of grazing systems in Alabama. They increase and improve forage quality, extend grazing, improve animal performance, and provide up to 100 pounds of nitrogen per acre with the aid of Rhyzobia bacteria.

Eight different clovers were planted into a Bahiagrass pasture in October 2008. Crimson, red, subterranean, berseem, white, Durana, arrowleaf, and ball clovers were planted using a broadcast spreader after a light disking. Soil test recommendations for growing clover were followed prior to planting. Excellent moisture conditions existed after planting and through this spring. Stands and production of each clover were good to excellent.

According to Calhoun, the livestock have effectively utilized all of the clovers. Because stocking rates were conservative, the clovers and grasses have continued to produce adequate, high quality forage throughout the spring. The growth and maturity characteristics of each clover also aided in providing a continuous forage supply.

According to Dr. Don Ball, Forage Specialist at Auburn University, and NRCS Conservation Agronomist Eddie Jolley, the demonstration was also part of an effort to evaluate the ability of new intermediate clovers to actually perennialize. Since most of the clovers grown on Coastal Plain pastures are annuals, having a perennial clover option would help reduce costs of annual plantings and stand failures from fall plantings. Nitrogen fixation benefits would be provided throughout the year.

The CIG was funded by NRCS and will continue for two more years. The CIG also includes partners from Georgia and Mississippi. Staff from the New Brockton NRCS Field Office and Coffee County ACES Office organized the event.

FFA Holds State Land Judging Contest in Coosa County

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

The FFA State Land Judging Career Development Event was held on Waller Farms in Coosa County on March 26. Eleven teams competed for the opportunity to attend the national event in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The event is designed to help students learn more about land, difference in soils and their capabilities, methods of soil conservation and improvement, treatments to help in obtaining higher production, and selection of suitable home sites. The event is both a competition and a learning opportunity for students. Approximately 95 people were in attendance including NRCS and SWCD personnel, parents, teachers, and students.

The teams performed well and congratulations are due to Falkville High School for placing first in the event. They will proceed to the national event in Oklahoma.

Rodney Waller, owner of Waller Farms, hosted the contest on his land and contributed some of his own time and effort to help setup the event.

Special thanks are extended to the Coosa Valley RC&D Council and the Coosa Central High School for their support and donations, as well as to the AACD in cooperation with NRCS.



First Place - Falkville High School, Morgan County



Second Place - Clay County High School



Third Place - Milrly High School, Washington County



Fourth Place - Brantley High School, Crenshaw County

Three Alabama Small Farmers Graduate From USDA Agricultural Leadership Training Institute

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

Three Alabama producers successfully completed a two-year course at the Agricultural Leadership Training Institute in Washington, DC. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack presided over the graduation ceremony held at USDA Headquarters in the Jamie L. Whitten Building on March 27.

Barbara Shipman of Barbour County, Sandra Simone of Talladega County, and Ernest Tyson of Geneva County were among the 26 graduates of the of the leadership institute.

The program focused on the success of agricultural entrepreneurs, promoting sustainability of small family farms, enhancing decision making skills, and assisting in leadership development to become successful agribusiness managers and community leaders. The uniqueness of the program is that it is the only one in the country targeting minority, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited resource agricultural producers.

Never Too Old to Farm

By Janie Howell, District Administrative Coordinator,
Geneva County SWCD, Geneva, AL

Matthew L. Long was born April 25, 1913, in the Midland City/Pinckard area in southeast Alabama. Known in the community as “Mr. Matthew”, he began farming at the age of thirteen with his father and nine brothers and sisters.

At the age of 24, Long was married and had started a family of his own. He and his wife, Ida Mae, had nine children. Only seven would survive and grow up on the farm. He started his farming operation at age 26 with a rented ox. Long was a share-cropper in the Midland City/Pinckard Area and south of Slocomb until he could afford to buy his own land. In 1951, he purchased 40 acres and an old house on a county road south of Slocomb for \$3,000. He and Ida Mae later built a small house, only 960 sq. ft., where they would raise their children on the farm.

It took Long and his children two to three years of pulling up Bermuda grass on their new land to get it in shape to farm. The Long Farm later produced corn, peanuts, soybeans, vegetable crops, beef cattle, and hogs. The most land Long ever farmed



Even at the age of 96, Matthew L. Long is still active and interested in soil and water conservation on his farm near Slocomb.

at one time was 85 acres. During these years, he served on the Geneva County Extension Vegetable Crops Planning Committee and worked closely with the Extension Service (now ACES) personnel, Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (now FSA). Long was instrumental in developing good solid vegetable crop programs in Geneva County.

In 1989, Long made a decision to lease out a large part of his farm. In 2006, he, along with four sons and three daughters, agreed to take back control of their farm and put it into agricultural production. Long is now 96 and still makes decisions on his farm. He and his family produce 24 acres of pasture/hay, four acres of corn, an acre of vegetables under plastic with drip irrigation, 15 pecan trees, and five acres of wildlife habitat. He has been working with NRCS and FSA since 1951 developing good conservation practices.

All seven of Mr. Matthew and Ida Mae’s children hold at least a bachelor’s degree. They have a beautiful farm everyone can visit and a love for the land. Long can tell you about a century of farming: from farming by hand and farming with an ox to farming with a tractor. The Longs will all agree, you have to love farming to be a part of it, but it offers a lifetime of rewards.



Geneva County DC James Currington looks on with Matthew and Simon Long as plastic is being laid for their micro-irrigation practices on their farm near Slocomb.

Earth Day with Holly Hill Students



In observance of Earth Day, Holly Hill first graders in Enterprise saw first hand the effect that pollution can have on wildlife in ponds and streams. Sue Leverett with Coffee County SWCD read “The Disappearance of Mudpuppy Pond” to the students and demonstrated the destruction of a frog’s habitat due to littering, careless mining practices, and release of manufacturing waste.

Students were encouraged to develop good conservation habits to preserve natural resources early in life and to practice Earth Day principles every day. Earth Day coloring books and ideas on how to reduce, reuse, and recycle items were distributed.

Florence Earth Day Celebration

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

On April 25, Wilson Park in downtown Florence was packed with vendors promoting Earth Day. Booths included information on “going green,” solar ovens, and planting trees. The Colbert/Franklin SWCD, Northwest RC&D, Lauderdale NRCS, and Earth Team Volunteers were available to answer questions about conservation of natural resources.

Mascots Ruby Raindrop and Sammy Soil were at the event. Steve Trash performed several magic shows about conservation in the afternoon. The staff on-hand hoped the event encouraged others to help conserve natural resources and make the Earth a better place for the future.



Earth Team Volunteer Emily Malone hands out information at the Earth Day Celebration in Florence.



Steve Trash entertains and educates spectators about conservation.

Winston County Earth Day Celebration at Clear Creek Park

By Katherine Patton, District Administrative Coordinator, SWCD, Jasper, AL

On April 17, about 100 Curry Elementary second grade students participated in an annual Earth Day Celebration at the Clear Creek Park in Winston County. The Earth Day Celebration was made possible through a partnership with AFC, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (AWFF), and the Walker County SWCD/NRCS. Each of the organizations hosted different stations which lasted 30 minutes each.

The AFC's station consisted of a game that taught the students how quickly a wildfire can spread. They also learned the difference between a prescribed burn and wildfire along with the benefits to wildlife that are associated with prescribed burning.

AWFF conducted two stations. One station allowed the students to identify pelts and the matching footprints associated with that animal. The other station consisted of wildlife skulls and the different types of habitat that these animals live in.

The Walker County SWCD/NRCS staff allowed the students to feel different soil textures and types through a hands-on soil probe activity.

Fossils from the Minkin fossil site located in Walker County were available for the students to look at to aid in discussing how the fossils were formed. Water conservation was discussed and each student received a water conservation kit, including a five-minute shower timer, leak detection tablets, toilet displacement bag, lawn watering gauge, drops and watts conservation booklet, and a four-inch rain gauge.



Second grade students take part in the soil probe activity at the Earth Day Celebration in Winston County.

New Initiative Focuses on Black Belt Forest Landowners

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

On June 12, several Alabama conservation partners came together to discuss procedures to implement the Alabama Forestry Commission's (AFC) Alabama Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners.

This program is administered through NRCS EQIP as a Special Emphasis Initiative for New and Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers as authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill.

The Initiative targets forest landowners in the Black Belt counties of Bibb, Dallas, Hale, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, and Wilcox. Lands eligible for the initiative are forestlands of at least 10 acres that are overstocked, under stocked, and subject to fire hazard, disease, or insect infestation, and that are not enrolled in any other EQIP or Farm Bill programs.

The goal of this initiative is to aid in forest restoration efforts by supporting and encouraging forest



State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett (right foreground) listens as State Forester Linda Casey discusses the Alabama Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners. The initiative targets Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers in the Black Belt region of the state.

stand improvement practices, such as prescribed burning, fire breaks, and Longleaf pine establishment.

AFC foresters will assist participants in developing a forest stewardship plan with NRCS assisting in developing a schedule of planned practices.

Participants will receive financial assistance from NRCS, and both NRCS and AFC will

assist landowners in the application of practices.

The Alabama Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners is part of NRCS's Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, which encourages producers to install and maintain conservation practices and address conservation priorities on a local, State, or regional level.

Randolph County Forest Field Day

By Craig Johnston, District Conservationist, NRCS, Wedowee, AL

AFC held three Forest Field Days in Randolph County in late April and early May for local fifth grade students. The field days were held by private landowners who are actively applying forest management practices. The field days were near Roanoke on April 30, Wedowee/Woodland on May 6, and Wadley on May 11.

Randolph/Clay Counties SWCD/NRCS staff discussed forest related topics such as threatened and endangered species, habitat improvement for wildlife, stream management zones, and riparian buffers. The day also included presentations on tree identification, "Everything needs space," and "Who lives here."



Randolph County fifth grade students attend one of the Forestry Field Days held on property of private landowners actively applying forest management practices.

Alabama SWCS Holds Annual Meeting

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

The annual meeting of the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) was held in Birmingham, June 10-12, at the DoubleTree Hotel. The theme was "Energy and Water Development for Alabama: Managing our Natural Resources for the Future." The meeting provided attendees with information about alternative energy and managing Alabama's current water and energy supplies.

The meeting opened on Wednesday afternoon with Alabama SWCS Chapter President Francisco Arriaga introducing Brent Cotton of the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau, who welcomed the group to Birmingham.

The first day featured speakers from the Auburn University Natural Resources Management and Development Institute; the Southern Company, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Development; New Gas Concepts in Pelham, AL; National Soil Dynamics Lab, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Auburn, AL; and farmer Dennis Bragg of Toney, AL. The topics covered included energy and water development and



SWCS tour participants at Sunshine Supplies where they observed a demonstration of FilterPave porous pavement.

uses, bioenergy initiatives and implications for agriculture, the development of wood pellets for energy, and one speaker's vision of renewable resources.

On Wednesday, after a business meeting, the group received presentations from other speakers in a technical session. Topics included using energy from algae, designing homes that are energy efficient and environmentally friendly, innovative projects the city of Hoover is using to recycle, and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's exhibit "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil."

On Thursday the attendees boarded two buses for field trips around the Birmingham area. The tour included stops at a forest owned by the Gene Ray

Taylor Company to discuss Loblolly pine management and carbon credits, the Birmingham Water Works Board water treatment facilities, Alabama Power's Miller Steam Plant, Sunshine Supplies for a demonstration of FilterPave porous pavement, an Alabama Department of Transportation highway grade and drain project site, and the Auburn University Center for Bioenergy and Bioproducts mobile gasification unit.

Thursday ended with a dinner, which included entertainment by Wayne Keith of St. Clair County and his "Adventures Across the U.S. in a Wood-burning Truck." Keith built a gasification unit in the bed of his truck that can burn just about any material with carbon for fuel. His main fuel source is wood and the truck can go about 5,000 miles on a cord of wood with speeds of up to 80 mph. He has partnered with a group from Auburn University to further research and refine the unit for possible public use.

For more information on the Alabama Chapter of the SWCS, visit the website at: <http://www.alchapterswcs.aces.edu/>



SWCS members visit the Auburn University Center for Bioenergy and Bioproducts mobile gasification unit in Fultondale. The mobile gasification unit was one of the tour stops during the Alabama SWCS Annual Meeting.



The Birmingham Water Works Board opened one of its water treatment facilities for the SWCS tours.

American Indian Heritage Month Poster

November has been designated as American Indian Heritage Month. One of the ways NRCS nationally celebrates American Indian Heritage Month is by distributing a poster created by an American Indian artist. Each year artists from selected states have the opportunity to exhibit his/her talents and heritage on a national level. For 2009, the West Region produced the poster; and NRCS Alaska was the lead state.

Artwork by Andrew Abyo was chosen for the NRCS 2009 American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month Poster. Abyo titled his artwork, "We Are All Connected." It depicts the relationship between land, animals, and people. Abyo described his piece this way: "We are connected to land and animals. We are connected by touch and feel in spirit. Our ties to land and animals help us survive and connect to our ancestors. We are all connected."

Abyo was born in Anchorage, Alaska, and raised in the Bristol Bay village of Pilot Point. Abyo is an Aleut/Alutiiq artist and carver who seeks to learn and pass on his cultural traditions.



Conecuh County SWCD Holds Cogongrass Field Day in Repton

By Bridget Cain, District Administrative Coordinator, SWCD, Evergreen, AL

Cogongrass is one of the world's worst weeds, and it is spreading rapidly throughout the state. It is reducing forest and pasture productivity, destroying wildlife habitat, impacting right of ways and presenting a severe fire hazard. As good stewards, landowners must become aware of this aggressive invader and combat one of the most invasive plant species in the world.

The Conecuh County SWCD hosted a Cogongrass Field Day on May 14 at Ryals Farm in Repton. Carol Ryals, a cooperator with NRCS, and her son Mike are aggressively attacking Cogongrass on their property using the measures found in their Conservation Management Plan.

The morning began with an introduction of multiple invasive species plaguing Alabama, including Cogongrass, by Beau Brodbeck of ACES, followed by Gary Cole from AFC presenting "Alabama's Most Unwanted – Cogongrass."

Conecuh County Engineer Winston Foshee covered

control measures and local infestations and treatment on public roadways. Mabry Anderson with Dupont Chemical Corporation spoke about products being offered as well as some products being tested for Cogongrass by Dupont.

Escambia County NRCS District Conservationist Detra Boutwell then conducted a discussion of Best Management Practices, the importance of follow-up, and financial assistance opportunities. Landowners were given an opportunity to discuss what was and was not working for them and to report on control methods. During this time, Jennifer Stanley from FSA was introduced and spoke about how Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) maintenance payments are intended to supplement cost of invasive species control.

Lunch was provided for all participants and was followed by a field tour and demonstrations led by Victor Howell from AFC and Mike Ryals. The Alabama SWCS provided a portion of funds for the event and the participants paid a nominal registration fee to offset cost. Each participant received a notebook filled with information about Cogongrass. Thirty people, including many landowners, attended the event.

Georgia and Alabama NRCS Hosts 2009 Sunbelt Expo

By J.M. Dangler, State Agronomist, NRCS, Athens, GA

The Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition (Expo) was held in Moultrie, Georgia, October 20-22. The Sunbelt Expo is billed as the “premier farm show in the world.” Alabama and Georgia NRCS promoted natural resource conservation. Alabama and Georgia NRCS have been working with several partners for years as part of the Team Conservation group at Expo. This year, the two states focused on the many goals of NRCS.

A tent on a corner along the main pedestrian thoroughfare of the fairgrounds was the venue for NRCS at this year’s Expo and farm machinery was placed outside the tent to attract row crop and other producers. There were exhibits on the importance of energy management, such as information on using peanut oil for diesel fuel from USDA-Agricultural Research Service, and the EQIP version of “cash for clunkers” for irrigation motors.

Exhibits inside the tent highlighted natural resources and programs, including topics such as conservation tillage, soil biology and quality, energy and water quantity, careers and volunteer positions.

Erosion Stopped In Its Tracks

By Jillian Stephens, TSP, Lee-Chambers-Russell SWCD, Auburn, AL

“Helping people, Help the Land,” has been the long-standing motto of the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and NRCS employees in Lee County have been doing just that.

Work has been completed on the first sediment basin, built under the new standards, in lower Lee County. Prior to installation, managers of this land were experiencing major sediment erosion. The effects of this erosion could have proved detrimental to the area, soiling nearby waterways through the washing of top soil and sub-soil from the site.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), managers of the site were able to receive financial assistance to prevent the continued deposition of undesirable materials and prevent the sediment from disturbing other areas. Managers were also able, through EQIP, to improve the quality of the forest behind the site by providing openings for wildlife and managing runoff problems from the nearby dirt pit.

Enviroscape Programs 2009

By Jillian Stephens, TSP, Lee-Chambers-Russell SWCD, Auburn, AL

Students in Russell and Lee Counties had the opportunity to learn about water conservation through the NRCS and SWCD’s Enviroscape program. Through the program students were actively engaged with questions about conservation while seeing the effects of pollution, run off, and soil erosion on a watershed diagram.

Facilitators used colored powder and cocoa powder to represent pollutants and a mister to represent rain. When combined on the watershed diagram students could see where “dirty water” goes after it leaves places like subdivisions and factories and how it affects rivers, lakes, and streams.

Students this year left the Enviroscape program with renewed enthusiasm about conservation and encouragement to find small ways in their own life to preserve our natural resources.

Walker County SWCD Hosts Invasive Species Workshop

By Katherine Patton, District Administrative Coordinator, Walker County SWCD, Jasper, AL

The Walker County SWCD along with the Alabama Invasive Plant Council and the Cawaco RC&D Council hosted the “Weeds Gone Wild” Invasive Species Workshop on October 14, 2009. About 80 people from at least 12 counties across the state attended the workshop.

The speakers, presentations and material provided at the workshop provided the public with both general and detailed information on the detrimental effects caused by invasive species. Attendees were also provided with the different types of control measures and eradication techniques as well as information on the NRCS EQIP Invasive Plants Management Project.

The workshop was well received by landowners and forestry professionals.

Personnel News

Promotions

Jamie Carpenter, District Conservationist, Tuscumbia, AL
Wade Hill, District Conservationist, Hamilton, AL
Christopher Joe, Soil Conservationist, Auburn, AL, to
Andalusia, AL
Craig Johnson, Soil Conservationist, Scottsboro, AL, to
District Conservationist Wedowee, AL
Shane King, Resource Engineer, Troy, AL
Annette Spivey, Soil Conservation Technician,
Alexander City, AL
Anne Cross, Soil Conservationist, Rainsville, AL, to
District Conservationist, Linden, AL
Greg Dansby, District Conservationist, Camden, AL, to
RC&D Coordinator, Thomasville, AL
Joey Koptis, Soil Conservationist, Bay Minette, AL, to
District Conservationist, Bay Minette, AL
Allison Mackey Smith, Secretary, Auburn, AL
Blake Ray, Soil Conservation Technician, Talladega, AL
Joshua Elliott, Soil Conservationist, Mobile, AL
Tammy Hussey, Administrative Coordinator, Troy, AL
Joe Norris, Geographer, Auburn, AL
Josh Reed, Soil Scientist, Jackson, AL
Wendy Smith, Soil Conservation Technician, Selma, AL

Accessions

William Bodiford, Soil Conservation Technician, Monroeville, AL
Khalia Giles, Soil Conservation Technician, Tuskegee, AL
Adam Sconyers, Soil Conservation Technician, Auburn, AL
Shea Strickland, Soil Conservation Technician, Abbeville, AL
Wesley Halbrooks, Program Assistant, Decatur, AL
Heather Pouncey, Program Manager,
Navy Personnel Command, Millington, TN, to
State Administrative Officer, Auburn, AL

Reassignments

Josh Elliott, Soil Conservationist, Andalusia, AL, to Mobile, AL
James Butch Kelley, Soil Conservation Technician,
Andalusia, AL, to Brewton, AL
Amy Moncus, Agricultural Engineer, Auburn, AL, to Moulton, AL
Tanga Skinner, Soil Conservation Technician,
New Brockton, AL, to Geneva, AL
Bennie Moore, Conservation Agronomist to
District Conservationist, Luverne, AL
Blake Garner, Soil Conservation Technician, to
Soil Conservationist, Camden, AL
Michelle Wood, Secretary, Grove Hill, AL to Program Assistant,
Grove Hill, AL

Retirements

Ronnie Davis, Soil Conservation Technician, Geneva, AL
Paul Swenson, Human Resources Officer, Auburn, AL
Clark Painter, Budget Officer, Auburn, AL
Phillip Barbaree, Soil Conservation Technician, Troy, AL
Jimmy Butler, Soil Conservation Technician, Fayette, AL
Susan Duff, District Conservationist, Vernon, AL
Sandy Tucker, Soil Conservation Technician, Autaugaville, AL

Summer Internships

Demetris Johnson, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation),
Livingston, AL
Drake McCants, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation),
Huntsville, AL

In Sympathy

Ottis Polk, Retired DC and Wilcox County SWCD Supervisor, passed away June 3. He was 94 years old. Polk worked as DC in Wilcox County for 40 years and retired in the late 1970's. He began serving as a Supervisor for the Wilcox County SWCD in 1985 and retired in 2008.

James E. "Eddie" Harrison, Retired Wilcox County DC, passed away after a battle with cancer. Cards can be sent to his wife Cheryl at:
14395 Highway 154
Grove Hill, AL 36451

• From Retired ASTC-Technology Robert Berry:

"I would like to express my appreciation to the NRCS employees, retirees and other natural resource partners for the support you provided through your prayers, visits, phone calls, and cards during and following my wife Jeanette's battle with muscular dystrophy that ended on January 23. She was a real trooper throughout the struggle. It means a lot to me knowing the natural resource family extends beyond job requirements."

Robert's address is:

135 County Road 1310
Vinemont, AL 36179

• Next Issue

Submissions for the *Current Developments* newsletter, potential online success stories, and news releases are welcomed, encouraged, and appreciated anytime.

The Communications, Marketing, and Outreach (CMO) staff may be contacted with questions or submissions by email at AL-nrcs-publicinfo@one.usda.gov.



Current Developments
Winter 2009

Dr. William Puckett
State Conservationist

Julie Yates
Director of Communications,
Marketing, and Outreach

Fay Garner
Public Affairs Assistant

Alice Love
Agricultural Outreach Liaison

Matthew D. Collins
Communications Specialist

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SWCD/NRCS at Mall Green Day



On June 20, the Jasper Mall held its first Green Day. Jasper County SWCD/NRCS took part in the event with an exhibit with information about conservation. The event also included an opportunity for residents to bring electronic devices, batteries, printer cartridges, etc., to be recycled as well as books, clothing, and household items. Some of the displays setup for Green Day were a solar power display, rainwater recycling, a smart car, and an environmentally friendly auto paint used by a local body shop.

Coosa Valley RC&D Provides Funds for Alabama Scenic River Trail



Noopie Cosby, program developer for the Alabama Association of RC&D Councils, presents a check from the Coosa Valley RC&D Council to the Alabama Scenic River Trail. On hand for the June 13 presentation were Representative Richard Lindsey, Senator Larry Means, Senator Roger Bedford, and Cherokee County Probate Judge Melvin Salter.

Congratulations NRCS Retirees!



Soil Conservation Technician Ronnie Davis retired after 33 years of federal service.



Human Resources Officer Paul Swenson retired after 37 years of federal service.



Budget Officer Clark Painter retired after 37 years of federal service.



Soil Conservation Technician Phillip Barbaree retired after 30 years of federal service.



Soil Conservation Technician Jimmy Butler retired after 31 years of federal service.



District Conservationist Susan Duff retired after 27 years of federal service.



Soil Conservation Technician Sandy Tucker retired after 24 years of federal service.

New Faces in the State Office



Heather Pouncey, the new State Administrative Officer comes to NRCS from the U.S. Navy Personnel Command.



Jean Sparks returns from the Veterans Affairs Regional Office in Atlanta as Procurement Clerk in the state office.



Ann Crawford joins the state office staff as the new Mailroom Clerk.



Clay Jones is a student at Auburn University and joins the staff at the state office as Management Services Clerk.