

Iowa Current Developments

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 210 Walnut St., Rm. 693, Des Moines, IA 50309 October 2007

From the Office of Iowa State Conservationist Rick Van Klaveren



What's inside....

Trautman to Iraq	Page 2
Three Retire with 104 Years of Service	Page 2
"Thousands" Attend Pasture Walk	Page 3
Soil Scientists Celebrate	Page 4
Golf Tournament a Success	Page 4
Biggs Named National Special Emphasis Manager	Page 5
Iowa Drill Team Bores Nebraska	Page 5
Personnel Actions	Page 6

"Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service: Excellence in helping people conserve and improve our natural resources, communities and environment."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Change is all around us. We are getting a new Farm Bill so we know some of our current programs will be altered. We are conducting an early initial Environmental Quality Incentives Program sign up, which is unique. Our budget has changed. From FY2005 to FY2007 we've seen Iowa NRCS's allocation for Financial Assistance (FA), money to pay for conservation projects, go up while Technical Assistance (TA), money for wages, offices, Technical Service Providers, and anything not FA, go down. The change we see in our work lives at Iowa NRCS is constant with one very critical exception: conservation is going on the ground. Regardless of what is happening around us, it is critical we adapt to change, focus on our mission of improving the environment and positively impacting people's lives. You are doing that.

The proof of your good work is in the numbers. In FY2007, Iowa NRCS and our partners improved soil quality on 1,052,406 acres. We improved water quality on 1,163,209 acres. All soil surveys are now on-line. We improved habitat quality for fish and wildlife on 157,805 acres in the state and added 14,095 more wetland acres. Resource Conservation and Development projects improved land and water resources on 103,111 acres of land and were directly responsible for creating or retaining 131 businesses in rural communities and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of jobs.

That's impact. That's proof our work is improving people's lives and the land. That shows we are keeping our eye on what's important.

Thank you for your work and dedication to helping people help the land in FY2007. I look forward to our continued success in 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Van Klaveren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Iowa Current Developments

Trautman Going to Iraq

In late October or early November, Bruce Trautman, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Fairfield, will leave Iowa for one year of service in Iraq. He will be based north of Baghdad, serving as an agricultural advisor with a reconstruction team.



Bruce Trautman

Trautman will help rebuild an agricultural system that was once a strong part of the economy. He will work closely with local farmers on crop production issues and help build an extension service.

Trautman is excited at the prospect of helping in Iraq and working with a failing ag system. He likes the challenge and a chance to help people on a "big" scale.

Trautman says personal safety is a concern, but he'll be part of a team that includes Marines.

While he is gone, a group of four people will be detailed to fill Trautman's position on a quarterly basis starting with Christa Perkins. Shawn Dettman will follow with others to be named later.

Three Retire with 104 Years of Service

Three people recently retired with a combined 104 years of experience in district conservation work. Arlene Riley, Sac County Soil and Water Conservation District secretary, retired September 6 with 50 years of service. Les Betts, District



Arlene Riley

Conservationist in Keosauqua, retired with 34 years of working with farmers and Mark Sandvig, Wetland Specialist in Emmetsburg, retired June 29 after serving 20 years, seven months.



Les Betts

"When I started," Riley said, "we only had a manual typewriter to work with, and now, the computer. It is great to go out in the country and see so many windbreaks, terraces, and waterways that have been installed over the years."



Mark Sandvig

Iowa NRCS Quality Assurance Report

The Iowa NRCS BEST (Bringing Excellence and Systems Together) Team recently completed statewide quality assurance training for all employees. As result of that training, employees know the importance of performing their jobs in a more streamlined and consistent fashion.

According to Jason Johnson, BEST Team member, great ideas for future process step tables and flowcharts came out of the meetings. "This was particularly true," said Johnson, "for employees who work in our field offices across the state. The BEST Team, which meets regularly, will begin work immediately on several of those process step tables and flowcharts."

If you would like to suggest a process step table or flowchart, or have a question or comment relating to Iowa NRCS Quality Assurance, please contact Jennifer Dubendorf, Quality Assurance Leader, at jennifer.dubendorf@ia.usda.gov or 515-323-2225.

On the web: <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/QualityAssurance.html>.



State Conservationist Rick Van Klaveren, Area 5 NRCS employees, partners and friends, wish Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations) Bruce Trautman well as he is about to spend one year helping Iraqi farmers rebuild their agricultural economy. Group photos of the 138 attendees were taken during a break in a recent area meeting held in Fairfield.

Workshops Held for TSPs

Over the summer, NRCS and Prairie Rivers of Iowa RC&D, Humboldt, partnered to present a series of three-day Considerations in Nutrient and Pest Management Planning (CNPMP) workshops to 75 Technical Service Providers (TSPs). The workshops utilized the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning (CNMP) process to fulfill the national TSP requirement for "Module 7" of the CNPMP AgLearn course. Upon completion of additional National NRCS TSP requirements, the licensed engineers and agricultural professionals were eligible to receive Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) certification.

CNMPs are used by the producer to best utilize manure and other animal wastes in environmentally sound ways that follow NRCS standards and specifications. The producer pays the TSP for the CNMP and can be reimbursed by NRCS.

CNMPs may be an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract requirement.

Judy Martinson, Iowa NRCS TSP Coordinator, said, "There was great interaction between the TSPs and NRCS. We hosted four workshops in 2007 and we will hold two more workshops in 2008."



John Swizdor, State Office Purchasing Agent, examines an artifact during the

cultural resources segment of the Orientation for New Employees course he attended in August.



Soil Conservation Technician Denise Miller with NRCS in Oakland stands where a newly constructed terrace was damaged from heavy rains in May. Terraces were damaged all across Iowa by a year of rainfall that exceeded terrace design limits.



State office Easement Programs Easement Specialist Shelley Dugan and Easement Program Coordinator Monica Monk welcome Ed Cox, a second year Drake University law school student to their staff. Cox, who is an Earth Team Volunteer, will prepare "option agreement to purchase" worksheets and examine ownership documents.

'Thousands' Attend Pasture Walk

The Woodbury Soil and Water Conservation District recently co-sponsored a pasture walk that brought in 31 producers from seven counties and one television farm director. Dennis Morrice of KMEG TV-14 in Sioux City was on hand to film it. Once back at his studio, Morrice prepared a report on the pasture walk and broadcast his findings to thousands more on his "Farm Focus" program.

"We had a lot of great conservation information for farmers on this pasture walk," said Jerry Sindt, District Conservationist for Woodbury County. "While we always want more people to attend these events, I'm very pleased that many more farmers from all across northwestern Iowa, and parts of Nebraska and South Dakota, were able to go along, thanks to reporting on KMEG TV."

The KMEG report featured an interview with the producer, Brian Weaver. Weaver answered several questions about the size of his operation and how he manages the number of cow-calf pairs on his pasture.

Walls are Winners

Michelle Wall, Cartographic Technician in the State Office, and her daughter Chelsea, won seven medals in this year's Iowa Games. They took first place gold medals in the relay race and in the parent/child aluminum class canoe race. Chelsea won gold medals in the junior 300 meter sprint white water kayak and junior slalom course. Michelle also earned a second place finish in the master slalom course.



Waverly soil scientists Neil Sass, Elizabeth Swanberg and Lee Camp were instrumental in updating the field work in the revised Bremer County Soil Survey.

Soil Scientists Celebrate Wrap Up

Soil scientists in northeastern Iowa recently celebrated the completion of three years of fieldwork that was needed to update the Bremer County Soil Survey. Observing the occasion were NRCS soil scientists that did the field work: Leland Camp, Elizabeth Swanberg, Neil Sass, and Area Resource Soil Scientist Bob Vobora. Kevin Norwood started on the project, but moved to take a job in the Indianapolis, IN, soils office.

The previous Bremer County soils fieldwork was completed between 1957 and 1961.

Fieldwork took the five soil scientists to every part of Bremer County. They checked landscapes and did transects across fields to determine if the soils described in the old survey were accurate or if a different soil series would be a better fit.

This fall and winter, Michelle Wall and Dale Ceolla, of the Carto Team in Des Moines, will make soil map adjustments to aerial ortho imagery to ensure accuracy. A finished product should be available to the public by next summer.

Golf Tournament a Success

Crawford County NRCS employees hosted a statewide golf tournament August 17 at the Majestic Hills Golf Course in Denison. The annual event drew 68 golfers from across the state and included federal, state, district and partner employees and guests.

Scott Eischeid, Jay Ford, and Ray Brotherton, of the Denison County field and engineering offices, arranged this year's tournament. Eischeid said his goal was fun with friends weaved around a little golf.

Tournament winners were:
Championship Flight

1. Dana Holland / Steve Radosevich
 2. Randy Robb / Dave White
 3. Jim Phillips / Jason Johnson
- First Flight

1. Curt Donohue / Paul Sweeney
 2. Mike Sucik / Douglas Oelmann
 3. Scott Eischeid / T.J. Mathis
- Second Flight

1. Brian Tumey / Kim Proctor
2. Jason Hart / Jered Finley
3. Ron Carper / Deb Vonnahme



Jim Phillips, Geodata Manager, prepares to tee off at the statewide golf tournament, held August 17 in Denison.



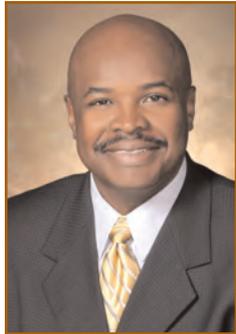
Civil Engineering Technician James Gibbs and Environmental Engineer Mark Garrison staff the Team USDA booth at the Iowa State Fair. Gibbs and Garrison were among the 20 NRCS workers from across the state that answered questions and promoted better understanding of the NRCS and USDA mission and accomplishments to thousands of attendees.



At their annual picnic, State Office Employees Association (SOEA) members and their families pose with a poster of support for Army soldier Thomas Avera. Avera is in Iraq and has been "adopted" by the State Office. Besides collecting signatures, SOEA members gathered a box of personal items, magazines, note paper, socks and packaged food and sent it to Avera. Another "care" package will be sent in November. To contribute, contact Jill Clothier at 515-323-2231.

Where Are They Now?

Terry Cosby, a former Iowa NRCS student trainee, is now the State Conservationist for Ohio.



Terry Cosby

Raised on a cotton farm in northern Mississippi, he joined NRCS in 1979 while still in college. Working in Iowa during the summers, he graduated with an Agriculture Education degree

and started full time with Iowa NRCS in 1982. While in the state, Cosby worked in a number of positions including as a District Conservationist in Burlington and as an Area Resource Conservationist in Atlantic. He left for Missouri in 1994 to serve as Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations. He was Deputy State Conservationist in Idaho from 2004 to 2005 and, in May 2005, Cosby became the NRCS Ohio State Conservationist.

Cosby enjoys hunting, fishing, and watching his children's sporting activities. He is also a high school and NCAA soccer referee. Cosby and his wife, Brenda, have three children: Terrance (19), Cory (16), and Jasmine (13).

Biggs Named National Special Emphasis Program Manager

Angela Biggs, District Conservationist in the Harlan Field Office, was named National NRCS Asian American/Pacific Islander Program Manager. A collateral duty, Biggs will be involved in a number of civil rights initiatives including enhancing career development and advancement of Asian Pacific American employees in NRCS.

Biggs began her NRCS career in 2002 as a Soil Conservationist in the Indianola and the Independence Field Offices. She has also served as the Iowa Asian American/Pacific Islander Program Manager since 2002.

Prior to joining NRCS, she worked for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation as an Environmental Specialist on a water quality project involving 276,000 acres in four counties. She received a BA in Biology from the University of Guam in 1997. Angela is half Chamorro and has spent her life moving back and forth between Guam and the mainland US.



Angela Biggs

Iowa Drill Team Bores Nebraska

They weren't lost. They were supposed to be in Nebraska. Iowa Geologists Kathy Woida and Angela Bowman, assisted by Drill-rig Operator Jamie Johnson and Driller Helper Jerry Mall, spent four days in early October drilling 20 holes in the earth in Washington County, Nebraska, north of Omaha.

An agreement between the Iowa and Nebraska NRCS State Offices sent members of the Iowa engineering staff to work on a Nebraska dam project. Drilling test holes is part of the design process. Engineers need to know what soil properties lie beneath the surface in order to safely design and build dams.

At this Nebraska site, in the Papillion Creek Watershed, the engineers are rehabilitating a 40 year old high hazard flood control dam. They need to raise it 12 feet and strengthen the structure to protect a downstream home and highway.

Rick Knutson, Design Engineer, expects dam construction to begin this fiscal year.

News to Know

The Iowa NRCS website is constantly being updated. For the latest conservation news, go to: <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/news/>.

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Personnel Changes

Retired:

Carol Olson – Soil Conserv Techncn from Clinton SWCD – August 2007

Arlene Riley – Secretary from Sac SWCD – August 2007

New Employees:

Susania Ernst – Environmental Specialist in Lucas SWCD – September 21, 2007

Alea Klatt – Secretary in Palo Alto SWCD – September 21, 2007

Connie Carpenter – Secretary in Lucas SWCD – September 21, 2007

Shannon Hurd – Secretary in Howard SWCD – October 5, 2007

Iowa NRCS Personnel Actions

Name	Title	Eff Date	Action	Location
Exey, Barbara J	Soil Conserv Techncn	7/8/07	Promotion	Area 3 Decorah
Hoeffler, Julie R	Soil Conserv Techncn	7/8/07	Promotion	Area 3 Epworth
Mitchell, Julie K	Soil Conserv Techncn	7/8/07	Promotion	Area 3 Toledo
Rachut, Elizabeth	Soil Conserv Techncn	7/8/07	Promotion	Area 3 New Hampton
Gross, Adrienne	Stud Trainee (Law)	7/13/07	Resignation	Wetland Restoration Team
Froah, Gary	Soil Conserv Techncn	7/27/07	Resignation	Area 2 Newton
Bednarek, Richard	Soil Scntst	8/5/07	Reassignment	To NRCS in South Dakota
Fischer, Jaia L	Soil Conservst	8/5/07	Reassignment	Area 2 Newton
Ridgeway, Shaffer	Dist Conservst	8/5/07	Promotion	Area 3 Waterloo
Vogel, John P	Soil Conservst	8/5/07	Reassignment	Area 1 Lemars
Wegner, Jesse B	Soil Conservst	8/5/07	Promotion	Area 4 Corydon
Focht, Andrew M	Soil Conserv Techncn	8/19/07	Reassignment	Area 4 Red Oak
Frobish, Lucas A	Soil Conservst	8/19/07	Promotion	Area 3 West Union
Henke, Darwin F	Soil Conserv Techncn	8/19/07	Promotion	Area 1 Ida Grove
Hillers, Brian R.	Dist Conservst	8/19/07	Reassignment	To NRCS in Wisconsin
Houk, Curt M.	Soil Conservst	8/19/07	Reassignment	To FSA in Iowa
Owen, Hillary A	Soil Conservst	8/19/07	Reassignment	Area 2 Boone
Koenig, Chad M	Geo Sys Speclst	8/24/07	Resignation	GIS Staff
Kluver, Lynn R	Soil Conserv Techncn	9/2/07	Promotion	Area 2 Thompson
Robb, Randy J	Wetland Restrtn Speclst	9/2/07	Reassignment	Area 5 Fairfield AO
Selky, Daniel G	Natrl Resource Speclst	9/2/07	Reassignment	Area 2 Fort Dodge AO
Webster, Michael	Natrl Resource Speclst	9/2/07	Reassignment	Area 3 West Union AO
Zimmerman, Sarah	Soil Conservst	9/2/07	Reassignment	Area 5 Washington
Betts, Leslie G	Dist Conservst	9/3/07	Retirement	Area 5 Keosauqua
Peitz, Eric R	Soil Conservst	9/16/07	Promotion	Area 5 Fairfield
Sass, Neil R	Soil Scntst	9/16/07	Promotion	Area 3 Waverly
Watson, Donald	Soil Scntst	9/28/07	Resignation	Area 1 Storm Lake
Everts, James	Soil Conserv Techncn	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Grundy Center
Green, Lawrence	Dist Conservst	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Allison
Jung, Jay	Dist Conservst	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Knoxville
Lewitke, Michael	Soil Conservst	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Knoxville
Luebbers, Michael	Soil Conserv Techncn	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Allison
MeyerDideriksen, T	Outreach Coordinator	9/30/07	Reassignment	Des Moines
Mier, Roberto	Dist Conservst	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Grundy Center
Morrell, Ray	Dist Conservst	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Indianola
Praska, Michael	Dist Conservst	9/30/07	Promotion	Area 3 Cresco
Rash Daniels, P	Soil Conserv Techncn	9/30/07	Promotion	Area 2 Hampton
Streeter, Rick D	Soil Conserv Techncn	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Indianola
Welshhons, Randal	Soil Conserv Techncn	9/30/07	Area Change	Area 2 Knoxville
Williams, Nichole L	Soil Conservst	9/30/07	Reassignment	Area 2 Allison
Owen, Hillary	Soil Conservst	10/12/07	Resignation	Area 2 Boone