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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
May 2010

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[The West Virginia Small Farm Conference](#)

The West Virginia Small Farm Conference was a three day educational and networking opportunity for farmers from West Virginia and surrounding regions to improve and better market their products.

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[Ruffner' Tall Oatgrass](#)

Ruffner' is a cultivar released by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Appalachian Plant Materials Center.

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[Wastewater Treatment Coalition of McDowell County](#)

The Ashland Wastewater Treatment System is complete. The first round of laboratory analysis showed fecal contamination greatly reduced.

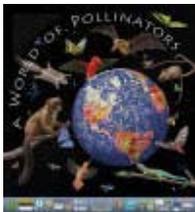
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Ripley Service Center People's Garden, Barbara Broxterman Works with WVU Jackson's Mill Market Garden Irrigation, State Office Bioswales, USDA Peoples Garden.

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Mike Jones, Soil Data Quality Specialist /Soil Geomorphologist

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To submit news items for the August *News and Views*, please send an e-mail message to [Carol Lagodich](#).

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS West Virginia State Office
1550 Earl Core Road, Morgantown, WV 26505
304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839
<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Kevin Wickey, West Virginia State Conservationist

NRCS field offices are located throughout West Virginia
Visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/> for addresses and phone numbers.

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Message from Kevin Wickey

If I haven't seen you in the last two months, let me say it's great to be back in West Virginia! I think I surprised several of you by returning and maybe even disappointed a couple of you! As the acting Chief Information Officer, I gained a fresh perspective on how dependent we are as an agency on Information Technology (IT). We cannot operate or complete our mission today without functioning IT. This wasn't true 26 years ago when I started work as a Student Trainee. It was much less the case even 10 years ago at the turn of the century. Today we don't like to admit how dependent we are on IT and, unfortunately, much of the IT infrastructure we've deployed tethers us to the office instead of coming with us to where our customers and activities take us.

While I enjoyed the detail I served, I enjoy being a State Conservationist more. I like that word conservationist in my title. However, one of the things I was challenged with during my detail was to answer the question of what are we doing here in West Virginia? What conservation goals are we trying to achieve? What activities are you most proud of at your office and why? What are the resource concerns here in the state (watershed, district, council, county, etc.) and how are we working with our partners and using the resources we've been given to address and correct those concerns?

With our nose to the grindstone (or rather tethered to the computer), we lose sight of our mission if we are not careful. We begin to go through the motions of obligating money and making payments. But that is not who we are as an agency. We are about cooperatively working with private landowners to solve natural resource problems. Everything each of you does points to that end – or it should.

As acting CIO I had the chance to work closely with Lane Price and the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative. This five year effort is about changing this paradigm and reinventing our business processes (not just our IT) to significantly increase the amount of time our field staff spends in the field. But the most important part of their effort is putting conservation planning back at the center of our focus.

Our Chief is reminding us that each small act of conservation chosen by private landowners across this country can add up to solve large problems – problems like cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, solving the hypoxia problem in the Gulf of Mexico, keeping a species of concern (like the Sage Grouse) from becoming endangered. This little agency-born 75 years ago during a large economic downturn and great social stress in our nation—together with our partners—solved the large problem of the day—the dust bowl. We've made enormous strides since then with Private Lands Conservation, but there are still huge, seemingly insurmountable problems ahead. But this agency knows the key to these problems is working cooperatively with individual private landowners to make decisions for conservation on their land that add up to large impacts for the nation. As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, let's remember why we're here and focus on the next 75 years. There is more work to be done.

Kevin Wickey
 State Conservationist
 West Virginia

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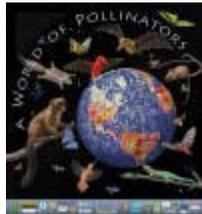
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Bits and Pieces

New LANDCARE products



The new 2010 Pollinator poster, *A World of Pollinators*, is available. This colorful 32 1/2" x 30" poster depicts the world as flowers and is surrounded by 17 different types of pollinators.

You can order these or any of our publications and forms at our website, <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov>, by email landcare@usda.gov or by calling 1-888-LANDCARE (1-888-526-3227).



LANDCARE also has a new NRCS 75th anniversary exhibit that can be reserved for your events or fairs. The exhibit comes as a set and contains 4 banner stands and 1 horizontal banner. See all exhibits at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/exhibits/>.

To reserve any National NRCS displays, call Chris Radley at 515-289-0325, extension 101, or by email christopher.radley@ia.usda.gov.

Wind Turbine at Cross Winds Farm Update

The November *News & Views* (http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/09nov_nv/wind.html) had a story about Barbarba Broxterman's wind turbine. The turbine is now producing electricity. Read more about it at <http://www.postgazette.com/pg/10112/1052406-115.stm> (leaving WV-NRCS website).

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Stewardship of West Virginia Hydrography Datasets

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and WV Office of GIS State Coordination (WVOGSC) are working together to provide current, accurate, and consistent surface water geospatial data for West Virginia. The three agencies signed a data stewardship Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to maintain, update and improve the hydrography datasets on April 26, 2010.

The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) and the Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD) are two closely related National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) datasets that provide a nationally consistent way for national, state, and local organizations to share information about surface water features such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, springs and wells. Uses include watershed management, water quality initiatives, watershed modeling, resource inventory and assessment, fire assessment and management, total maximum daily load calculations of pollutants, floodplain management, non-point source management planning, wetland loss mitigation, aquatic species conservation strategies, and land use management.

WVOGSC will act as the coordinator of stewardship activities for the State of West Virginia. The USGS will facilitate the State's efforts to build a successful stewardship program by providing necessary information and assistance. NRCS is providing technical support for the West Virginia WBD. Stephen G. Carpenter, NRCS State Soil Scientist/MLRA Region 13 Staff Leader, is the WBD Principal Steward. Deborah L. Chase, NRCS GIS Specialist (Publications), is the State WBD technical point of contact.

For more information on NRCS's participation in the project, contact Deborah L. Chase at 304-284-7568 or debbie.chase@wv.usda.gov.



Deborah L. Chase, NRCS GIS Specialist (Publications), and Stephen G. Carpenter, NRCS State Soil Scientist/MLRA Region 13 Staff Leader, watch as Tony Simental, WV GIS State Coordinator and Kevin Wickey, West Virginia State Conservationist, finalize the West Virginia Hydrography Datasets MOU at the WV-NRCS State Office in Morgantown.

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The West Virginia Small Farm Conference

The West Virginia Small Farm Conference was a three-day educational and networking opportunity for farmers from West Virginia and surrounding regions to improve and better market their products.

Matt Finck (VISTA) and Jason Teets, Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D Coordinator, were involved in planning the WV Community Food Security Symposium. For more information, go to http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/10feb_nv/field.html.

Barbara Broxterman, WV-NRCS Agricultural Engineer co-presented the "Beginners Guide to Drip Irrigation" with Gary Rapping. Barbara spoke about planning a micro irrigation system, finding a dependable water source, sizing the main, sub mains, headers, and how to select drip line laterals.

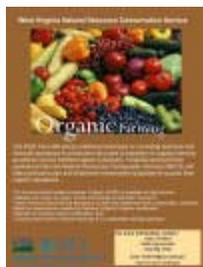


Barbara's second conference topic was the "High Tunnel on your Farm" discussion with Dr. Jett.

Barbara covered the limitations of the high tunnel, how to select a site, structural considerations, operation and maintenance needs, and the need for a properly designed irrigation system inside the tunnel. She let the participants know how to locate their local NRCS DC, mentioned EQIP and AMA programs, and the "Transitioning to Organic Farming" sign-up.



Rebecca MacLeod, Potomac Headwaters RC&D Coordinator, spoke on USDA funding for energy audits and energy efficiency programs.



Carol Lagodich, Pat Bowen, and Isaac Wolford created a display and fact sheet highlighting the NRCS Organics Program and the March 12 Organic sign-up. Contact information for District Conservationists and other NRCS publications were also available.

Some of the presentations were recorded and are available at <http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/conference/2010> (leaving WV-NRCS website).

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Agriculture Day At the Capital

February 27, 2010, was *West Virginia Agriculture and Conservation Day at the Legislature*. The area surrounding the Senate and House chambers was filled with informational booths promoting agriculture and conservation activities in WV. Soil Survey and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA Recovery Act) were featured at the NRCS display. Jackie Byars, Great Kanawha Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator, represented the RC&D programs and also had a display for the event.



Steve Carpenter, Rosalie Carpenter, Carol Lagodich, Charlotte Elliot-Friend, and Mike Jones staffed the NRCS exhibit.



Greg Kist explains the ARRA Floodplain Easements to Earth Team volunteer Rosalie Carpenter.

West Virginia NRCS Recovery Projects are in three categories.

1. Watershed Rehabilitation

- Rehabilitation of New Creek Site 14
 This Grant County project protects lives, property, and public works from flooding, and provides the City of Keyser with a reliable supply of water. The dam is being brought into compliance with current design criteria and performance standards by modifying the auxiliary spillway, replacing the water intake riser, installing a drainage system, and mitigating the temporary loss of the lake's fishery.

2. Watershed Operations

- Upper Tygart–Elkwater Fork Mitigation
 Upper Tygart–Elkwater Fork Mitigation construction began on the Randolph County dam in 2006 and was completed in 2009. As a condition of permitting under the Clean Water Act, mitigation activities must be completed before the dam can be utilized to supply water. On-site mitigation work includes creation of a .75 acre of wetland, angler access improvements (boat launch area, handicap accessible fishing area, and an angler walking trail), and a safety boom to improve boater safety. Mitigation work is also being done in the adjacent Shavers Fork watershed. This off-site component includes the use of natural stream design methods to improve aquatic habitat on about seven miles of trout stream that includes creating deep pools, adding riparian vegetation, narrowing over-widened sections, and creating woody fish habitat.
- Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage Remediation
 Coal mining in the Preston and Monongalia Counties Deckers Creek watershed at the turn of the twentieth century resulted in acid mine drainage and degraded the water quality of the creek. The Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage Remediation Project is treating acid mine drainage. The project consists of open limestone channels, sediment settling ponds, and erosion and sediment control practices.
- Dunloup Creek Voluntary Floodplain Buyout
 This Fayette and Raleigh Counties project targets threatened properties within the 100-year floodplain. USDA will deliver this assistance through its Watershed Protection and Flood

Prevention Program administered by NRCS. Flood damages will be reduced by 100 percent for those property owners that participate in the voluntary buyout and relocate outside of the floodplain. A total of 255 parcels were entered into the program with at least 128 applications for primary residences which are susceptible to repeated flooding from Dunloup Creek. State and local sponsors will provide 10 percent of the funding for the project. The program works with local partners who provide cost-share, permits, long-term operations, and maintenance. Upon completion, these projects are owned and operated by these local partners.

3. Floodplain Easements

- Goony Otter Creek, Barkers Creek, Upper Guyandotte River Watershed
North Fork of Elkhorn Creek, Tug River Watershed
The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program allows NRCS to acquire permanent easements on private land that has been damaged by flooding at least once in the last 12 months or twice in the past 10 years. NRCS funds the conservation work necessary to restore the land to its natural state.

The easements will restore floodplains to a natural state ensuring they function properly; conserve and improve fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, ground water recharge, and open space; reduce long-term federal disaster assistance; and safeguard lives and property from floods and erosion.

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Wastewater Treatment Coalition of McDowell County

Mountain Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) was asked to join the Wastewater Treatment Coalition of McDowell County following the devastating floods of 2001 and 2002. This organization is a unique coalition of individuals, non-profits, federal, state, local governments and agencies coming together to address local concerns about water quality.

In March, 2005, the Coalition published a county-wide treatment plan. In 2007, a watershed based plan for the North Fork of Elkhorn Creek was completed, identifying stream impairments and improvement projects. That same year, the Coalition started their first major project, the Ashland Wastewater Treatment System. Ashland is a small, impoverished, coal camp community established in the headwaters of the Elkhorn Creek Watershed. Ashland consists of 22 homes and a newly renovated coal company store which retails locally produced crafts and houses a commercial kitchen/restaurant. Due to failing septic systems, fecal contamination in the stream registered in excess of 200,000 col/100ml. Various grants and funding sources were bundled together to cover the \$600,000 construction cost. The system consists of home site storage tanks, effluent collection lines, pump station, constructed wetlands, and a subsurface drain field. The drain field was installed by college student volunteers from around the country, many of whom had never been to West Virginia before. The system has been completed and is treating these former sources of waste. The first round of laboratory analysis showed fecal contamination reduced to a level of 18 col/100 ml, a *wow* reduction. Nitrogen, phosphate and phosphorus are being monitored and will be reported on later this summer.

Other projects undertaken by the Coalition in this watershed are the installation of approximately 60 individual home site systems funded by Clean Water Act Section 319 and planning for a 130 home wastewater system in the neighboring community of Crumpler.

Community benefits expected from this project include improved human health, improved water quality, enhanced stream habitat, community growth due to availability of wastewater infrastructure, increase in home values, and the expansion of the Ashland Community Utility business.



Tim Craddock and Laura Maxfield (WV DEP) are shown helping to put the final touches to Ashland's constructed wetland.



Jim Reed (WV DNR) and Mike Gasper are shown helping to put the final touches to the Ashland constructed wetland.



Pictured are storage tanks that are being installed for each Ashland home site. These tanks will collect solids and allow the liquids to travel by collection lines and then be pumped uphill to constructed wetlands.

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Gardens

Ripley Service Center People's Garden Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities

About a month ago, the Ripley USDA Service Center decided they would participate in the USDA's "People's Garden" initiative. Interest was sparked as a result of a bulletin issued by the Farm Service Agency.

NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), and the Western Conservation District have partnered to make this project a reality. The community has generously donated materials and the District has provided financial assistance. A local Boy Scout troop has also pledged their participation. The People's Garden project is now underway.

A 4 ft X 48 ft raised bed vegetable garden is being constructed. There will be a sign on display at the Ripley Service Center identifying the raised bed as the "People's Garden." Produce from the garden will be donated to local senior citizens, which helps to promote health and wellness in the community. The garden will also be used as a teaching tool.

Two other potential projects being proposed are a rain barrel and container gardens. Personnel are enjoying this cooperative effort to supply homegrown, fresh products to the community. These activities are to be performed voluntarily and on personal time.

NRCS staff participating in the project are: Carlos Cole, Carrie Crislip, Valerie Hannon and Rodney Sites.

For more information, contact [Carrie Crislip](#), Soil Conservationist and CRAC West Area Member-at-large



Carlos Cole, Rodney Sites, and FSA employees construct a raised bed.

Barbara Broxterman Works with WVU Jackson's Mill Market Garden Irrigation

The WVU Jackson's Mill Market Garden is set on 1.5 acres adjacent to historic Jackson's Mill. The garden produces a variety of crops under the direction of the WVU Extension Service Co-operative, the WV Small Farm Center. The land will serve as a research and marketing prototype for the state's 23,000 farm families.

Carrie See (Program Coordinator) and Tom McConnell (Director) met with Barbara Broxterman (Agricultural Engineer) from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to discuss installation of a drip irrigation system. During the visits, they walked around and discussed different ideas about how to maximize water, gather necessary materials, and increase production for the season. For more information, go to <http://wvumarketgarden.blogspot.com/> (leaving WV-NRCS

website).

For more information, contact [Barbara Broxterman](#).



State Office Bioswales

The WV State office is a green, or sustainable, building that uses healthier and more resource-efficient construction, operation, and maintenance methods. The building is certified by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. LEED certified buildings typically use resources more efficiently when compared to conventional buildings. The landscaping utilizes gently sloped, vegetated ditches that slow the flow of rainwater runoff into the sewer system called bioswales.



A common application is around parking lots, where substantial automotive pollution is collected by the paving and then flushed by rain.

Bioswales are storm water runoff conveyance systems that provide an alternative to storm sewers. Bioswales are landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. They consist of a swaled drainage course with gently sloped sides (less than six percent) and filled with vegetation, compost and/or riprap.

Once established, bioswales require less maintenance than turf grass because they need less water and no fertilizer.

Traditionally, storm water management has involved the rapid conveyance of water via storm sewers to surface waters. Low Impact Development (LID) is a different approach that retains and infiltrates rainfall on-site. The LID approach emphasizes site design and planning techniques that mimic the natural infiltration-based, groundwater-driven hydrology of our historic landscape. Bioswales are one component of LID.

For more information, go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioswale> (leaving WV-NRCS website) or <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/news/BioswalesFS.pdf>.



For more information on the **People's Garden Initiative**, go to http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=PEOPLES_GARDEN

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Conservation Education

The Grassland Evaluation Contest

Submitted by Katy McBride

The 2010 Grassland Evaluation Contest was held on Friday, April 16, in Jackson's Mill in Lewis County. The Grassland Evaluation program consists of four sections: Grassland Condition, Soil Interpretation, Wildlife Habitat, and Plant Identification. Each of these factors were considered in evaluating the pasture to best utilize the resource and to help make useful management decisions. A scenario with the landowner's goals for livestock and wildlife production was provided along with appropriate soil survey information, aerial photos, maps, scorecards and other relative information. The contestants first determined the condition of the field then made corrective decisions based on sound agricultural practices compatible with the landowner's goals. The judging site was typical pasture used for livestock grazing.

This year's contest consisted of ten 4-H and FFA teams. The top three finishers were:

1. Clay County FFA
2. Ravenswood FFA Green
3. Ripley FFA

The other teams were: Ravenswood FFA Yellow, Cabell Midland Team 1 & 2, Tyler FFA, Buckhannon Upshur, Liberty, and Ravenswood Middle FFA.

Each member of the winning team receives a \$500 scholarship. Each member of the second winning team receives a \$250 scholarship. The first and second place teams are eligible to participate in the Mid-America Contest in Missouri. The top scoring individual receives a \$500 scholarship.

Technical support for the WV contest is provided by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Sponsors for this year's contest were the 14 Conservation Districts, WV Conservation Agency, WV Department of Agriculture, WV Association of Professional Soil Scientists, WV Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the West Fork Conservation District, and private donators. Individuals attending and/or assisting were:

- WV NRCS: Jamey Darlington, Gary Redden, Katy McBride, Barbara Greenleaf, Andy Sentz, Jared Nestor, Tom Vance, Brandon Duckworth, and Rob Pate (also, Jim Fedders & Wade Snyder of the ARS Lab in Beaver, WV).
- WVCA: Bruce Skidmore, Mark Buchanan, Jennifer Skaggs, Adam Merritt, Tara Matheny (GVCD), Roger Poling (TVCD) and Danny Little (SCD).
- WVACD: Timothy VanReenan, Clyde Bailey, Dixon Law, Rex Reeder, William Bolenbach, Arthur Mouser, Carroll Cumberledge, William Coffindaffer, Randy Plaughter, Jim Foster, and Russ Rittenhouse (please forgive me if I accidentally left anyone out).

Without all of these individuals, this contest would not be the great success that it is!



Barbara Greenleaf sets up plant ID test. The plants came from the Agricultural Research Service in Beaver, WV

Jamey Darlington, Rob Pate, Jared Nester (left) and Jared Nester, Andy Sentz, and Tom Vance (right) provided technical



support.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#).

Landjudging and Homesite Evaluation Contest

Submitted by Katy McBride

The Greenbrier Valley Conservation District and the Southern Conservation District held a Landjudging & Homesite Evaluation Contest on Friday April 16, 2010, at the Plant Material Center in Alderson, WV. The local NRCS field offices (Greenbrier County and Monroe County) and employees of the PMC assisted with the technical part of the contest (got the pits ready, scoring, etc). The districts provided breakfast and lunch for everyone.

The Homesite Top 5 Teams:

1. Shady Spring FFA
2. Surveyor FFA
3. MCTC-FFA Team A
4. Monroe 4H Team B
5. Monroe 4H Team A

The Landjudging Top 5 Teams:

1. Shady Spring FFA
2. Monroe 4H Team B
3. Monroe 4H Team A
4. Surveyor FFA
5. Surveyor FFA

Landjudging is a high school competition that challenges students to gain a better understanding of soil structure and land evaluation. Landjudging, enables each participant to learn how to recognize the physical features of the soil, determine land capability for crop production, and evaluate management practices needed for proper stewardship. Landjudging is oriented to the conservation of agricultural land. The major factors affecting how the land can be used must be determined. These factors are used to correctly recommend conservation practices and fertilizers for conserving soil.

A team is made up of three or four members. The total of the top three scores made by the individual members of the team is the team score. All team members are eligible for individual and team prizes. Team members judge four fields previously selected by the judges. Each field is marked off with stakes or other boundary markers. At some point in the field, a pit or hole is dug, exposing the soil profile. From this profile, the contestant determines the texture, depth, degree of erosion, permeability, and internal drainage of the soil. After these soil properties are determined, land use interpretations can be made. In each field, two wooden stakes are set up to determine slope. The leaders give any information that is needed about each field. This may include the original topsoil depth, pH or soil acidity, amount of available plant nutrients, and size of the field. Contestants are given 20 minutes to score each field.

Many of the factors used in judging agricultural land are also applicable to evaluating sites where homes will be constructed.

The following made this years contest a success. I NRCS employees: Tom Vance, Dewey Broyles, Wanda Smith, Lee Godbey, Warren Haynes, Randall Lester, Rob Pate, and Katy McBride.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#).



Earth Day Events

Carol Lagodich represented NRCS at the annual Impact E.A.R.T.H. (Environmental Awareness and Respecting Tomorrow's Home), which draws attention to our environment and local efforts to improve it. The races and festival help to create awareness of environmental issues and to inform county residents of what they can do locally to help improve the quality of our Earth. NRCS's 75th Anniversary, Backyard Conservation, WV-NRCS American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects, and general NRCS programs were featured. About 500 attended. It was a chilly, windy day so handouts and the display were held down with rocks.

Tim Dilliplane is made his third Earth Day presentation for the 3rd grade at Woodsdale Elementary in Ohio County. Ben Collier did an Earth Day presentation for employees of the Bureau of Public Debt in Parkersburg.

West Virginia Envirothon

The 14th annual West Virginia Envirothon proved to be another exciting competition. The top places teams were: Jefferson FFA, Ripley Environmental Science, Doddridge County Gold, Doddridge County Environmental Science, and Shady Spring Biology Club. Greg Kist, Tom Vance, Lee Godbey, Dewey Broyles, Debra Murphy, Debby Cunningham, Rob Pate, Kevin Wickey, Barbara McWhorter, and Katy McBride participated in the event.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#).



Lee Godbey and Tom Vance were floaters who helped wherever they were needed.
Rob Pate (center) organized the soil station.



Dewey Broyles assisted at the soils station.



Debra Murphy and Debby Cunningham graded tests at the soils station.



Greg Kist reviewed the rules with the teams.



Barbara McWhorter graded the forestry exam.

The following links leave the WV-NRCS website:

David Sweeney competed in the WV Envirothon and was featured in a WTRF news story.
<http://wtrf.com/story.cfm?func=viewstory&storyid=77998>

The following document requires [Adobe Acrobat](#).
West Virginia Conservation Agency [news release](#) (16 KB).

More photos of the Environthon may be seen at the West Virginia Conservation Agency photo gallery at <http://gallery.wvca.us/2010-WV-Envirothon?page=1> (leaving WV-NRCS site).

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Useful Links**Photo Tips**

National Geographic has a collection of 18 short video photographic tips (unfortunately there are short advertisements before each video). Subjects include: White Balance, Macro Photography, Composition, Backup, Image Resolution, Using Available Light, Action Photos, Camera Symbols, Photo Software, and more. The length for each video tip is one to two minutes.

<http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/?source=NavPhoHome> (leaving WV-NRCS website)

The West Virginia Small Farm Conference

The West Virginia Small Farm Conference was a three day educational and networking opportunity for farmers from West Virginia and surrounding regions to improve and better market their products. Some of the presentations were recorded and are available at

<http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/conference/2010> (leaving WV-NRCS website).

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West Virginia's Civil Rights

Women in Agriculture Day

Submitted by Carrie Crislip

On October 13, 2009, FSA, NRCS, RD, the Western Conservation District and Jackson County WVU Extension Service partnered for a "Women in Agriculture Day." Support was also provided by the West Virginia Farm Bureau, Jackson County CEO's and West Virginia State University Extension Service, in addition to numerous community businesses. The daylong event was held at the Jackson County Junior Fairgrounds. It was open to interested persons in Jackson, Roane, Putnam and Mason counties. The purpose was to provide a relaxing, enjoyable day of learning and personal development.

The morning schedule consisted of remarks regarding various programs that the hosting USDA agencies had to offer participants, Slow Cooker Cooking, and AgrAbility. A presentation on Collecting Water in Rain Barrels was given by Carrie Crislip, NRCS and Gina Knotts, FSA. Jackie Byars, RC & D Coordinator gave a presentation on both the Cut-Flower Project, as well as the WV Quilt Trail. Lunch was provided by the Western Conservation District, and drinks and desserts by the WV Farm Bureau. Participants had the option of finishing their day up by taking part in one of two hands-on activities: Fall Container Gardening, or Making Holiday Wreaths/Centerpieces with Natural Materials. The West Virginia State Extension gave their expertise on those projects.

This was the first time this event had been sponsored in Jackson County. There were approximately sixty attendees to the workshop. The women were given shopping totes containing "goodies" that had been donated and information on programs offered by USDA and Western Conservation District. Positive feedback was given by the women and they enjoyed a day that was dedicated to them.

NRCS employees who took part were: Jackie Byars, Carrie Crislip and Valerie Hannon.

For more information contact [Carrie Crislip](#), Soil Conservationist and CRAC West Area Member-at-large



A presentation on Collecting Water in Rain Barrels was given by Carrie Crislip, NRCS and Gina Knotts, FSA.



Jackie Byars, RC & D Coordinator gave a presentation on the Cut-Flower Project and the WV Quilt Trail. (Go to http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/08aug_nv/field.html and http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/09aug_nv/quilts.html for more information on the projects)

Test Your Knowledge of the NRCS Civil Rights Program*

Submitted by Debbie Chase, State Office Member-at-large, Civil Rights Advisory Committee

1 To whom does the West Virginia Civil Rights Advisory Committee make recommendations?
 a) State Conservationist b) President of the United States c) Mickey Mouse d) Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

2 Which one of these is NOT a responsibility of the Civil Rights Advisory Committee?

a) Work with state training officer regarding training needs b) Receive and investigate complaints c) Provide feedback on the performance of the Civil Rights program d) Develop and implement strategies designed to increase participation in NRCS programs and activities by underserved groups, individuals, and communities

3 The current Chairperson of the West Virginia Civil Rights Advisory Committee is _____?

4 Which poster regarding equitable delivery of USDA programs and services is prominently displayed in all offices where there is an NRCS presence? _____

5 Each NRCS employee must act to provide information to an individual or group when a program discrimination complaint is made...

a) Verbally b) In writing c) To the service desk at Wal-Mart d) Both a & b

6 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination to recipients of _____?

7 A harasser in the workplace can be...

a) A client b) Supervisor c) Co-worker d) All of the above

8 If an individual files a complaint of harassment, that individual is protected from _____

9 Which of these actions is NOT considered harassment?

a) Verbal or physical conduct which demeans, intimidates, or causes humiliation or embarrassment to another person b) Unwanted sexual advances c) Empty coffee pot d) Unwelcome physical contact

10 The term "Special Emphasis Programs" refers to those programs which focus special attention on certain specific groups as a result of...

a) A particular law b) A reality TV show c) A regulation or executive order d) Both a & c

11 Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) can be mandated or initiated. Which one of these SEPs is initiated by NRCS?

a) Federal Women's Program b) Hispanic Program c) Asian American/Pacific Islander Program d) Disability Program

12 Which program seeks to create advancement opportunities throughout all occupational levels and disciplines?

a) American Indian/Alaskan Native Program b) Federal Women's Program c) That '70s Show d) Habitat for Humanity

13 Who may attend a Civil Rights Advisory Committee meeting?

a) Only permanent full-time employees b) Any NRCS employee c) Only members of the Committee d) Only those receiving a formal handwritten invitation

14 Which answer best describes how to become a member of the Civil Rights Advisory Committee?

a) Blindfolded State Conservationist throws dart randomly at a map of West Virginia b) Supervisor appoints you without asking c) Express an interest by submitting an application as vacancies arise d) Names are put in a hat and yours is drawn out

15 All materials produced by USDA and its agencies for public information, public education, or public distribution must contain what statement? _____

ANSWERS: 1-a, 2-b, 3-Crystle Buchanan, 4-And Justice for All, 5-d, 6-federal financial assistance, 7-d, 8-retaliation, 9-c, 10-d, 11-c, 12-b, 13-b, 14-c, 15-the USDA Non-Discrimination Statement.

*Adapted from the PowerPoint presentation Civil Rights Trainee, which is located on the CRAC tab of the NRCS-WV SharePoint. The PowerPoint was authored by Shawna Carter, NRCS-KS and revised by Crystle Buchanan, NRCS-WV. View the PowerPoint for discussion of each of these questions.

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Meet . . .**Mike Jones**

Soil Data Quality Specialist /Soil Geomorphologist
 MLRA Region -13 - Morgantown, WV

I was born to the middle class in North Carolina a long time ago! Grew up in suburban Richmond, Virginia. Received a B.S. in Geology from a great university, Virginia Tech. Old timers like myself prefer Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. That is the longest name of any university in the U.S.!! Went to work in the environmental geology world and found that few, if any, of the geologists knew anything about soils. This is the exact area that the majority of our work dealt with!! So, I went back to school. Had such a great experience at Virginia Tech, decided to go back there and work toward a Masters in soils!!!

Well, you could say the rest is history, but you would be leaving out all the juicy details by doing that. So, I will not!! I did my research on long term effects of forest disturbance in a southern Appalachian watershed, looking at logged and unlogged forested watersheds. WOW, what a blast that was. Hiking up and down mountains, avoiding rattlesnakes, fording creeks on slick and slimy rocks—all the while carrying field tools and soil samples. If you are interested, my thesis can be found at the following web page:

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-09282000-14050018/unrestricted/JonesFT.pdf>

After finishing up the classwork, but before finishing writing my thesis (DO NOT EVER DO THIS, standing on soap box right now), I took a job in the agriculture industry in Indiana using Precision Ag technology for fertilization, seeding, chemical application, and harvesting. Took that knowledge to Virginia, where I managed the regions Precision Ag needs for another Ag company.

Well, I decided I wanted to work directly with soils. So, I took a position managing a project in Arkansas mapping forest land for a timber company. I was able to work closely with some fine soil scientists, most notably Berman Hudson, former Director of Soil Survey for USDA-NRCS.

I saw an opportunity to work for USDA-NRCS in North Carolina and jumped for it. I started with NRCS as a soil conservationist in Rutherford County, under the supervision of Albert Moore, D.C. I was moved to Edgecombe County, North Carolina (the Tarboro Field Office), a little over a year later, to expand my views and experiences in conservation. This field office was still recovering from Hurricane Floyd three years later. This move was both good and bad, timing wise. I had been diagnosed with a stomach tumor just prior to moving! You can imagine the stress of getting that news and moving all at the same time! Well, I had the tumor taken out a couple of months later, along with a big chunk, two-thirds, of my tummy at Nash General in Rocky Mount, North Carolina instead of at Baptist University in Winston Salem. This is a surgery that I would not wish upon my worst enemies; OK, there is one, wooh ha ha ha ha ha!!! I guess I will never fully recover from that. After nearly 2 years in Tarboro, I put in and was chosen for the D.C. in Princeton, West Virginia! What a great place—the people, the area, and the proximity to my alma mater!

Sheeeeeew, I worked there for a while and found myself craving work back in soil survey! I was fortunate enough to meet Steve Carpenter at the Conservation Partnership annual meeting in Charleston one year and there was a position open, a Soil Data Quality Specialist. I applied and was chosen for that position. That was a great day. It meant a HOKIE in MORGANTOWN!!

Recently, I was given the new task of running the Rapid Carbon Assessment for MO-13. This is a high priority for the agency and will bring many miles on the road over the next year and a half, as

well as long hours, tedious work, and likely some pretty spectacular scenery, at least as long as I can avoid the megalopolis. I will be travelling for training on how to use the Visual Near Infrared equipment during May and should start collecting data shortly thereafter. If any of my sample points happen to be in your county, I would enjoy your participation in the collection!

Thanks! If you have questions about this study/data collection, please do not hesitate to ask!

Mike

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Personnel Updates

(Submitted by Karen Fitchett as of May 3, 2010)

Name	Action	Location
Steve Carpenter	Temporary Promotion	State Office
Erin O'Leary	STEP Appointment	State Office
Greg Kist	Detail	State Office
Kathy Allen	Change in Hours	Philippi AO
Sam Ware	Temporary Promotion	Parkersburg AO
Larry Casseday	Retirement	Elkins FO
Mike Mullenex	Temporary Promotion	Philippi FO
Louis Aspey	Detail	NHQ
Danny Miles	Retirement	Beckley AO
Joe Hatton	Promotion	State Office
Lori Redden	Conv to TPT	Beckley AO
Carol Durham	Conv to TPT	Beckley AO
Judith Jardine	Promotion	Parkersburg FO



HR Minute

Submitted by Diana Bokoch

The President released an Executive Order, which prohibits federal employees from engaging in text messaging when:

1. Driving GOV, or when driving POV while on official Government business.
2. When using electronic equipment supplied by the Government while driving.

As you know, text messaging causes drivers to take their eyes off the road and at least one hand off the steering wheel, endangering both themselves and others. This prohibition will help save lives, reduce injuries, and set an example for State and local governments, private employers, and individual drivers.

Electronic Official Personnel Folder

The eOPF site, is available for you to view and/or print your SF-50's, personnel actions, and other documentation in your official file.

If you never visited the site, you will need to register. Once you gain access, you will find that it is a very easy site to use.

For the website and information, you should go to the West Virginia Share Point site, <https://nrsc.sc.egov.usda.gov/east/wv/default.aspx> and click on "Human Resources", and then "eOPF". You will find the website, registration instructions and West Virginia bulletin 360-09-20, announcing access to the website.

Favorite quotes:

"Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it." - Confucius
"Nature does nothing uselessly." - Aristotle

Phone Directory

An updated phone directory is available at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/employeeDirectory/app?agency=nrcs&state=wv>

Contact information may be found by searching on the employee name, city, all employees in the state, or by Service Center.

If your phone number or contact information is missing or incorrect, go to <https://icams.usda.gov/> (password required) and update your personal information.

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From the Field

Mountain Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Mountain RC&D Landowner Workshop

Mountain RC&D, working with local watershed associations, sponsored a dinner meeting at the Fayette County Vo-Tech Center Feb 18. Fifty area landowners braved the bitter cold to listen to District Conservationist Gary Redden and other natural resource professionals describe cost-share programs and benefits available to them. Greater interest is being expressed by local organizations to improve the water quality of the New River.



A New Twist on Watershed Education

Mountain RC&D has been working the last six months on watershed education kiosks. It received a \$2,100 grant from NRCS for the purchase of high grade aluminum frames and development assistance from Public Affairs / Marketing Specialist Carol Lagodich to produce the Backyard Conservation panel.

Other completed panels ready for installation are *What is a Watershed*, *Water Cycle*, *Appalachian Bogs*, and a Trout Unlimited panel on *Watershed Stewardship*. To view this project just make a leisurely stroll along the White Oak Rail Trail in Oak Hill.

Crumpler Brownfield Assessment

With the Ashland wastewater system completed and scheduled for dedication the McDowell Coalition is now working with the Region 1 Development Council to conduct a Brownfield assessment of the former Justice Coal Tipple site in Crumpler. A field visit was made April 17th by Mountain RC&D Coalition members and consultant Dawn Seeburger of Environmental Resources Consulting. Long time Crumpler resident Frank Dalton was asked to join the team to provide site specific details of the former tipple site. A phase 1 assessment will be completed and back to the Coalition early this summer. A phase 2 assessment will be conducted if the site is considered to be acceptable for additional study.

For more information, contact [Mike Gasper](#) at 304-469-9738.

WesMonTy Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Spruce Planting

WesMonTy RC&D worked with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (CASRI) on Earth Day Tree Planting. WesMonTy RC&D is a CASRI partner through relationships with TNC and USFS.

For more information, contact [Jason Teets](#) at 304-457-4596.

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