



**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

# **East National Technology Support Center**

*"A great leader's courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position." — John Maxwell*

## **Passing on the Passion** **Mary Podoll, Director**

Recently I challenged the East NTSC staff to address the questions "What foundation are you building? To whom are you passing on your passion?" I have observed that people who exhibit passion in the workplace are naturally motivated and driven. They go the "extra mile" without a lot of oversight and prodding. Sometimes they might even seem a trifle obsessed – they are so fun to be around because they get excited; they want to share their knowledge; they want to help you to see their message.

When you are passionate about the final goal (the purpose that's driving you), the obstacles in the way are just part of the process – doors to be opened, gates to be driven through, mud puddles in the road...

What is our collective passion at the East NTSC?

- Natural Resources!
- Customer Service!

Topics that start lively discussions and activity here at the East National Technology Support Center include: soil health, cover crops, organics initiatives, economics, grazing lands, forage suitability groups, PLANTS (National Plant Database), energy, irrigation, conservation planning, and much more.

I encourage you to start a conversation with a technical specialist - today! The venues for discussions are many – email, phone, video conferencing, the "communicator" ... If you haven't checked out the ability for interactive discussions on SharePoint, we have a couple of discussions ongoing on the East National Technology Center SharePoint (left column under Discussions) at <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/st/ENTSC/default.aspx>.

If there is anyone – in any way – from the East NTSC that can enable you to keep your sense of passion in the realm of conservation and natural resources, we will find a way to make it happen.

**– Mary Podoll, Director**

*"Keep your sense of proportion by regularly, preferably daily, visiting the natural world." — Catlin Matthews*

## **Quarterly Newsletter** **April 2011**

### **Watersheds Workshop**

The East Watershed Workshop was held in Greensboro, North Carolina on March 1-3, 2011. It was a joint effort with Madalene Ransom and Kristin Smith from the East NTSC, David Heffington, Tim Sweeney, and George Townsend from the National Water Management Center, and Matt Harrington from the Ecological Sciences Division, NHQ serving as the instructors. There were 13 participants from 11 states. The workshop accomplished four goals. Participants (1) left knowing where to go for assistance and guidance, (2) were clear about the distinction between the Planning PROCESS and the Plan DOCUMENT, (3) understood criteria for the National Water Management Center review process and National Environmental Policy Act defensibility, and (4) returned home with a piece of work done, or having made progress on an existing or potential project. All of the presentations, handouts and reference files are available on the East NTSC SharePoint site in the Planning and Assessment Library, East Watershed Workshop - March 2011 folder at <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/st/ENTSC/default.aspx>.

For more information, contact Madalene Ransom at (336) 370-3357 or Kristin Smith at (336) 370-3362.



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**Visit our Web site: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/ntsc/east/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/ntsc/east/)**

# Technology Transfer & Development

## Pondering Pohnpei Piggeries... Bill Boyd, Manure Management Team Leader journaled the following entry 1/2 way around the world...

Pohnpei is an island in the Federated States of Micronesia. Paul Lake is a Resource Conservationist in their local NRCS field office. A former governor of Pohnpei owns a small restaurant on the island. He would like to install a piggery behind the restaurant, run the manure from the piggery through an anaerobic digester, use the methane from the digester for cooking in the restaurant, and use the effluent from the digester to provide nutrients to a mixed agro-forestry operation of yams, taro, bananas, breadfruit and coconut. When we went to his home he wanted me to see his current piggery and his yams. There were not many pigs in the piggery because he had recently attended a funeral where they had killed three pigs a day for seven days. They do not eat the pigs at the funeral. They pile hot rocks over the pig and cover it with banana leaves. At the end of the day they uncover the pig. It is not fully cooked, but it is not supposed to

be. They cut the pig up and divide it among the guests to take home to finish the cooking process. Pigs and yams are an important part of cultural activities and celebrations, especially at funerals. Small piggeries are scattered throughout the island, dispersing sources of manure, and avoiding the problems associated with large concentrations. The areas where the piggeries are receive about 200 inches of rain a year, and the pigs and piggeries are washed daily with water from a hose. The nutrients that are not absorbed in agro-forestry operations are buffered in the jungle and the mangrove wetlands before entering the lagoon. The effects of the nutrients on the mangrove forest are not documented. This system of piggeries and mangroves has been in place for generations. The mangroves are important sources of wood for building and fuel on the island, and the wetlands are important sources of fish and crops for food, and for some species the mangrove

wetlands serve as a nursery area for the lagoon. *Leptospira* is a bacterium that lives in swine, dog, and rat urine, and it can persist in the warm wet soils on the island. It can cause flu-like symptoms in humans, and if not treated, can lead to death from kidney failure. Composting can kill the bacterium, and avoiding soil where manure has been applied when there are cuts on the feet, and thoroughly cooking foods that come from the soil can also help to avoid human contamination. We do not know if time in the anaerobic digester will reduce the occurrence of *Leptospira* in the digester effluent, but there are reasons to believe it will be helpful. We set up the instrument in the rain and began to survey the area where the former governor is hoping to place his new piggery and methane digester. It will be a good demonstration of the technology.

Contact Bill Boyd at (336) 370-3334 for more information.



*Rainbow over Pohnpei invites visitors to the island*



*Proud mama*



*Surveying for a new piggery near the restaurant*



*Local cooking with piggery biogas*



*Forty coconuts thanks to piggery manure fertilizer*



*Lettuce raised on composted piggery manure*

# Technology Transfer & Development

## PLANTS Leader

Continuing with our January Newsletter focus on the blossoming National Plant Data Team, let us introduce you to our newest staff member and its new leader...

**Dr. Gerry Moore** – Gerry is a native of Millville, New Jersey, a small town in the southwestern region of the state. There he developed an early interest in botany, receiving a B.S. in botany from Richard Stockton College (Pomona, New Jersey) in 1989. During his undergraduate studies, Gerry published a list of all of the plant species occurring in Cumberland County, his hometown county. He worked as a research assistant with the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, and then in 1991 enrolled in Vanderbilt University's graduate school where he focused on the taxonomy of sedges. Gerry continued his studies on sedges with a post-doctoral position at Duke University and then served as an assistant professor of biology at Alabama State University. In 2000, Gerry took a position as a plant researcher, and later director of the science department, at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. There, Gerry studied the local flora of the region and was especially active in monitoring invasive species. Gerry has been a frequent user of the PLANTS database and is pleased to join the National Plants Data Team. Contact Gerry at (336) 370-3337. (*helpful hint... phonetically, that's gary, not jerry.*)

<http://npdc.usda.gov/>



*Yellow-fringed orchid (Platanthera ciliaris) is a rare species Gerry inventoried during his undergraduate studies. In southern New Jersey, this species is typically found in dryish to moist open pinelands.*

## Sharing Employee Resources for an Organic Goal

Sarah Brown is an employee of Oregon Tilth, a national non-profit organic certifying organization. Headquartered at the West NTSC in Portland, she is working with NRCS as our Organic Conservation Specialist through a two-year agreement.

While completing her B.S. in International Agricultural Development, she had the opportunity to visit agricultural systems from California to Chile and develop a deeper understanding of sustainable agriculture - from hands-on practice to socio-political perspectives. After graduating, she moved with her husband to southwest Washington to build and manage a small, diversified, organic farm.

Since moving to Portland three years ago, Sarah has worked with a number of agriculture education programs including Zenger Farm's Emerging Farmer Training Program, Oregon Tilth's Organic Education Center, and Oregon State University Extension. Now at home on their 2-acre urban farm, Sarah and her husband grow vegetables for a Community Supported Agriculture enterprise and local restaurants, harvest fruit in abundance, and raise a diversity of livestock.

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## NRCS Organic Training - KY



*Pastured turkeys raised to meet organic standards*



*Training participants learn about organically-grown raspberries*

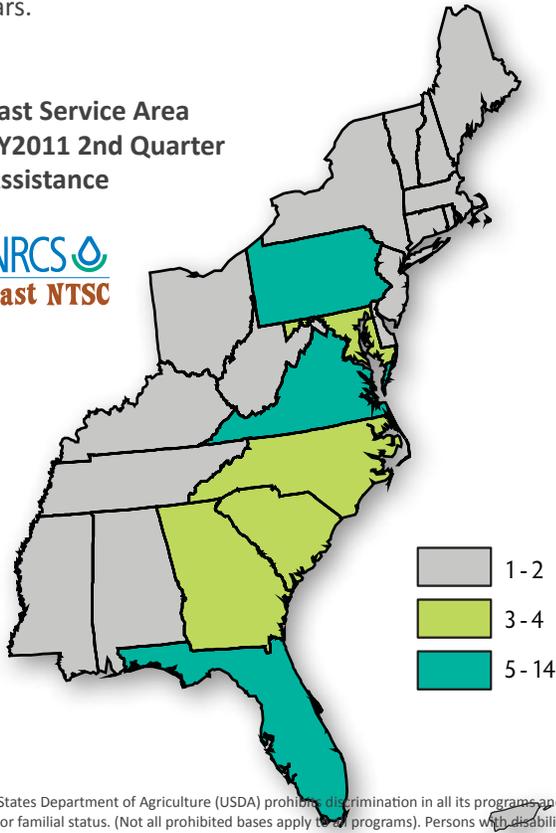
EAST NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT CENTER 2011 WEBINAR SCHEDULE	
Date	Topic
May 24	Organic Buffer Installation and Maintenance
May 25	Avoiding and Managing Herbicide Resistance
June 14	Organic Cover Cropping and Intercropping
June 29	Economic Costs of Poor Grazing Management
July 27	Energy Conservation Practices
August 31	Stream Crossings for Livestock and Equipment: Aquatic Organism Passage
September 13	Organic Grain Production
September 28	Crop Diversity, Rotations, Systems for Soil Health
October 26	Crop Tree Management for Forest Stand Improvement
November 30	Nutrient Management in an Organic System
December 6	Pest Management in Organic Production Systems

## Assistance Highlights

In the second quarter of FY2011, the Center provided assistance on 122 requests, of which 79 were direct assistance to states, 16 were regional, and 27 were national activities. In addition to direct assistance to the states, the Center supported 15 training events to a combined audience of approximately 650 participants.

Visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/ntsc/east/workshops.html> to view a list of training sessions scheduled for upcoming months or to download training materials and replays associated with our monthly webinars.

East Service Area  
FY2011 2nd Quarter  
Assistance



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- 5-14

## Sharing Employee Resources for a Common Goal

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Through her national position, Sarah delivers training and develops technical information for use by NRCS staff and organic professionals to better support conservation work on organic farms. Since starting work with NRCS she's conducted two national surveys aimed at collecting information and priorities related to organic technical support and training within NRCS. The surveys have helped determine priorities for conducting training, such as a clear need to provide more information on management of nutrients and pests.

In FY2011, David Lamm, East NTSC Natural Resources Specialist, and Sarah are facilitating a special webinar series focused on organic production topics (see schedule at left), and they are providing on-site training in Kentucky and Mississippi. Contact David Lamm at (336) 370-3339 for more information.



**Photo of the Quarter**  
Same day planting into a rolled cover crop

Click the photo to download a high resolution file.

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