



East National Technology Support Center

FY2011 ~ 4th Quarter Newsletter

Director's Comments

As I head into the final days of my NRCS/SCS career I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to serve as acting Director. This opportunity comes as a result of Mary Podoll moving to the State Conservationist position in North Dakota. Mary will be missed in Greensboro, but we understand her move to North Dakota was one she couldn't pass up. While I am acting director one of the things I want to accomplish is to work with my colleagues at the Center to look for ways to ensure we remain relevant and effective as budgets shrink. Because we serve 23 states, travel is a significant portion of the East NTSC budget and may be one of the things that is cut. We have been a leader in developing webinars on a variety of topics to provide information and training to the field without either the instructors or the students traveling. We want to continue this service, expand our offerings, and look for new, better and more effective methods to provide this information. We also want to identify ways we can effectively provide direct technical assistance to the field with reduced travel. Can we have a "virtual presence" if we can't be there in person?

Over the next few weeks the East NTSC staff will consider these ideas in a series of brainstorming and strategic planning sessions to determine what we need to do to continue to meet the needs of the states we serve as well as others around the nation. So, tell us what you need. We welcome any ideas that you have that can make us more effective and efficient. This will be the final chapter of my career with NRCS, but the East National Technology Support Center will continue to be a leader in providing innovative technical assistance.

Phil McLoud, Acting Director

Conservation Beyond Boundaries

The 1st Annual Land and Wildlife Expo was held August 12-14, 2011, at the Gaylord Opryland Convention Center in Nashville, TN. The Expo was open to the public and featured exhibits, demonstrations, and presentations on wildlife habitat management, rural land enhancement, and land conservation activities. Along with Bass Pro Shops, Dodge Ram, and the National Wild Turkey Federation, NRCS was a major sponsor of the event. Chief Dave White was the keynote speaker for the Saturday evening session.

Mary Podoll, former director, Hank Henry, wildlife biologist, and Ramona Garner, plant materials specialist, all of the East NTSC, assisted NRCS staff from NHQ and TN set-up, staff, and dismantle the NRCS exhibit during the 3-day event. The theme of the exhibit was "Conservation Beyond Boundaries" and it featured displays of the Longleaf Pine, Sage Grouse, and Migratory Bird Habitat Initiatives,



and a field office experience. Also on display was a planted pollinator garden and in an outside demonstration area, NRCS staff from TN designed and established demonstration plots of native warm season grasses, wildlife planting mixtures, cover crops, a shallow wetland area, and a soil pit.

The primary purpose of the indoor and outdoor exhibits was to highlight the benefits of landscape conservation, which yield tangible, positive wildlife and ecosystem results on working lands.

The display was such a success that the CEO of the National Wild Turkey Federation asked Chief White if the display could be recreated for their Annual National Wild Turkey Federation Conference, which will also be held in Nashville in February 2012. The Chief agreed and NRCS staffs from NHQ and the East NTSC are currently planning for this event. Chief White will be a keynote speaker for the event. Contact Hank Henry at (336) 370-3349 or Ramona Garner (336) 370-3340 for more information.



Technology Transfer & Development

East NTSC Webinars...

Our Success Story for No-travel Training

Did you know that the East NTSC has been offering webinars on technical topics since the autumn of 2007! That's right, it has been four years since Phil McCloud, agricultural engineer, introduced the idea to the Center's Director and staff, and we presented our first topic. To help us get started, Phil roped his own wife, retired conservation agronomist Susan McCloud, into giving the first netmeeting; and then volunteered, along with Holli Kuykendall, to present the second topic in our burgeoning series.

We've come a long way since 2007 with this all-East NTSC endeavor. With 60+ webinars presented since our project began (an amazing 29 of them in the last 12 months!), we're proud to present noteworthy facts and figures about our FY2011 Webinar Program below. Click [here](#) to see a U.S. map that highlights webinar participation by state.

Contact Holli Kuykendall, ecologist, at Holli.Kuykendall@gnb.usda.gov or Kristin Smith, ecologist (environmental compliance) at Kristin.Smith@gnb.usda.gov to add

FY2011 Webinar Highlights

- NRCS and partner employees trained - 3,754 (calculated as 2,503 logins with 1.5 employees per login as estimated from our survey results)
- All 50 states and the Caribbean Area joined us for at least one webinar
- In the East Region, we've made a big impression on Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and New York
- Outside the East Region, Iowa, California, Arkansas, Illinois, and Colorado are tuning in big
- Low-water Crossings for Livestock and Equipment presented by Kale Gullett (fisheries biologist) had a whopping 189 lines for the live presentation and another 107 people accessed the replay within the following 45 days
- David Lamm, natural resources specialist, is the East NTSC "King of Webinars" with 12 organized this year
- The Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative series of eight soil health webinars involved almost 900 logins for an estimated 1,350 participants
- A survey giving the people the power to choose was used to develop our topic list for CY2011 (and again for CY2012)
- We started FY2011 with 1,200 email addresses in our announcement list and finished the year with 2,080
- 1,800 NRCS State, Area, and Field level staff received our announcements at year's end, with 280 private and National level addresses rounding out the list
- Supervisors are starting to suggest webinar replays for staff training, and a post-test for one webinar has been implemented to document learning
- 215 hours of Certified Crop Advisor continuing education units were awarded as a result of our webinars... this service is especially appreciated by those taking advantage of it



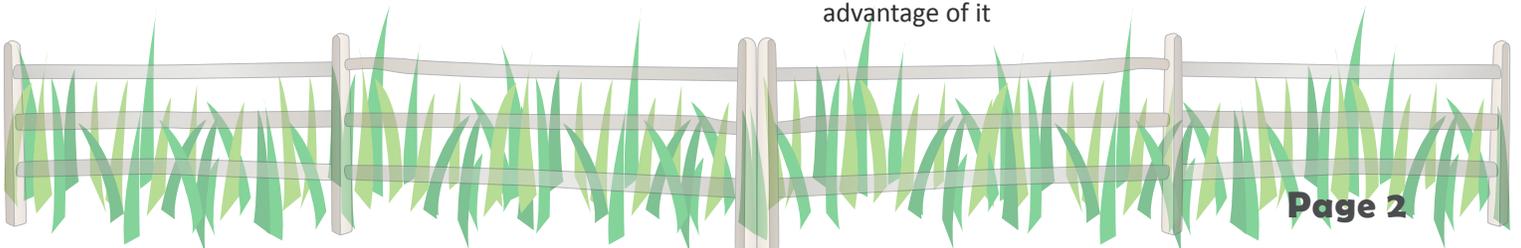
email addresses to our distribution list (your entire state is all right with us!) As States are catching on nationwide, we're now up to 2,200 email addresses in our announcement list.

On the eve of his pending retirement, here's to Phil for initiating the webinar project and leaving one of many legacies to NRCS and the East NTSC.

P.S. Did we mention the [Science and Technology Training Library](https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/st/ntsc_training/default.aspx) (https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/st/ntsc_training/default.aspx) as the source for East NTSC webinar replays...? Check it Out!

State Conservationists:

Is your state taking advantage of our timely, low cost, no travel, employee-driven webinar training?



Technology Transfer & Development

Savannah River Environmental Sciences Field Station

In 1995, Dr. Ambrose O. Anoruro, a professor at South Carolina State University, proposed a concept for an environmental field station using facilities at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site. The Savannah River Site, a restricted nuclear research facility, sits on approximately 200,000 acres near Aiken, SC, and includes a wide range of ecosystems. With availability of laboratory and classroom facilities and proximity to farms the site offers a great setting for hands-on instruction. The inaugural offering of the Environmental Sciences Field Station took place in 1996. The Field Station offers undergraduate students an opportunity to take courses in environmental sciences not offered by their university or college. In 2011, 14 different courses in environmental sciences and related fields, including soil science and agronomy, were offered in two summer sessions.

NRCS has been an active supporter of the Field Station through specific grants and by providing technical specialists to serve as instructors. Most recently, Leander Brown, soil scientist, Dr. Hamid Farahani, water management engineer, and Gene Hardee, agronomist, served as primary instructors for the basic soil science course in the June 2011 session. The course used a standard university text and covered the full range of topics typically included in undergraduate basic

soil science. However, with the assistance of the staff from the Aiken County NRCS office, the instructors were able to provide a number of experiences not typically offered in a basic soil science course, including use of rainfall simulator to demonstrate runoff, erosion and infiltration; use of the Soil Quality Test Kit; and a study of soil formations, crop production practices, soil properties across four land resource areas. Contact Gene Hardee at (336) 370-3365 for more information.

Mike Prevatte, Associate District Commissioner and NRCS Earth Team Volunteer, and Emily Pohlman, District Conservationist, Aiken Field Office, demonstrate use of the Soil Quality Test Kit.



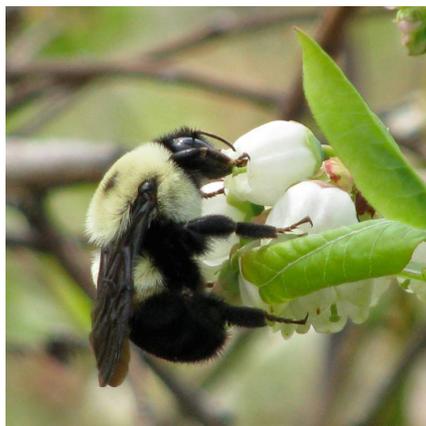
Bees are Her Buzziness... Introducing our East NTSC Pollinator Specialist

Nancy Adamson works jointly as pollinator conservation specialist for NRCS and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation at the East NTSC. She earned her Ph.D. in entomology from Virginia Tech with research on native bees important for crop pollination. She was previously a horticulture extension educator in Frederick, MD, coordinating the Master Gardener program,

responding to public questions on landscaping and landscape pests, and establishing a native hedgerow demonstration garden. Much of Nancy's work has been in ecological restoration, collecting native plant seeds for propagation and use in habitat gardens, inventorying natural areas, teaching people about native plants, and establishing plantings for wetland mitigation. She studied native grass establishment for her Master's degree in natural resource sciences with input from the Beltsville Plant Materials Center. Interested in cross-cultural relations since growing up with Belgian, Ukrainian, Spanish, and Italian neighbors, she spent time in Guatemala as an intern with Cultural Survival supporting an indigenous community's forest preserve work, in Tunisia as a Peace Corps and Save the Children volunteer, and in Scotland for her junior year abroad. She's very

happy to be working with NRCS and Xerces Society and looks forward to the chance to expand pollinator awareness and conservation. Contact Nancy Adamson at (336) 370-3443.

*Photo credits:
Nancy Adamson*



East NTSC Webinars

Your votes are in and our annual survey to determine webinar topics for our CY2012 webinar schedule has concluded. The response rate was approximately 35% – approximated since we don't know how many times the survey was forwarded. We know of at least one state that took advantage of this opportunity to shape our webinar schedule by forwarding the survey announcement statewide to all employees! That's proactive and looking out for the needs of your State.

WEBINAR SCHEDULE	
Date	Topic
Nov 30, 2011	East NTSC Monthly Series: Nutrient Management in an Organic System
Dec 13, 2011 (date change)	Understanding Organic Agriculture: Pest Management in Organic Production Systems
Jan 25, 2012	East NTSC Monthly Series: Stream Habitat Management: Assessing stream condition and identifying management options

We'll release our webinar schedule soon – so what's new in 2012? Based on your responses, we're planning at least two mini webinar series to cover grazing lands and soil-water-plant relationships topics. These will be scheduled in addition to our regular monthly webinars that are held the last Wednesday of the month. In the meantime, plan to participate when the topics above are presented. As always, we appreciate your business! Contact Holli Kuykendall at (336) 370-3341 or Kristin Smith at (336) 370-3362 for more information.

Assistance Highlights

In the fourth quarter of FY2011, the Center provided assistance on 100 requests, of which 66 were direct assistance to states, 16 were regional, and 18 were national activities. In addition to direct assistance to the states, the Center supported 26 training events to a combined audience of approximately 1,968 participants. The East NTSC delivered 11 webinars with 1,258 participants and 15 classroom sessions with 710 participants.

Visit the [Science and Technology Training Library](https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/st/ntsc_training/default.aspx) (https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/st/ntsc_training/default.aspx) for training materials, Webinar replays, and to view the Webinar Calendar.

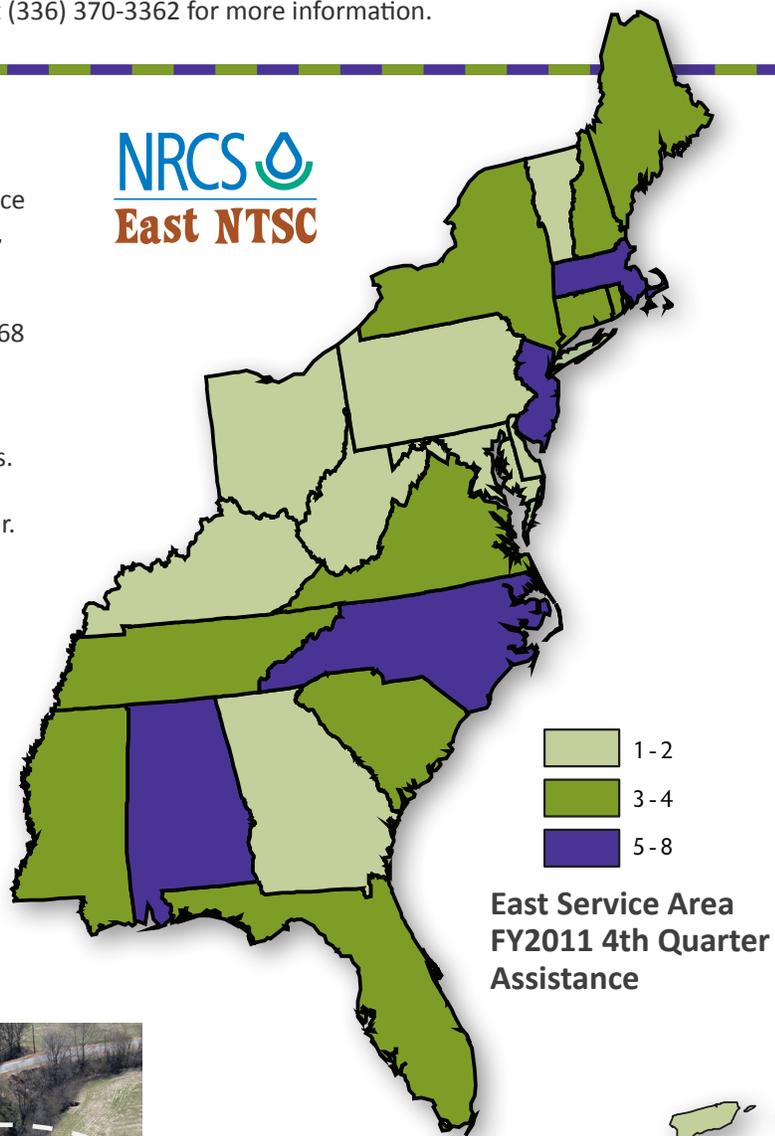
Photo of the Quarter

Before (bottom) and after (top) photos taken by Ralph Smith, hydraulic engineer, TN NRCS. This NRCS treatment literally saved the bridge and quite possibly some of the people that drive it every day. Click the photos to download high resolution files.



After photo above, Before photo at right
Photo credits: Ralph Smith, TN NRCS

NRCS
East NTSC



East Service Area
FY2011 4th Quarter
Assistance

