



United States Department of Agriculture

*Natural Resources Conservation Service Earth Team*

# Volunteer Showcase

## ***Volunteers Bring Talent, Creativity & Energy to NRCS' Soil Health Campaign***

It may take a village to raise a child, but Earth Team volunteers can provide the creative spark that's needed to produce amazing communications products.

Courtney Adkisson, Pierre Redmon and Phil Hill were recruited as Earth Team volunteers by NRCS web services and product design leader Bob Gresh to help with NRCS' soil health campaign.

The agency is always looking for good ideas and creative people to help produce effective communications products, and these art students' video editing and animation skills proved a perfect fit.

"It's a mutually beneficial relationship," Gresh said. "NRCS needs talent and capacity and the students need experience and work examples they can show prospective employers."

The volunteers worked to narrate, edit and illustrate "Hope for a Healthy Soil," a 20-minute video on the principles and practices of soil health, even though they had limited knowledge of the topic.

"I didn't know much about farming and agriculture, but I really took to the subject matter and learned," said Phil, a graduate of Westwood College in Arlington, VA. Phil designed and animated items for the video in a collaborative effort with Pierre, who also attended Westwood.



*(L to R) Pierre Redmon, Courtney Adkisson and Phil Hill provided creative spark with the video, "Hope for a Healthy Soil".*

Courtney, a film student at the Art Institute, found editing the video a perfect match with her interest in environmental film-making. "It's great to use my talents, and I learned something new every day," said Courtney.

Ron Nichols, the campaign coordinator for NRCS' soil health campaign, was excited to work with the volunteers, but also had some doubts.

The Earth Team is the volunteer component of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. If you are interested in volunteering, contact the National Earth Team Office at 888-526-3227 or visit:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/EarthTeam>

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“When post-production began on the project, I wasn’t sure whether a video editor with limited knowledge of our subject matter could translate the subject’s concepts into a visual narrative that was both technically correct and visually interesting,” Nichols said. “Much to my delight, however, Courtney quickly demonstrated a talent for grasping the technical concepts and was able to subsequently develop a visual narrative that far exceeded my expectations.”

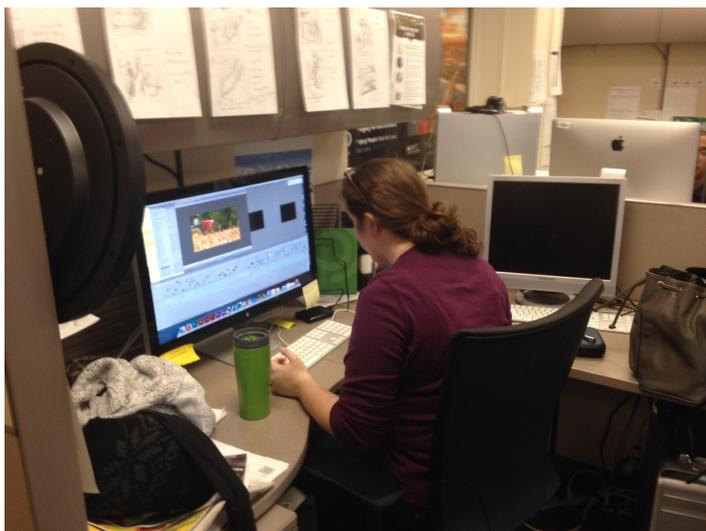
“Thanks to Courtney’s remarkable video editing talents, we’ll soon be connecting with new audiences and educating them about the hope in healthy soil,” Nichols said.

“You have convinced me that through volunteering with NRCS, my skills will definitely benefit your future audiences with awesome media content,” said Courtney.

In addition to the “Hope for Healthy Soils” video, Phil and Pierre were able to expand their portfolios with their work illustrating conservation practices, such as terraces and high tunnels, using animation.

“It was really a pleasure to use my skills and contribute to this program,” said Pierre.

Overall, Adkisson and the other Earth Team volunteers donated dozens of hours of time to the project. Nichols estimates the volunteer’s contributions saved the agency more than \$20,000 dollars.



*Courtney honed her video editing skills as an Earth Team volunteer.*



*Pierre created several animated illustrations for the video and other conservation practices.*

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