Message from the State Conservationist

Anyone who has heard me speak lately knows that I have focused on "Back to Basics". We are facing a lot of unknowns right now with the Admin Reorganization, PAS Modernization, Soil Survey Reorganization, and CDSI. Another unknown is the outcome of the 2012 Farm Bill. While our budget is okay this year, we may be facing some discretionary spending cuts in the 2013 budget.

It would be easy to get discouraged as we face all these unknowns. But on a more positive note, while other agencies have had some office closures, NRCS is not planning to close offices. We have a strong conservation partnership in Tennessee. And we have a workforce of professional, committed employees.

With all these unknowns, it is important to focus on the basics of conservation planning and service to our customers. I want to commend the field employees for working to meet our goals and following through and getting everything reported. The best way to ensure the well being of the agency is to remain focused on doing our job and getting conservation on the ground.

Our work is important because we do make a difference in the lives of Tennessee landowners. I thank each of you for doing your part.

Kevin Brown
State Conservationist

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Kay Cox Receives 2011 Oscar Scott Conservation Educator of the Year Award

by Renita (Shorty) Beaty, District Technician, Chattanooga Field Office

Cassandra (Kay) Timberlake Cox was the recipient of the 2011 Oscar Scott Conservation Educator of the Year Award given by the Hamilton County Soil Conservation District.

Kay Cox worked with the USDA NRCS for 41 years. With her years of experience, her infinite patience and knowledge of working with people, she is truly a positive influence on everyone who gets an opportunity to work with her. The Hamilton County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors and Office staff were fortunate to have the opportunity to work with her.

She worked diligently for years to assist in the "Give-a-Hoot" for Kids program with Oscar and Barbara Scott. This award is named in honor of Oscar Scott who no doubt would be proud to see Kay recognized for her efforts.

Kay has dedicated many hours to community outreach in the promotion of conservation education and the preservation of natural resources. She has also worked tirelessly in many community organizations such as the Aldersgate Garden Club, the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, several county district events, state and federal committees, and church programs to name a few.

Kay teaches youth and adults the importance of conservation with her own special flair and enthusiasm. Her commitment to conservation and to faith, family, and fellowship are evident.

Congratulations to Kay Cox recipient of the 2011 Oscar Scott Conservation Educator of the Year Award.

Photo above (l to r) - Jesse Hewlett, Hamilton Co. SCD Supervisor; Dr. Patrick Tyree, Hamilton County SCD Chairman; Cassandra (Kay) Cox, Tom Crawley, Hamilton County SCD Vice-Chairman; Johnathan Smith; Hamilton County SCD Supervisor; and Michael Reed, Hamilton County SCD Secretary/Treasurer.

Bradley/Polk Counties Receive Area 4 Outstanding Community Involvement of the Year Award

Photo above (l to r): Chase Hicks,Soil Conservationist; Kevin Brown, State Conservationist; Joyce Green, District Technician; Wayne Coates, District Conservationist; Jim Ledford, Soil Conservation Technician; and Terrance Rudolph, Knoxville Area Conservationist.

Bradley/Polk received the Area 4 **Outstanding Community Involvement of the Year Award** for their dedication in involving local communities in soil and water conservation activities throughout the two county area.

Steve Koonce Mentors Local Student Sarah Grover, Recipient of Multiple Awards in the Regional Science Fair Held in Jackson

Sarah Grover, a Lauderdale Middle School 8th grade student, placed 1st in the Association of Woman's Geoscientists, 2nd in the Physical Science Jr. Division and Overall Excellence Stockholm Jr. Water Prize at the Regional Science Fair competition on March 9th at Union University in Jackson.

Sarah's project was Soil Erosion in West TN. Sarah and her mother, Robin met with Dwaine Johnston and Steve Koonce in early November at the Ripley Field Office to begin gathering information on soil erosion.

Dwaine and Steve discussed various erosion control practices that are used in West Tennessee, such as rock drops, pipe drops, rock chutes, blankets, matting, etc.

Steve met with Sarah and Robin several times over the next few months to review Sarah's progress and offer suggestions.

Steve also joined Sarah and her Mom on several field trips to inventory and evaluate practices in the field where Sarah gathered information and photos.

One of Sarah's demonstrations included four containers of soil with different types of erosion control practices, such as rock, grass, matting etc. Sarah simulated rainfall by watering the containers once a week. She then measure and recorded the data on graph paper for comparison.

"Steve has donated many hours of his personal time to Sarah and her project," stated Will Pinson. "Not only did Sarah win in the Regional Science Fair competition, but now she plans on becoming an Earth Team Volunteer when she turns 14."

"With her knowledge of soil erosion, she will be an excellent addition to Tennessee's Earth Team Program," stated Steve Koonce. "I enjoyed working with her and I'm proud of her accomplishments; the awards were well deserved."

Congratulations to Sarah!

Photo above l to r - Sarah Grover, Regional Science Fair Winner and Steve Koonce, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician.

People's Garden

Many folks are wondering just what is the People's Garden? When President Lincoln founded USDA in 1862, he called it "The People's Department." USDA continues to honor his vision for a Department that serves the American people every day and in every way through the People's Garden Initiative.

People's Gardens vary in size and type, but all are required to have three components in common. They **must benefit the community**, in some cases by creating recreational spaces and in others by providing a harvest for a local food bank or shelter. They **must be collaborative** - that is, the garden must be created and maintained by a partnership of local individuals, groups, or organizations. And third, they **must incorporate sustainable practices**. The gardens might use compost or mulch made by participants. They might contain native plants or encourage beneficial insects. They also might exemplify water conservation, for instance, capturing rain in a barrel to water the garden.

People's Garden coordinators for Tennessee are **Carolyn Bartee, Area 1; Sharon Englett, Area 2; Sarah Singhurst, Area 3; and Shirley Childs, Area 4**.

Gardens located at private residences are not eligible to become People's Gardens. You can declare an existing garden as a People's Garden as long as it incorporates the three components. For more information on the People's Garden, go to www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden

Davidson SCD Works with 15 Community Gardens & 27 School Gardens

by Carol Edwards, Administrative Assistant, Davidson County SCD

The Davidson County Soil Conservation District's work with community gardens throughout the city and in social economic urban areas provides fresh nutritional food and educational opportunities to teach students about agriculture. The Soil Conservation District and other partners have received $87,300 in grants to establish community and school gardens in Davidson County.

The Park Avenue Enhanced Option School is located on the north side of Charlotte Avenue near the Sylvian community. It is a low income, predominately minority, diverse neighborhood with a large swath of public housing. In this urban environment, agriculture production is not a part of everyday life. The vision of the Outdoor Garden was to work together to meet academic and social learning needs in an environment where families are welcomed and students are challenged. The Community Garden was started so the children and their families could experience the wonder and joy of food production.

Plants, trees and fruit bushes were chosen that would ripen while school was in session. Window gardens were used to produce starter plants. The vision is to surround the grounds with a variety of edible plants and trees that celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity of the neighborhood.

The soils had to be improved substantially. Soil amendments started with volunteers gathering bags of leaves from the neighborhood.

Classes are also held for students and adults from the Park Avenue Career Center located on the property.

A green house is used during cooler weather and seedlings are started on the window sills in January as part of the year round program. New international types of plants are part of the garden and provide interest and diversity for the students and neighborhood.

The partnership between the school, volunteers, neighbors and partners has been a success and source of pleasure. Park Avenue Enhancement Option School Outdoor/ indoor/greenhouse gardens were featured on TV.

Photo above: Community gardens across from Nashville Rescue Mission.

Photo above: Raised bed gardens at Bells Bend Nature Center.

Other successful community garden locations in Davidson County include Glencliff High School; J.C. Jones Community Center; Jefferson St. Baptist Church; Bells Bend Nature Center: Ellington Agriculture Center, Bethlehem Center; Nassau St. (across from Union Mission); Caldwell School; and Woodmont Church.

You CAN be a member of AIANEA

Celebrate our rich culture which includes tribal governments, food, native traditions, natural resources, education and family connecting with the Natural Resources Conservation Service employees, Diversity of Tribes and Tribal Elders from 100s of different tribes across the United States.

- **Who can join AIANEA? Anyone**
- **Do you have to be American Indian or Alaska Native heritage to join this employee association? Anyone can join!**
- **What are the benefits of becoming a member?**

  * Network with NRCS employees throughout the United States
  * Learn about diversity of American Indian Cultures and Traditions
  * Mentor or become a Trail Blazer (*protégé*) in the ***Bi-Cultural Mentoring Program***
  * Educational Opportunities
  * Support Tribal Youth Activities/ education
  * Promote excellent government to government relations between Tribal Nations and NRCS
  * Encourage and support efforts in Conservation activities with the Farm Bill, Indigenous Stewardship Practices relating to Tribal Governments and NRCS
  * Leadership/Detail Opportunities
  * We offer several committees to make a difference; Visioning Committee, Leadership, Growth and Mentorship Committee, Youth Committee, Elder Committee, and many more…

How to join: American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association
http://www.aianea.com/index.html

You can also visit us on **Facebook**

http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Indian-Alaska-Native-Employees-Association/160121254007738?sk=wall

Bradley County SCD Holds Annual Awards Banquet

by Joyce Green, District Technician, Bradley County SCD

The Bradley County SCD held its Annual Awards banquet November 17, 2011 with nearly 100 people attending. Each year a landowner is recognized who has made a difference in Bradley County by installing Best Management Practices to protect the natural resources. The 2011 Farmer of the Year was Don Wyatt who farms 444 acres and has installed 14,667 feet of fencing, 3,995 feet of pipeline, 10 watering facilities, 1 stream crossing, and 47 acres of pasture management with 13 paddocks.

He follows a Prescribed Grazing Plan he developed himself that shows the total requirement for dry matter needed for his cattle. He also participated in the Ag Enhancement Program and purchased 2 bulls, installed weight scales and a head shoot and is planning to purchase a creep feeder. He has completed the Master Beef Program. Mr. Wyatt has made significant accomplishments in conserving soil and protecting water quality in Bradley County.

For more information on the Bradley County SCD, go to http://bradleycoscd.com

Photo above: Nearly 100 people attended the 2011 Bradley County SCD Annual Banquet.

Photo above (l to r): Wayne Coates, NRCS District Conservationist; Don Wyatt, Bradley County Farmer of the Year; and Todd Watson, Farm Credit Services of Mid-America.

Photo above: The Bradley County SCD's annual banquet provides an opportunity to highlight the significant accomplishments in agriculture in the county.

Four honored at Hamilton County Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet

by Renita (Shorty) Beaty, *District Technician, Chattanooga Field Office*

The Hamilton County Agriculture Hall of Fame inductees for 2011 were Jesse W. Hewlett, Sr. and F. G. Longley. Both Hewlett and Longley were honored at the annual banquet, along with special recognition recipients Bill Hullander, Hamilton County Trustee, and Greg Atchley, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

Induction into the Agriculture Hall of Fame is to honor, preserve and perpetuate the names and accomplishments of outstanding Hamilton County agricultural leaders, and other present or former citizens of Hamilton County who have made noteworthy contributions in farming, silviculture, agriculture inventions or other rural development accomplishments.

Jesse W. Hewlett, Sr., was born in Nashville, Tennessee. He developed a love of animals and farm life while spending time on his grandparent's farm in Columbia, Tennessee. He received a B.S. in Agricultural Economics and M.S. in Agricultural Sciences from Tennessee State University. Mr. Hewlett worked for the Extension Service for twenty-eight years.

In Hamilton County, he provided leadership for the Urban 4-H Program and later was the Area Agent for Hamilton, Bradley and Marion counties. After retirement, he began work with the Tennessee Department of Conservation at the Booker T. Washington State Park. This work has allowed him the opportunity to teach others about animals and plant science. Mr. Hewlett presently serves as a Director on the Hamilton County Farm Bureau Board and he is a Supervisor on the Hamilton County Soil Conservation District Board.

For many years Hewlett and long-time farmer Oscar Scott, hosted "Give a Hoot for Kids." This program offered urban kids interaction with the farm, farm animals and discovery about food. His other involvement in the community includes membership as a Mason, Toastmasters International and member of Warren Chapel AME Church. Hewlett and his wife Fannie live in Chattanooga.

F. G. Longley and his wife Dot live in Ooltewah, Tennessee. Mr. Longley has been farming in the Collegedale community for more than seventy years. He resides on the farm where he was born. He began farming early in his life. His father died when he was eight, and it became his responsibility to provide the food for his family.

The Longley family currently farms more than three hundred acres with one hundred head of beef cattle and grow more than one hundred acres of hay. The beef production has been in operation for more than fifty years. Mr. Longley is a member of the Apison Baptist Church. He has been a member of the Masonic Lodge for more than fifty years. Mr. and Mrs. Longley have two daughters, Myra (Jerry) Burgess and Joy (David) Newby and one grandson, Joshua. Mr. Longley has a lifelong devotion to the land and agriculture.

In addition to those inducted, special recognitions were given to two well deserving supporters of agriculture in Hamilton County. Bill Hullander, Hamilton County Trustee, was recognized as the 2011 Distinguished Service recipient. Greg Atchley, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, is the 2011 Special Achievement recipient. Both Hullander and Atchley have supported and continue to be strong supporters of agriculture.

Photo above, front row seated (l to r) F. G. Longley and Jesse Hewlett. Back row (l to r) Greg Atchley and Bill Hullander.

Dimple Geesling is the 2011 Civil Rights Award Recipient

by Lori Pittman, Chairperson, Civil Rights Committee, Murfreesboro Area Office

The recipient of the 2011 Civil Rights Award is Dimple Geesling. Through her NRCS-related duties, Ms. Geesling has labored tirelessly to advance Civil Rights and to contribute to the agency's mission of making NRCS the "Employer of Choice".

It's been said that "magic" happens when Dimple is around because she has a way of creating a diverse, cooperative, and effective working atmosphere. And it is this atmosphere that has contributed to the success of many projects including but not limited to: Upper Cumberland Quilt Trails; Free Hills Community Sears/Rosenwald School Project; Agri-Tourism and BioAssessment Watershed Initiative; State-wide Earth Team Volunteer Initiative; Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Projects.

Dimple has encouraged and supported many NRCS employees in activities that improve quality of life and conserve natural resources. "Dimple assisted me and the RC&D council in securing funding for that much needed group of African Americans from Clay County and her help made this project a wonderful success," stated Phillip Dixon, District Conservationist.

Through her NRCS-related duties, Dimple has labored tirelessly to advance Civil Rights and to contribute to Agency's mission of making NRCS the "Employer of Choice".

Dimple has been instrumental in recruiting, organizing, and training partners and volunteers. She has provided training to numerous District Employees at TACD State meetings and set up Earth Team displays. Earth Team Volunteers are an important component in the Agency's success and Dimple has played an integral role in recruiting volunteers and in training field office employees on how to successfully recruit and retain volunteers. During the year, Dimple provided training to approximately 9 Area Volunteer Coordinators and 36 field offices and she worked with Area Coordinators and Area Conservationists to recognize and award outstanding volunteers and NRCS employees. She has delivered presentations to our state Leadership Team and has developed a yearly Earth Team (ET) Business Plans. As a result of Dimple's efforts, Tennessee's Earth Team volunteers contributed nearly 22,000 hours during Fiscal Year 2011.

Photo above: Dimple Geesling, Cookeville Area Office, is the 2011 Civil Rights Award Recipient.

Yes, "magic" happens when Dimple is around. But it's not really magic…it's an Agency crusader who is totally committed to seeing the "best" in people and elevating them to a "higher level". For her commitment and extra effort in the area of civil rights, the 2011 Civil Rights Award Recipient is Dimple Geesling.

Civil Rights Committee Employee Spotlight

by Pam Hoskins, NRCS District Conservationist, Woodbury Field Office

The MLRA Soil Survey Office in Milan is the Employee Spotlight "Group" this quarter. For those who are unfamiliar with NRCS MLRA Offices, they are a group of soil scientist and specialist who work to update and manage data for use in the Web Soil Survey.

The MLRA office in Milan covers Major Land Resource Areas 131A and 134 which are the Mississippi Delta and Loess Hills region. That geographical area includes parts of Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee and covers about 10 million acres. The group ensures that soil survey information from traditional soil surveys for each county and state are presented and available as a seamless unit that provides information on soils and ecology for the different landscapes within the MLRA. The Milan MLRA office is staffed by MLRA leader Caleb Gulley, Soil Scientist Craig Harris and David Thomas, and Ecologist Barry Hart.

Caleb Gulley is a native of Smithville and graduated from TN Tech University where he was a student trainee/intern for three summers. After graduation, Caleb worked in the Bishopville, SC MLRA office until returning to TN as the MLRA leader in Milan.

Craig Harris is a native of Dickson and also graduated from TN Tech University. He worked on Soil Survey in Cheatham County briefly before joining NRCS in North Carolina as a soil scientist. Craig and his wife Alison have two boys, 16 and 13 years old. He enjoys perennial gardening, refereeing soccer, and outdoor activities.

Photo above (l to r): Soil Scientist Craig Harris; MLRA Leader Caleb Gulley, Soil Scientist David Thomas, and Ecologist Barry Hart.

David Thomas is a native of Haywood County and attended UT Martin and joined the SCS a long time ago. Dave has experience in soil survey in 15 Tennessee counties. In 2010, he was honored as a "Million Acre Mapper" for mapping more than one million acres in his career. He lives in Paris with wife Melinda and 13 year old son.

Barry Hart is a native of Dickson County. He graduated from Austin Peay State University and UT Knoxville for his undergraduate/graduate degrees with studies in Biology and Ecology. He has experience with all vertebrate taxonomic groups, select invertebrate groups, and plants. He is a new employee with NRCS and lives in Cumberland City with his wife Michelle and two daughters, ages 19 and 16.

High Tunnels

by Mary Penick, Soil Conservationist, Livingston Field Office

At the Little Creek Farm produce stand, customers come and go, ever in search of quality fruits and vegetables. The items in demand include: sweet corn, green beans, and tomatoes. Wayne Moss talks to customers as he packs up ears of sweet corn by the baker's dozen. Beyond the produce stand, the fields and garden structures that help him generate his wares are visible. In one particular structure, the tomato plants are at least seven feet tall. Small tomatoes hang from vines that grow so closely together, you have to push your way into the jungle that is Wayne Moss's high tunnel.

He estimated that the plants yielded 100 pounds of tomatoes per week, beginning in June and lasting until the end of August. Different varieties of tomatoes, including grape and Park's Whopper, grown under the same roof produced fruits that kept customers coming in all summer long.

Moss's production system is slightly different from many producers. Instead of a greenhouse or hydroponic facility, his tomato crop was grown in a high tunnel structure. It looks like a large greenhouse, but with a plastic roof and sides that can be rolled up by hand. The soil inside is tilled, fertilized, and covered with plastic prior to transplanting the plants.

"We keep hearing about high tunnels at different meetings like the Southern Association of Organic Growers," stated Moss, " and they just seem to be the way to go." According to Moss, who already had a green house, a high tunnel system is conducive to a more intense, high-yield production system. Compared to conventional planting and plasticulture, it grants the grower better control of water usage and temperature, while increasing yields and adding days to the plants' growing season. Moss estimates the plants in his high tunnel gained an extra 30 days of production. He also reports that the quality of his tomatoes improved in the high tunnel. Grape tomatoes produced in the high tunnel had fewer splits and better yield than the same plant grown in the field.

Moss utilizes plasticulture in his fields and inside the high tunnel. Plasticulture involves covering tilled soil with transparent green plastic (he does not recommend red plastic, as yields were lower than those of green plastic), then planting seedlings in this prepared bed. Because soil-borne diseases are easily transmitted via water, farm equipment, and splashes from raindrops, plastic coverings are a means of maintaining clean soil and preventing pathogenic contamination. Plastic also holds soil in place, diminishing erosion and transfer from one plot to another. Another attractive aspect has several growers excited: plasticulture can increase yields, sometimes

Photo above: Wayne Moss stands by the tomato plants he grew in his hoop house.

twice those of conventional plantings. In a high tunnel, yields are even greater than similar plasticulture field plots.

A primary incentive, however, is the cost: building a high tunnel costs significantly less than a standard greenhouse. The structure itself is more simply designed and easily built. Daytime ventilation is achieved by raising the sides, which prevents burning the plants with excess heat. It gets hot in a high tunnel throughout the day; depending on climate, the need for a secondary heat source may be nonexistent. Moss did not install a heat source, stating that none would be needed as long as the sides were kept down overnight and the temperature stayed above 25° F. The design also allows for cold weather cropping, meaning production can continue year-round.

Moss was able to install his high tunnel at a reduced rate through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). He qualified for a cost-share program that assisted with the installation cost. It permitted him to install a large high tunnel for very little money. "The incentive from NRCS was just incredible," said Moss. "We only had a couple hundred dollars in it after the EQIP payment."

The EQIP program provides up to a 75% cost-share on farm conservation practices for qualifying applicants. In addition to fixing problem areas on farms, it assists producers in constructing fences, improving wildlife habitat, and conserving water resources, all in the name of conservation and better farm production.

His success has encouraged others in the area to look into building high tunnels and inquire about conservation pro-rams. He hopes to construct a second high tunnel specifically for growing heirloom and grape tomatoes in the future.

Mapping at TSU

by Gabe Krantz and Melissa Oliver, Cookeville MLRA

The Tennessee State University (TSU) Main Campus Agricultural Research and Extension Center, often referred to as the farm, is located along the banks of the Cumberland River in Nashville. Approximately 400 goats pasture in some 50 paddocks covering 127 acres on the farm. There is a community garden and research plots on an additional 32 acres.

Photo above (l to r): Melissa Oliver, NRCS Soil Scientist; Debbie Brasfield, NRCS Soil Scientist; Jerry Dickerson, TDEC; Gabe Krantz, NRCS Soil Scientist; Dave Barker, NRCS Cartographer; Patrick Bowers, Wounded Warrior Program; and Lori Pittman, NRCS Cartographer.

While this area was part of the Davidson County Soil Survey, Dr. Jason De Koff, Extension Assistant Professor - Bioenergy Crop Production, Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, TSU asked NRCS for help in producing a detailed soils map of the farm to aid them in planning for research projects.

The original soil map had thirteen different soil polygons and was accurate at the published scale. The new soil map has approximately 50 soil polygons with some as small as .10 acre in size.

A survey grid was needed to organize the mapping effort and provide this level of detail. The NRCS GIS staff produced a digital grid of the entire farm providing 150' sample spacing on the areas used for pasture and 75' spacing on the planned research plots. The digital grid, aerial imagery, topographic map, contour lines, and the existing soils data were all downloaded to Trimble GPS units for use in the field.

A geodatabase was created with domains (pick lists) to capture soils information for sample points on the grid. By utilizing the check-in/check-out features of ESRI ArcPad software, information from multiple GPS units could be checked back into the geodatabase after each days field work was completed.

Two person teams were used to sample each site on the grid; a soil scientist described the soil while the other team member collected the location and attribute information using the GPS unit. After the last hole was bored, soils scientists had sampled 340 locations on the TSU farm. Using these data points identified with soil series, new map unit boundaries were delineated with high accuracy.

NRCS Soil Survey, GIS, and Engineering employees, Patrick Bowers of the Wounded Warrior Program, and Jerry Dickerson, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, worked together to complete the project.

Photo above (l to r): Kevin Davis, State GIS/NRI Specialist; Lori Pittman, Geographer; and Bobby Mimms, GIS Specialist.

Meet Karen Wynne, TSP

by Danny Jones, Soil Conservationist, SRC Staff - Nashville

Karen Wynne grew up in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and her mother says that her enjoyment of the sandbox in rain and snow was an indicator of future aspirations. As a young adult, Karen worked and volunteered on farms, detasseling corn in Iowa, teaching public health in rural areas of Mexico and Paraguay, playing an active role in the student-run Miller Farm and starting a student-led sustainable agriculture class at Earlham College in Indiana, and working for three seasons at Wheatland Vegetable Farms in Virginia.

Karen tried to settle down in Newfield, New York, where she started Stick and Stone Farm in 1995, a seven-acre organic truck farm that is now a successful 25-acre farm very much due to the efforts of her former partner Chaw and his wife Lucy. She was a board member and eventual president of the Ithaca Farmers Market, a 120-member cooperative that operated farmers markets three days a week. While Karen was in upstate New York, she also worked nights as a baker at the Ithaca Bakery and finished up her degree in soil science at Cornell.

Dissatisfied with working on rented land, after she finished school in 2000, Karen decided to get rich quick by taking a job as a soil scientist with Ecological Resource Consultants in Florida. While she didn't get rich, she did spend lots of time looking at wetlands and pine forests in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana and Arkansas. She learned about soil mapping, wetland delineation and mitigation (especially pitcher plant bogs), and geographic information systems, and spent her days off paddling around the swamps of the Florida panhandle. She also became licensed and certified as a soil classifier and scientist.

In 2003, Karen migrated to north Alabama, where she began her own consulting business, Crotovina, Inc. She continued to work for clients needing her expertise in soil characteristics and wetlands, primarily for builders in North Alabama. She also began working with small farmers again through the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network and briefly with the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association. Her family bought a small farm in Hartselle (Rosita's) where they raise cows, pigs, chickens, honey bees, and organic vegetables and experiment with organic production methods. These days she focuses primarily on working with small and beginning farmers, organic and not, on planning for successful and sustainable businesses and improving their access to resources.

Photo above: Technical Service Provider Karen Wynne.

Karen Wynne can be reached at P.O. Box 18782 in Huntsville, Alabama 35804.

Current Non- Discrimination Statement

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Meet Paul Hayden, TSP

by Danny Jones, Soil Conservationist, SRC Staff - Nashville

Based in Greeneville TN, Hayden is in position to service all of the counties in the NRCS Knoxville Service Area. He is a Certified Conservation Planner specializing in Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs), and general farm conservation planning. Hayden has about 10 years of experience in conservation planning and for a period of 15 years owned and operated a Black Angus pure bred cow-calf farm in West Virginia.

Hayden has completed several CNMPs for beef operations in east TN and is currently working on a project that will eventually include 14 feeding structures for a cow-calf operation in northeast Tennessee.

Hayden is also contracted to the Middle Nolichucky Watershed Alliance (MNWA) where he provides farm planning to local residences through funds provided by Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency-Land Owner Improvement Program; the US Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners Program; and general fund raising of the MNWA (a not for profit organization). The most frequent installed BMPs are stream exclusion fencing, watering facilities and pumping stations for livestock watering.

In addition to the normal planning and support for farm operation, Hayden has extensive experience in Low Impact Development Design and Stormwater Management. At present, he is providing support to the Greene County Soil Conservation District in the management of a 319 grant for the improvement of College Creek, which is a 303d listed stream for sediment. Over the last 3 years, two major stormwater retention ponds have been designed and installed to reduce the flash of runoff during an intense rain storm. Also during this time numerous rain gardens and rain harvesting systems have been put into operation. Additionally, there are three created wetlands being designed to help improve filtration of the runoff from a cluster of buildings on Tusculum College campus.

Part of the Tusculum project will include a large pervious pavement parking lot and an outdoor classroom adjacent to the wetlands for teaching elementary through college age students about the ecology of the wetlands and other Best Management Practices installed in the project.

Photo above: Paul Hayden, Technical Service Provider.

Farm BMPs are also part of this 319 program with emphasis on livestock stream exclusion, stream accesses and water systems.

These various assignments provide a full time operation for this small company and Hayden, the TSP that is at the core of the operations.

Lofton Retires with 32 Years of Service

by Sharon Englett, Office Assistant, Area II

Larry Lofton retired with 32 years of service from USDA – NRCS on September 30, 2011. He served as Project Coordinator for the Buffalo/ Duck River RC&D (Resource Conservation & Development) Council since its authorization in April of 1994.

The Buffalo/Duck River RC&D is a non-profit organization working to improve natural resources, education, and economic and community development in Hickman, Lewis, Perry and Wayne Counties. Prior to this assignment, he was a Soil Conservation Technician for NRCS serving Hickman, Lewis and Perry Counties.

Larry received many awards for his many accomplishments with NRCS and the RC&D Program, including: (1) stream bank stabilization along the Tennessee River at Mousetail Landing State Park that resulted in the protection of a navigational channel, (2) preservation of a Native American burial ground, and (3) providing a heritage river kiosk depicting life along the river.

Through his leadership, the council developed numerous working relationships with various agencies including the Tennessee Department of Tourism, which assisted the RC&D's four counties through their Chambers of Commerce. He assisted in the establishment of the Devil's Backbone State Natural Area and kiosk in Lewis County, the Waynesboro City Park Trail, the Duck River Trail in Hickman County, the Wayne County Welcome Center in Collinwood, and the Collinwood Railroad Depot restoration. Lofton developed "Communities Tomorrow" that led to two adult leadership programs and Three-Star Certifications. He secured a grant with the US Forest Service that allowed Perry County to host the first of many festivals. He was also instrumental in the development of the Perry County Chamber of Commerce.

Photo above (l to r): Sharon Englett, Office Assistant; Jim Azbill, President Buffalo-Duck RC&D Council; Larry Lofton; Ancil Balentine, RC&D Council Member; and Patricia Skelton, RC&D Council Member.

His leadership in the council's partnership with the Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area led to the completion of projects such as the placement of historical Civil War markers located at all four courthouses in the RC&D area and throughout each county. He worked to bring the Century Farms Program to the RC&D area and as a result, several farms were recognized as 100-year old farms. Among those recognized, was a family farm dating back to 1871 owned by the Craigs, who are African- Americans. The Craig farm is now on the National Historic Register as well.

In partnership with the USDA Farm Service Agency and other RC&D councils, he organized three statewide Outreach Workshops for women, minorities, and socially disadvantaged Farmers who actively engage in agriculture. The workshops provided economic and conservation based opportunities to these farmers who have historically faced difficult challenges.

These are but a few of the projects the RC&D Council accomplished with Larry's leadership in partnership with USDA/NRCS, local units of governments, and other organizations. Larry is continuing to assist the RC&D council and is finally putting his Master Degree in Art to good use by pursuing his love of art. Larry and his wife, Sheila, reside in Waverly.

Earth Team Award Winners

by Dimple Geesling, State Earth Team Coordinator

Delilah Anderson, Niota, was recognized as the top volunteer in the eastern United States by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Anderson received the NRCS Earth Team East Region Individual Volunteer Award and the Tennessee East Region Individual Volunteer Award from Tennessee State Conservationist Kevin Brown at the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts Convention in Jackson on February 28, 2012.

Brown praised the selection. "Delilah Anderson is a very busy volunteer. She is a full-time college student, works part-time, and helps her family with many chores including feeding livestock and bailing hay. As busy as she is, Delilah finds time to volunteer for us," said Brown. "Our Cleveland Field Office staff credits her with helping them meet program deadlines and being able to better serve their customers. In 2011, she conducted field inspections including 2,400 feet of stream fencing and 1,500 feet of pipeline, 2 watering facilities and a stream crossing for NRCS staff. She works with enthusiasm and is always ready to take on new tasks." Congratulations Delilah!

Leon Tillman received the Volunteer Coordinator of the Year Award for 2012. With Leon's leadership, Area 1 more than doubled the volunteer hours and number of offices working with volunteers. And the number of volunteers in Area 1 almost tripled. Congratulations Leon!

The Tennessee Earth Team Group Award was presented to Union City Boy Scout Troop 55 who made a positive impact on their community by volunteering their time to plant shrubs for wildlife habitat enhancement. Congratulations Boy Scout Troop 55!

The Tennessee Earth Team Field Award recipient was the Union City Field Office. With the assistance of volunteers, the Union City Field Office obligated and completed nearly $1 million in EQIP. Congratulations Union City Field Office!

In fiscal year 2011, 618 volunteers donated 11,158 hours in Tennessee helping NRCS staff with conservation projects. Nationally, Earth Team Volunteers donated 435,653 hours of service to NRCS worth $9.3 million.

April 15-21 is National Volunteer Week. Thank you Earth Team Volunteers for your volunteer spirit!

Photo above: Delilah Anderson, Bradley County is the recipient of the Tennessee and East Region Individual Volunteer Awards.

Photo above (l to r): Recipient of the Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Award Leon Tillman, Union City and NRCS State Conservationist Kevin Brown.

Photo above: Recipients of the Earth Team Field Award Union City Field Office. Back row (l to r): Matthew Denton, NRCS and Leon Tillman. NRCS, Front row (l to r) Bobbi Campbell, District Secretary and Kevin Brown, NRCS State Conservationist.

More Award Winners at the TACD Convention

Photo above: Kevin Brown, State Conservationist with Troop 55 Boy Scouts Will Riley, Will Harris, Taj Reid, Garrett Hay, Austin Jefferson, Austin Kessel, Jeff Hay, Leader and Shea Riley, Leader.

Photo above (l to r): Category I District Cooperator of the Year winner Jason Crabtree of Obion County and Jerry McCullough, Farm Credit Services of Mid-America.

Photo above: Glen Long, Roane County, was the recipient of the TACD Distinguished Service Award for 2012.

Photo above: Recipient of the Vickie O'Bryant/Carolyn Franks Scholarship Janet Reyes, District Secretary, Lincoln County SCD.

Photo above (l to r): Recipient of the TCDEA Employee of the Year Award for 2011 Lois Garren, District Secretary, Monroe County SCD, and Anna Moore, TCDEA President.

Photo above (l to r): Carolyn Dillard, Recipient of the TVA/ TACD Outstanding District Conservationist of the Year Award, and Kevin Brown, NRCS State Conservationist.

Distinguished Partnership Awards

State Conservationist Kevin Brown presented Distinguished Partnership Awards to five soil conservation districts at the TACD conventions. Districts receiving the award included Clay, Davidson, Humphreys, Jackson, and Macon.

Photo above: Distinguished Partnership Award recipients Clay County SCD. (Back row, l to r) Jeff Young, NRCS District Conservationist and Kevin Brown, NRCS State Conservationist. (Front row, l to r) Jeanette Finch, District Secretary and James Stevens, District Supervisor.

Photo above: Distinguished Partnership Award Recipient Davidson County SCD. (Back row, l to r) Jerry Graves, District Supervisor; John Leeman, District Chairperson and Kevin Brown, State Conservationist, (Front row, l to r) Carolyn Dillard, NRCS District Conservationist and Carol Edwards, District Technician/Office Administrator.

Photo above: Distinguished Partnership Award recipients Jackson County SCD. (Back row, l to r) Jeff Young, NRCS District Conservationist and Kevin Brown, NRCS State Conservationist, (Front row, l to r) Kelly Stockton, District Supervisor and Pamela Flatt, District Secretary.

Humphreys County SCD was not available for photos.

Photo above: Distinguished Partnership Award Recipient Macon County SCD. (Back row l to r) Kevin Brown, NRCS State Conservationist and Brandon Moore, NRCS Soil Conservationist. (Front row, l to r) Barbara Spivey, District Secretary and Keri Craig, District Technician.

Ag on the Hill 2012

by Carter Harris, Program Analyst

On Tuesday, March 20th, NRCS and TACD promoted conservation and conservation districts at the Tennessee Legislative Plaza at Ag on the Hill 2012. NRCS, TACD and over 35 other agricultural stakeholders had displays and demonstrations at the annual event.

Ray Weaver, President of TACD, Sara Steelman (Coffee County), Carol Edwards (Davidson County) and Andrea Northcutt (Coffee County) staffed the inside display and Greg Brann (NRCS), Donna Garrettson (NRCS) and John Rissler (NRCS) staffed the rain fall simulator at the outside display. Hundreds of legislators, staff and others visited.

Photo above (l to r): Sara Steelman, Coffee County Administrative Secretary, and Ray Weaver, TACD President, staff the TACD exhibit.

Photo above: NRCS Grazing Land Specialist Greg Brann demonstrates the rainfall simulator.

Photo above (l to r): NRCS State Resource Conservationist John Rissler visits with conservation partner Mark Gudlin,TWRA.

Conservation in the Classroom

Mary Beth Flowers, Madison County District Secretary, visited the third grade classes of Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Browning at Jackson Preparatory School in December.

Mary Beth showed a powerpoint presentation she developed and discussed the role of the Soil Conservation District and NRCS.

She also set up an Enviroscape model to provide a hands-on demonstration to students showing the runoff from farms, factories, and residential areas. The presentation also showed how sediment, chemicals and other pollutants can flow into streams and lakes if adequate conservation measures are not used.

The hands-on demonstration helped students see how they can help conserve the natural resources.

Photo above: Mary Beth Flowers talk to students about the role of Soil Conservation Districts.

Upcoming Events

Macon County Farm Management Workshop & Field Day *Pesticide Points Available* *For more information, contact:* *Macon SCD Office @ 615-666-4016*	April 26, 2012	Jerry Ray Farm & Willette Community Center, Red Boiling Springs Meal Provided - RSVP by April 20, 2012
SWCS Meeting *For more information, contact:* *Jenny Adkins*	May 18, 2012	Jackson Experiment Station
2012 Milan No-Till Field Day	July 26, 2012	Milan Experiment Station Milan, Tennessee
Land & Wildlife Expo	August 9-11, 2012	Opryland Convention Center

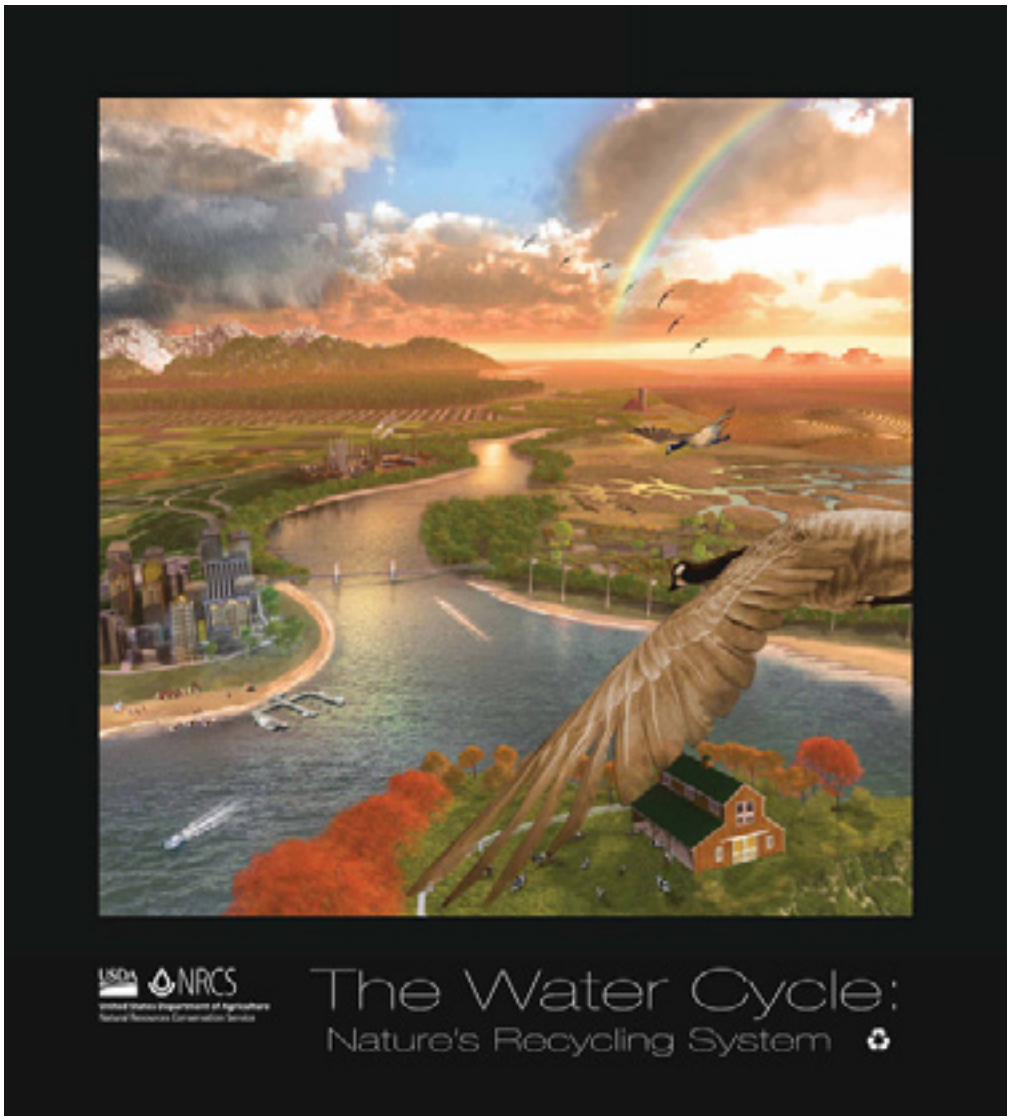
31st Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop

by Debbie Brasfield, Soil Scientist, Columbia Field Office

Seventy people from ten states attended the 31st Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop was held in the Natchez Trace State Forest area near Lexington, Tennessee on October 11- 13, 2011. Attendees included soil scientists, foresters, ecologists, educators and land use consultants and managers.

The workshop began with speakers from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Sewanee University of the South, University of Tennessee at Martin and University of Tennessee Experiment Stations welcoming and introducing participants to the area. Participants had the opportunity to learn about the soils and forestry conditions and plans at eight different sites in the Natchez Trace State Forest, and at forestry research projects at the UT Experiment Station at Jackson, Tennessee.

Photo above: Participants from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas attended the Central States Forest Soils Workshop in Lexington, Tennessee.

NRCS Publications and Forms

The new Water Cycle poster has arrived at the NRCS Distribution Center and is now available for ordering. The poster measure 40" x 35" and is 2-sided. The poster is packaged in boxes of 100. To view and order FREE National NRCS publications and forms, please visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/distributioncenter