

Current Developments

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Spring Issue - March 2010



Message from the State Conservationist

April 27, 2010 will mark the 75th anniversary of our agency. For three-quarters of a century the Soil Erosion Service (a name that didn't last long), then the Soil Conservation Service, and finally the Natural Resources Conservation Service have been helping Americans help the land. I am very proud to be a part of the agency founded by Hugh Hammond Bennett 75 years ago, and I hope you know just how important your work is to the country and to the world. Because of your dedication, we have healthier soil, cleaner water, and more abundant wildlife.

Chief Dave White recently laid out his priorities for NRCS as we mark this milestone anniversary, I want to share them with you.

First, we can't do conservation from the office. The Chief has pledged to cut out 80-percent of the bureaucracy currently tying us up at the field level. Doing that will allow you to get away from your desk and do more one-on-one work with customers like we used to do.

Second, we will continue to embrace good science. As a technical agency, we must use good science to effectively carry out our work. It is the bedrock of what we do.

Third, we cannot work in isolation. Work more closely with your local partners. Have more field days. Take advantage of our strong partnerships with the Districts, TDA, RC&D Councils, FSA, TWRA, US Fish and Wildlife, and all the other agencies and organizations with an investment in conserving natural resources.

Fourth, local leadership is essential. That means step up. Bring partners together, empower your local working group, and prioritize your natural resources needs so that your local area receives the most benefit.

And fifth, we must take care of the land. That's the entire goal of our agency in one simple sentence. Our work is essential because we all want to leave the land in better condition to be utilized and enjoyed by our children, grandchildren, and all the generations to come.

Thank you for doing your part to make NRCS what it is. Here's to the next 75 years!

Kevin Brown

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2010 Kentucky-Tennessee Border Wars Golf Outing

- Friday, April 23, 2010 •
- 8:30 a.m. Shotgun Start • Scramble Format •

Lake Barkley (aka Boots Randolph) Golf Course
3500 State Park Road Hwy 68
Cadiz, KY 42211-0790
Toll Free: 1.800.295.1878

The cost is \$42.00 per person for registration received prior to April 13th, 2010 and \$45.00 after the deadline. The fee includes green fees, cart fees, a bucket of range balls, catered lunch, plus 2 mulligans. Practice range will be available beginning at 7:30 a.m.

DRESS CODE: Shirts with collars & sleeves (mock turtlenecks are permissible). No cut off shorts or t-shirts. No metal spikes permitted.

Prizes will be awarded for Lowest team Score (KY & TN), Longest Drive, Longest Putt, and Closest to the Pin, along with a random drawing for several other prizes.

All participants are responsible for their own overnight lodging accommodations, if needed. A block of rooms has been reserved at Super 8 just west of the I-24/U.S.68 interchange (near Cracker Barrel) at a rate of \$58.53 per night which includes taxes and fees...mention you are with the NRCS Golf Outing to obtain this rate (phone no. 270.522.7007). If you prefer, rooms on the lake at Barkley Lodge (3 minutes from the course) may be available... check with <http://parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/lb/> Contact Richard West for more information.

Conservation Planning Course

by Kathy Daugherty, Hull-York Lakeland RC&D Coordinator, Area III

Thirty-two students from across Tennessee and Kentucky attended the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Conservation Planning Course held during December and January in Cookeville, TN. Initiated by the vision of State Conservationist Kevin Brown, Hull-York Lakeland RC&D, in cooperation with Tennessee Technological University's (TTU) School of Agriculture, organized the two week course which included both field and classroom time. Utilizing the three available TTU farms gave the participants a chance to view unique perspectives all in one place.

Students attending the course were Soil Conservation District, County government, AmeriCorps, and NRCS employees. Training included Conservation Planning, Wildlife, Threatened & Endangered Species, Cultural Resources, Grazing, Water Quality, Soils, Organic Certification, and understanding the planning tools necessary to do their jobs well.

Each group was assigned a real life conservation planning scenario and asked to develop a Resource Management System (RMS) level plan with a 'mock' producer. USDA-NRCS Resource Specialists reviewed the plan. Successful development of the plan was necessary to pass the course.

State Conservationist Kevin Brown told students to "...take what you learn here and use it to be even more effective as you help people help the land."



Photo above: Conservation Planning Course attendees along with Kathy Daugherty, Hull-York Lakeland RC&D Coordinator and Kevin Brown, State Conservationist.



Shelby County SCD Conservation Awards Program

by Betty Brown, Administrative Assistant, Memphis Field Office

The Shelby County Soil Conservation District held its annual conservation awards banquet on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in the Agricenter. John Charles Wilson presided over the event and presented the Shelby County 2009 Conservation Farmer of the Year award to the Sneed family of The Sneed's Farm, Inc. of Millington. The Sneed family was presented a Resolution from the State of Tennessee, Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey and State Senator Mark Norris. The Shelby County Board of Commission also presented a resolution by Commissioner Matt Kuhn.



Photo above: John Charles Wilson presents the Shelby County 2009 Conservation Farmer of the Year award to the Sneed family of The Sneed's Farm, Inc of Millington.

The featured speaker was Dr. James L. Byford, Professor and Dean of Agriculture and Applied Sciences at The University of Tennessee Martin. Miss Anna Melvin of Collierville was the entertainer for the event.

Major sponsors and contributors for the event were SCD Affiliate Members, Agricenter, Cargill, Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture, Tipton County Co-op, Shelby County Soil Conservation District and NRCS Memphis Field Office.

Engineers Combine Training and Work Session to Expedite Design Work on Cane Creek ARRA Project

An engineering working meeting and training event was held in Ripley, TN the week of January 11 to help out with work on the Cane Creek American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Project. The goals of the meeting were twofold: 1) for the engineers and technicians across the state to receive updated training on the latest surveying and plotting software technologies used to design structures; and 2) to expedite design work on the time sensitive Cane Creek ARRA project. Six teams were sent out to perform total station surveys on 18 laterals along Cane Creek. The teams were then tasked with downloading the data and developing contour maps using AutoCAD and Eaglepoint software. This effort saved the Area 1 engineering staff considerable time and allowed them to focus on the next phase of work in Cane Creek.



Photo above, seated (l to r) – Ralph Smith, Allen Morrow, Frank Hamlin, Richard Bryan. Standing – James Kiah Ewer, Denise Watkins, Terry Horne, Jeremy Ruffell, Phillip Brasfield, Will Pinson, Jared Kelley, Jacob Barowsky, Joe Zimmerman, Kelly Gupton, Jorge Ramirez, James Gilliam, Alton Miller, Jo Ellen Johnson, Bobby Moore, Steve Koonce, and Cameron Williams.

Not pictured – Tate Jenkins, Matt Brown, Robert Anderson, Eddie Donald, James Garrett, Carolyn Bartee, and Dwaine Johnston.



Tennesseans Donate to Afghanistan

Tennesseans have been making a huge difference in the lives of some unfortunate women and children in Afghanistan. NRCS-Tennessee employee Jeff Sanders is on a USDA detail in Afghanistan. When he saw the conditions that some women and children there are forced to live in, he called on his fellow Tennesseans to help.

In Afghanistan, the rights of women are almost non-existent. During the ongoing conflicts there, many women have become victims of rape. Instead of calling it what it is, their husbands often prefer to call it adultery because the idea of rape is too shameful. Adulterous women go to prison in Afghanistan, and in many cases they are forced to bring their children with them. Other women in Afghan prisons are also there because of cultural—not legal—reasons. For instance, if a man hits a woman, there is no penalty. If a woman hits a man, she can be imprisoned. Again, they must often bring their children with them.

The women and children imprisoned throughout Afghanistan have suffered a long and cold winter. Jeff saw the need for warm clothing, blankets, and toiletry items, so he put out the word, and the response has been overwhelming.

Jeff's wife, Cindy, has been at the forefront of the Tennessee action. She has organized and coordinated the Tennessee efforts from her home in Murfreesboro. Boxes of clothes, blankets, and toiletries have been filled by NRCS-TN employees, RC&D Councils, District employees, and dozens of other volunteers. In all, Tennessee has shipped about 80 boxes to Afghani women and children.

Lori Reeves is a veteran Corrections Officer who works directly with the female inmates in Afghanistan. She says the donated items are greatly appreciated. "AFGHAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PRISON wish to thank those that gave from their heart and that donated various and sundry items. From warm winter clothing items, to toiletries, to toys, to a stuffed animal or doll a child can hold and draw comfort from as they sleep through the night... all of these have made it to the intended folks and are much appreciated; they form a special bonding relationship between Afghans and Americans that will always remain."

Reeves sent pictures, which Cindy Sanders has shared with us. Prisons in Kunduz, Takar, Baghlan, and Mazar have been reached. Reeves says the need is still there, and if you want to donate, you can send items to:
Chuck Bullington, INL, APO AE 09806





SCS/NRCS Tennessee Retirees Club

The SCS/NRCS Tennessee Retirees Club meets 4 times per year. The purpose of the organization is to maintain contact between retirees and to foster the welfare of members as a group and individuals. The Retirees Club currently has about 95 members, which includes not only Tennessee SCS/NRCS retirees, but also those that retired from positions in other parts of the country, but came to Tennessee to live.

Meetings scheduled for this year are as follows:

June 17, Montgomery Bell State Park
October 21, Cumberland Mountain State Park
December 9, Nashville, Hermitage House Smorgasbord

The photo was taken at the December 2009 meeting.



Photo by Vic Simpson

Photo above - Seated Front Row (l to r): Judy Bivens, Betty Jo Griggs, Connie Hasty, Sue Sims, Brenda Moore, Lou Richards, Ruby Mae Farrar, Ardelle Langdon, and Naomi Johnson. Standing (l to r): Allen Crowe, Ray Curl, Bobby Moore, Bill Johnson, Don Bivens, Tom Pointer, Jim Brasfield, Grady Griggs, Anna Chidester, Liz Johnson, Steve Dobbs, Ray Sims, Clarence Jent, Donald Dotson, Jim Lansford, Billy Headden, Clarence Richards, and Larry Hasty.

Central Basin Resource Conservation & Development Council Awarded Grant by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

by Allen Persinger, RC&D Coordinator, Central Basin RC&D

The Central Basin Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council received a \$1263 grant through The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to reestablish trees lost during the tornado that struck Murfreesboro April 10, 2009. The grant allowed the RC&D to make trees available free of charge to property and homeowners who lost trees during the tornado.

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee has distributed more than \$900,000 in grants to 198 nonprofit organizations in 30 Middle Tennessee counties as part of The Foundation's annual grant making process.

"As needs in Middle Tennessee grow, the work of our nonprofit partners to provide vital services and innovative programs has never been more important," said Ellen Lehman, president of The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. "The Foundation is honored to connect generosity with need through our annual grantmaking, and congratulates nonprofits on their efforts to improve quality of life for our community." The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee oversees more than 700 charitable funds. In the past 18 years, The Community Foundation has distributed \$440 million to its nonprofit partners.

The Central Basin Resource Conservation and Development Council serves six Middle Tennessee Counties - Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson and Wilson. For more information or to make a tax deductible contribution to the Central Basin RC&D council please see the following website: <http://givingmatters.guidestar.org/NonprofitProfile.aspx?OrgId=2304>



NRCS & TWRA Team Up for NWTF Convention

by Chris Wolkonowski, Wildlife Biologist, Area II

During the course of 3 days in February, nearly 45,000 outdoor enthusiasts descended on Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, TN for the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) National Convention & Exposition. One of the largest events of its kind, this convention highlights the efforts made by NWTF through its conservation programs as well as its focus on natural resource management. Seminars and lectures were provided by wildlife biologists and other outdoor professionals throughout the three days. There is a large exhibit hall where vendors can display and promote various hunting and wildlife management products.

At this year's event, NRCS and TWRA continued their partnership efforts by highlighting their private lands programs. The two agencies provided a booth for landowners to inquire about USDA/TWRA cost share programs and receive information about common wildlife management practices that can be implemented on private lands. The NRCS Area Biologists, TWRA Private Lands Biologists, District Conservationists, and other Area staff were on hand to answer questions. The biologists also had ArcMap software available to develop basic wildlife plans if requested.

During the event, hundreds of landowners interacted with NRCS and TWRA staff members. The Private Lands Booth received numerous compliments from attendees and NWTF staff for the variety of literature and information provided, as well as, the professionalism exhibited by the volunteers that worked at the booth. As a result of the success of the NWTF convention, NRCS and TWRA have been invited to take a leading role in a "first-of-its-kind" Land and Conservation Expo to be held in August 2010.

A special thanks goes out to all of the NRCS and TWRA employees that helped to make this event a great success. It is the commitment and enthusiasm of the employees of NRCS and TWRA that have developed the partnership we have shared over the years. Look for us to be back once again next year when the National Wild Turkey Federation rolls into town!

Photos - Top - NRCS & TWRA Private Lands booth before the event . Middle - Clint Borum, TWRA Private Lands Biologist, being interviewed about our private lands efforts. Bottom - Convention attendees looking at literature provided at the NRCS/TWRA booth.





Conservation Through Cooperation in Obion

by Leon Tillman, Soil Conservationist, Union City

Just south of Union City rests the nice, quiet town of Obion, Tennessee. Established in 1872, it is a rural community of about 1137 residents. It is also the residence of the Windy Acres Farm of Marion Jones, which was experiencing erosion issues.

Ms. Jones initially contacted the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to address an area of erosion that was in the corner of another crop field adjacent to a drainage ditch that led into the town.

The NRCS District Conservationist, Matthew Denton, spoke with Ms. Jones regarding the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a federal program offered through the agency, which would fund 75% of the cost to install the practice that would address the erosion concern. Denton proposed installing a cattle panel grade stabilization structure, a free flow structure that doesn't catch water or sediment but greatly stabilizes the erosion site with geotextile fabric and rock.

After Ms. Jones agreed to the construction of the cattle panel, the town approached Denton about the possibility of a partnership using town and possibly county funds to assist in the construction of the structure. However, the structure would have to be redesigned in the form of a water and sediment control basin. A town meeting convened and participants voted to change the structure from a cattle panel to a water sediment control basin, thereby better controlling the water and sediment entering the town.

"The cattle panel was the best fit for the on-farm problem," Denton says. "From a financial standpoint it was the best option. But when the town approached me, I encouraged them to contact the landowner because another structure would control the on-farm problem and also control some of the town's off-site flooding."

Wes Miller, the Mayor of the town of Obion agreed. "I thought it was a good idea and that it would be very beneficial." And Mayor Miller was right. "It has helped the water situation in the town and everybody is satisfied," he said. "We appreciate the cooperation with you (NRCS)."

Denton says the installation of the water and sediment control basin reduced the flood potential for the community. "Previously this water would be flowing from the agricultural

Cane Creek ARRA Project



Photo above: State Conservationist Kevin Brown and Cane Creek Watershed Board Chairman Dennis Lee sign an agreement to further work on the Cane Creek Stabilization Project in Lauderdale County. The \$12.5 million Cane Creek Project is one of dozens of similar projects around the country funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), also known as the stimulus funding act.

field with higher velocity and carrying sediment. Now the water is slowed and the sediment is contained on the farm."

Through the cooperation of NRCS, Obion County, the town of Obion, and Ms. Jones, erosion and flooding were reduced, the water quality improved, and the interest of the town was well-served. The structure now catches water and sediment runoff from 20 acres and slowly drains it out of the field into a nearby culvert under the town's roads and driveways.

Obion County Mayor Benny McGuire said it's only the beginning. "We need more retention dams put in the county to try to prevent the sedimentation that we have in the Obion River watershed now."





Earth Team Award Winners

Earth Team volunteers play a significant role in carrying out the conservation programs across Tennessee. State Conservationist Kevin Brown and Earth Team Coordinator Dimple Geesling presented awards to five Earth Team Award Winners, two of whom were also regional award winners, at the 66th Annual TACD Convention. Earth Team Award winners include:

Mike Richardson, Putnam County - NRCS Earth Team Individual Award Winner

Phillip Dixon, Jackson County - NRCS Earth Team Employee Award Winner & East Regional Employee Award Winner

Natalie Freeman, Jefferson County - NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Award Winner & NRCS East Regional Volunteer Coordinator Award Winner

Dr. George Smith, UT Extension Service (retired) - NRCS Partnership Award Winner

Clinch-Powell RC&D Council – NRCS RC&D Earth Team Award Winner



Photo above: Dr. George Smith, UT-Knoxville (retired) received the TN Earth Team Partnership Award.



Photo above: Mike Richardson, Putnam County received the TN Earth Team Individual Award.



Photo above: Natalie Freeman, Jefferson County received the TN Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Award and the NRCS East Regional Volunteer Coordinator Award.



Photo above: Phillip Dixon, Jackson County received the TN Earth Team Employee Award and the NRCS East Regional Employee Award.



TN Farmland Legacy Partnership

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, along with the USDA Rural Development, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, The Land Trust for Tennessee, and The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture partnered to preserve Tennessee farmland by forming the Tennessee Farmland Legacy Partnership. The partnership will serve as an authoritative resource for farm level and community planning to promote preservation and viability of working farms in Tennessee.

The Tennessee Farmland Legacy Partnership's goal is to raise awareness among farmers and other landowners, government officials including community planning and zoning officials, developers, business and civic leaders, media and residents as to the values, needs, and opportunities for farmland preservation in the state. The Partnership will also provide information on the technical and financial programs available through organizations and agencies related to farmland protection.

"In Tennessee, we're losing valuable farmland to development and other non-farm uses at a rate of 100,000 acres per year," said state Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens.

USDA Agency Leaders - Tennessee



Photo above: State Conservationist Kevin Brown met recently with his USDA-TN counterparts Gene Davidson, FSA State Administrator and Bobby Goode, RD State Director.

"Agriculture is a \$3 billion industry at the farm level. This partnership is about giving farm families options for keeping their land in sustainable production for future generations."

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, the number of Tennessee farms in 2008 totaled 79,000, down 8,000 since 2003. Land in farms decreased during the same period from 11.5 million acres to 10.9 million acres, for an average annual loss of 100,000 acres. According to state agricultural officials, factors contributing to the loss of farms and farmland in the state include the loss of Tennessee's tobacco industry, higher production costs, natural disasters and development pressures.

Under the Memorandum of Agreement, participating agencies and organizations agree to:

- Share information, staff and resources.
- Collect and disseminate information to stakeholders on the preservation of working farms.
- Conduct and provide support for educational workshops and conferences on farmland preservation issues.
- Serve as a central resource on technical and financial programs offered by private organizations and state and federal agencies.

For more information on the Farmland Legacy Partnership, visit: <http://www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/marketing/legacy.html>.



TACD 66th Annual Convention

"Clean Water - A Dwindling Resource" was the theme for the 66th Annual TACD Convention. Barry Lake, TACD President welcomed the approximately 350 attendees. Ken Givens, Commissioner of Agriculture, gave a special welcome.

Keynote speakers were Paul Sloan, Deputy Commissioner, TN Department of Environment and Conservation, and Margo Farnsworth, Senior Research Consultant, Cumberland River Compact.

A highlight of the convention was the Gubernatorial Forum on Rural & Agricultural Issues in Tennessee. All Gubernatorial candidates addressed the group and answered questions.

On Tuesday afternoon, board members had the opportunity to visit with their legislators to update them on agriculture and conservation issues.

Jim Nance, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, was the recipient of the TACD 2010 Distinguished Service Award. To view the video presentation on this and other TACD awards, visit TACD on You Tube at TACDTN1.

The scholarship auction raised more than \$4500. This money is divided three ways between the TACD Scholarship Fund, Auxiliary Scholarship, and TCDEA Scholarships. A special thanks to Lynice Broyles for chairing the Auction Committee, to Dwight Dickson for serving as Auctioneer, and Lois Garren, McMinnville Field Office, and Nancy Holt, Springfield Field Office for being the convention photographers.

TACD will be hosting the Southeast National Association of Conservation Districts in Nashville on August 8 - 11, 2010 at the Airport Sheraton. And NACD will be meeting in Nashville at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention on January 30 - February 2, 2011.



Photo above (l to r): Weldon and Anita Akins, Jim Nance's son-in-law and daughter; Ken Givens, TN Commissioner of Agriculture; Jim Nance; Barry Lake, TACD President; John McClurkan, TN Department of Agriculture; and Roy Gillis, TN NACD Representative.



Photo above: Earl Smith (far right) of Hardeman County was the recipient of the TACD & Farm Credit Services of MidAmerica's Category I Conservation Farmer of the Year for 2010. Also pictured are his wife Judy and son Justin. Justin is a Hardeman County SCD Board Member.

TACD is now on YouTube listed as TACDTN1. Go to www.youtube.com and search for TACDTN1. Video's of Jim Nance's Distinguished Service Award and the TACD Awards are now available. Other video's will be posted in the near future.



Photo above: Paula Petty, who along with her husband Ronnie manages Camp Discovery in Jackson County, accepts the TACD 2010 Category II Promoter of Conservation Award for Camp Discovery from Barry Lake, TACD President.



Photo above: Darlene Coffee of Grainger County was the recipient of the TACD 2010 Conservation Educator of the Year Award.



Photo above (l to r): The 2010 TVA Conservation District of the Year is the Hawkins County Soil Conservation District. Daniel Horne, District Conservationist; Bennie Davis, SCD Chairman; Ken Givens, Commissioner of Agriculture; Barry Lake, TACD President; Bernice Scalf, Programs Administrator, and Roy Gillis, TN NACD Representative. Daniel Horne was the recipient of the 2010 Outstanding District Conservationist of the Year Award. Bernice Scalf received the Outstanding District Programs Manager Award; Amy Chandler received the Outstanding District Employee Award and Jordan Southern received the Outstanding District Technician Award. Amy and Jordan were not available for photos.



Photo above: Mendel Wade, Soil Conservation Technician, Crockett County SCD, is the 2010 Conservation District Employee Association Employee of the Year. Mendel is currently President of the Southeast Conservation District Employees Association.

Photo at right; TCDEA employees met at the Ellington Agricultural Center to plant a tree to honor the memory of Olin Sims, former NACD President. A plaque was also placed at the site. Standing left to right: Janice Weiss, Cheatham County SCD; Anna Moore, President, TCDEA - Washington County SCD; Sandra Greene, Union County SCD; Bobbi Campbell, Obion County SCD; and Mendel Wade, Crockett County SCD.





Charles Roberts Retires

Charles V. Roberts has retired from NRCS after nearly 40 years of service. Charles, a native of Springfield, TN, began his tenure with the Soil Conservation Service in 1971 as a student trainee. When he stepped down in January 2010, he had risen to the position of Area Conservationist for NRCS-TN Area 3.

Charles began his career in the Lebanon Field Office. From student trainee, he went to Soil Conservationist (Jackson, Hartsville), District Conservationist (Sullivan County), IRM Coordinator (Johnson City area), Area Resource Conservationist (Johnson City area), Assistant State Conservationist for Watershed Resources (Nashville State Office), and finally Area Conservationist in Cookeville, TN.



Photo above: State Conservationist Kevin Brown reminisces about Charles Roberts career with NRCS.



Photo above: Terrance Rudolph presented Charles Roberts with his retirement gifts.

Charles served as an EEO Mediator/Counselor as a collateral duty. He also had the honor of serving on two details to the NRCS National Headquarters where he worked in the Legislative Affairs Office. He also serves on the NEDC cadre for Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery—a position he is continuing with since his retirement.

Charles is a member of the of the Tennessee Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. He has served as Chapter President and Secretary-Treasurer. He is also a life member of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees, serving for three terms as the NOPBNRCSE National Treasurer.

Friends and coworkers held a dinner reception on January 15, 2010 at Ellington Agricultural Center to honor Charles. He was joined there by his daughter TaJuan and his granddaughter Zoey, aged 11. Charles told the crowd he'd be spending his retirement enjoying his family and improving his golf game!

Mark Your Calendar

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Sustainable Management Farm
Field Day at Delvin Farms
6290 McDaniel Road
College Grove, TN
Register by April 16-Contact Janet Regen
admin@cumberlandrivercompact.org or 615-331-3787 | April 21, 2010
8:00 am - 1:00 pm |
| State Envirothon
Lipscomb University
Nashville, Tennessee
For more info, contact
Chandra Owens at
931368-0252, ext. 5 | May 10-12, 2010 |
| State Civil Rights Committee
Meeting
Memphis, TN | May 18-19, 2010 |
| Milan No-Till Field Day
Milan, Tennessee | July 22, 2010 |
| Southeast NACD Meeting
Airport Sheraton | August 8-11, 2010 |



Civil Rights Committee Spotlight Employee - Natalie Freeman

by Pam Hoskins, District Conservationist, Woodbury Field Office

The Civil Rights Committee spotlight employee this quarter is Natalie Freeman. Natalie is the District Conservationist in the Dandridge Field Office. She has been in Dandridge since February 2009.

Natalie came to NRCS through the Student Internship Program where she spent 2002 in the Lebanon Field Office, 2003 in the Crossville Field Office, and 2004 in the Smithville Field Office.

Natalie graduated from Tennessee Technological University in 2004 with a BS in Agriculture with a concentration on Environmental Agriscience.

Natalie came on board with NRCS full time in January 2005 as the Soil Conservationist in the Morristown Field Office.

She serves as the Area 4 Earth Team Coordinator and received the Tennessee Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Award and the Volunteer Coordinator Regional Earth Team Award for FY09.

Natalie grew up in Putnam County on a 5th generation beef cattle farm. She enjoys being outdoors, spending summers on the lake, and photography. She also enjoys spending time with family and friends especially her niece and nephew.



Photo above: The Civil Rights Committee chose Natalie Freeman, District Conservationist in the Dandridge Field Office for the Spotlight Employee for this quarter.

Farm Field Day on Sustainable Management Strategies for Strawberry/Vegetable Farmers

A Farm Field Day is scheduled for April 21st from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm at Delvin Farms, 6290 McDaniel Road, College Grove, Tennessee. The field day theme is "Sustainable Management Strategies for Strawberry and Vegetable Farmers." Pesticide points will be available for those needing them to maintain certification. Curt McDaniel will be representing NRCS as one of the speakers. The field day is being sponsored by the Cumberland River Compact as part of its Local Officials Community Water Curriculum.

Anyone who wants to attend should register in advance so planners will have adequate meals and farm transportation on hand. If you have questions, please contact Allen Persinger at 615.444.1890 x110. Partners include:

- Cumberland River Compact
- Delvin Farm
- EPA, Region IV
- Resource Conservation & Development Council
- Natural Resource Conservation Services
- Tennessee Dept of Agriculture
- UT Agriculture Extension
- Davidson County Soil Conservation District



Tennessee Civil Rights Committee and Special Emphasis Program Managers



Photo above (l to r): Front row seated - Kelly Gupton-American Indian/Alaska Native SEPM; Ralph Smith-Chairperson, Civil Rights Committee; Pam Hoskins-Civil Rights Committee Member; Kenneth Williams-Civil Rights Committee Member. Second row - Susan Hopkins-Civil Rights Liaison Officer; Jorge Ramirez-Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager; Carolyn Dillard-Civil Rights Committee Member, Ladonna Caldwell-Federal Women's Program Manager; Lori Pittman-Asian American/Pacific Islander SEPM; and Nearlene Bass-Civil Rights Committee Member. Back Row - Todd Reed-Disabilities Employment Program Manager, Amanda Cash-Civil Rights Committee Member-Kevin Brown, Deputy Civil Rights Officer; Perry Stevens-Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender SEPM; Wayne Coates-Civil Rights Committee Member; and Terrance Rudolph-Black Emphasis Program Manager.