

VOLUNTEER SHOWCASE

August 2012

Worth the Wait—Years of Volunteering Lead to Job with NRCS

It may have taken 19 years for Loren Muldowney to become a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee, but in her mind it was worth the wait! Muldowney became employed by NRCS Marshall, Minnesota Area Office in 2011 as a Water Quality Specialist. A career with NRCS is something she had long desired and her dream finally came true!

While Muldowney was attending Graduate School in 1992 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, an NRCS staffer at a career event encouraged her to include enough soil course work to qualify as a soil scientist for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Muldowney followed this advice and took the necessary course work, becoming increasingly interested the more she learned.

To further explore career work as a soil scientist, Muldowney became an Earth Team Volunteer (ETV). She worked approximately one day/ week for a summer in the New Jersey State Office under the supervision of former NJ State Soil Scientist Ron Taylor. Her work duties consisted of manual digitizing of soils information and various other tasks in the state office.

Looking back on her experience as an ETV, Muldowney credits her supervisor for making a positive impression of the agency. "Everyone there treated me like a potential colleague, taking time to answer my questions thoroughly and exposing me to as many interesting experiences as possible," Muldowney reports. It was at that time she fell in love with the Soil Survey, a relationship which continues to this day.

Over the many years following, Muldowney worked as a soil and environmental scientist for a civil engineering firm, as a private consultant, and most recently for the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station.



Earth Team volunteer, Loren Muldowney was recently hired as a NRCS Water Quality Specialist in Minnesota.

In 2010, she again became a once per week ETV and worked for a year out of the Freehold, New Jersey Field Office, this time as a conservationist in training. This experience proved to be a useful gateway to Minnesota NRCS.

For now, Muldowney has settled down in Minnesota and is enjoying her job as Water Quality Specialist! Looking to the future, she envisions taking a role in encouraging others to become Earth Team Volunteers. "For somebody who has time to invest, it can lead to training and career opportunities. It's a chance to work on real problems, do some real good, interact with dedicated, smart people, and become knowledgeable about natural resource issues of national scope," Muldowney states. "Who wouldn't want to do that?"



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 your local NRCS office.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/volunteers>