

NOPBNRCSE



"The Alabama Link"

September 2006

NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the President of the Alabama Chapter

As you know the Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE has been very busy lately. I would like to commend you for your meticulous and dedicated work, and your high standards of professionalism while attending and/or hosting the Alabama Chapter State meeting. The meeting was a tremendous success, filled with dynamic speakers which included a State Senator and several PhDs. Also, no one could forget the field tour of Chilton County Research Center. The Chilton County Research Center has a right to be proud of their produce which featured many different varieties of peaches and other fruits. All of the efforts of the Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE have been nothing less than exemplary.

The Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE has made extraordinary progress. Our membership is growing. We nominated a deserving individual for the National Small Farmer Award. Also, the Alabama Chapter is continuing to work on the Black History document honoring and remembering the African-Americans that paved the way for us within Alabama's NRCS. As a part of this commitment to excellence, we are set to present the annual Les Hilliard Scholarship to a deserving student at a HBCU in Alabama. It has been a joy for me to work with individuals that are truly dedicated to the goals and objectives of this outstanding Chapter.

Next on our agenda is the National meeting. The National NOPBNRCSE meeting will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana on December 4-8, 2006, and early registration must be paid by November 1, 2006. Let us try to do what we can to represent Alabama in the most positive light at the National meeting. If you

need more information about the National NOPBNRCSE meeting, please visit:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/organ/conference/index.html>

In closing, remember to network and communicate with each other. Pick up the phone and call someone just to say hello. All of us get busy and get into our own little worlds, but sometimes you have to step back, take a deep breath, and appreciate the blessings and joys of life that we do have.

Christopher Ford
Alabama Chapter President

Quotes

Quotes by:
Maya Angelou



"Living a life is like constructing a building: if you start wrong, you'll end wrong."

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain."



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Annual Chapter Meeting Clanton, Alabama July 13-14, 2006

"A FRUITFUL EVENT"

The Alabama Chapter of NOPBNRCSE held its 12th Annual meeting in Clanton, Alabama on July 13-14, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel. The theme for the conference was **"Back to the Basics-Living Off the Land"**. The conference was spearheaded on Thursday afternoon with a very fruitful start by a tour of the Cooperative Extension Service Horticulture Center located in Chilton County. Mr. Jim Pitts, Director of the Experiment Station provided a tractor ride guided tour of the experiment station and a generous supply of sample fruits from the experiment station.

Friday morning technical session was very informative with two dynamic speakers. Ms Angelia Hurst, Marketing Specialist with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries highlighted some of the services rendered by the Department of Agriculture and Industries. Dr. Tasha Hargrove of Tuskegee University gave a presentation on the progress of the Small Farmer Processing Facility to be constructed in Selma, Alabama. Thus far over a million dollars have been raised toward the construction of this facility.

The scholarship program, which included a silent auction, donations, and raffle drawing, raised \$1025 toward the Les Hilliard Memorial Scholarship Fund. Winners of the raffle were 1st-Place Winford Andrews (\$50.00), 2nd-Place Wilma Ross (\$25.00), and 3rd Place-Princess Love (\$25.00)

The conference was concluded with a delicious buffet luncheon at the Shoney's Restaurant with the Honorable Bobby Singleton, Alabama Senator, District #24 delivering a dynamic and inspirational message. The meeting was attended by about 25 members and guest.

**The Conference was dedicated in the
Remembrance of**

**Mr. Sebastian O' Neal Thomas
Historian, Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE
(November 14, 1968-May 25, 2006)**

"Gone But Not Forgotten"

**Submitted by:
Lawrence McGhee
Project Leader, Bibb County**



**Mr. Jim Pitts, Director
Cooperative Extension Horticulture Center
Clanton, Alabama**



**Attendees on grounds of Cooperative Extension
Service Horticulture Center in Chilton County.**



**Different variety of peaches and plums that are
grown at the Center.**



**Different variety of beautiful flowers that are grown
at the Center.**

Meetings (continued)

NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE DECEMBER 4-8, 2006

The 14th Annual Training Conference of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees will be held at the Westin Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana, December 4-8, 2006. This year's theme is "Crossroads of America: Embracing Challenges, Promoting Change, and Encouraging the Production of Fuel, Food, and Fiber."

We encourage as many members as possible to attend this year's meeting.

Spotlight

FEATURE EMPLOYEE



April Hill

District Conservationist, Fayette, Alabama

This quarter featured employee is April Hill, District Conservationist, Fayette County, Alabama.

Ms. Hill began her career with NRCS in 2000 as a soil conservationist trainee in Owosso, Michigan. She started full time as a soil conservationist the following year in Caro, Michigan. After a year and a couple of months, she then moved to Mason, Michigan as a soil conservationist where she continued to get experience for the next couple of years. While in Michigan she became a certified Conservation Planner.

April worked in Michigan for four years before going to Waconia, Minnesota as a District Conservationist. April is grateful that she had the opportunity to get experience working in two other states before coming back to her home State of Alabama to work in Fayette County.

April grew up in Huntsville, AL; although she is originally from Hillsboro, AL. She earned a BS degree in Animal Science from Alabama A&M University.

April is a member of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPBNRCSE), as well as a member of the Alabama Chapter of NOPBNRCSE.

When April is not on the job she enjoys spending time with her daughter Autumn, traveling to new places, and shopping.

The Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE salutes April for her accomplishments to date. We know she will be an asset to NRCS and the Alabama Chapter.

Submitted by:
Deloris Jones
State Office, Auburn, AL

Scholarship

THE LES HILLIARD SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our Chapter has two fund raisers during the year – ticket sales and auction. However, funds for our scholarship are not just limited to these two fund raisers. If there are persons interested in making a donation – you may do so at any time by merely sending it to the contact below:

Applications for the 2006 scholarship will be forwarded to liaisons at Tuskegee University and Alabama A&M University during the month of October 2006.

If you wish to make a donation to the scholarship fund, contact:

Shirley Hall-Cole, Chairperson
Les Hilliard Scholarship Program
USDA-NRCS, State Office
3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn, AL 36830
Phone: 334-887-4546

Outreach Accomplishments

Facilitated a networking process within the state to encourage participation of Limited Resource Farmers in conservation programs. This was completed by working with various partnerships in the state to include 1890 and 1862 land grant institutions, state and federal agencies, RC&D Councils, Conservation Districts, Private Foundations and Community Based Organizations.

Outreach Accomplishments ***(continued)***

Facilitated a process to include three new practices targeting LRF. These practices included pastured poultry, woodland grazing for small ruminants such as sheep and goats, and plastic mulch and drip irrigation.

Facilitated a process to complete two videos of conservation with limited resource producers in the state, one of which was presented as a nominee for the Lloyd Wright award, which is sponsored by the NOPBNRCSE.

Assisted with the design of a cooperative system that would assist LRF install plastic and drip irrigation.

Provided a revolving loan fund to assist with cash flow gap of Limited Resource Farmers in efforts to implement EQIP contracts – Ala – Tom RC&D. The Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District provided a TSP employee to assist with the implementation of plastic and drip irrigation practices within EQIP Contracts across the state, targeting limited resource farmers

Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industry provided equipment for LRF to install plastic and drip irrigation. The Federation of Southern Cooperative provided a storage facility for plastic and drip irrigation supplies and assisted with the management and scheduling of practice installation.

Outreach assistance was provided to eight (8) state recognized Indian tribes across the state concerning tribal community needs.

Facilitated the coordination of the Limited Resource and Small Farmers Initiative Component of EQIP within the state.

Leadership and participation was provided to the state FAC working group to ensure that the outreach partnership is working together in an effort to serve the under served.

Assisted Human Resources staff with recruitment process to obtain one student from Tuskegee University, and one from Alabama A&M University as career conditional students.

Facilitated a process to develop an outreach partnership with six (6) community based organizations around the state to assist with outreach and marketing among small scale, Limited Resource, Sustainable/Organic, Sheep, Goat and Rabbit Producers. These groups will become familiar with

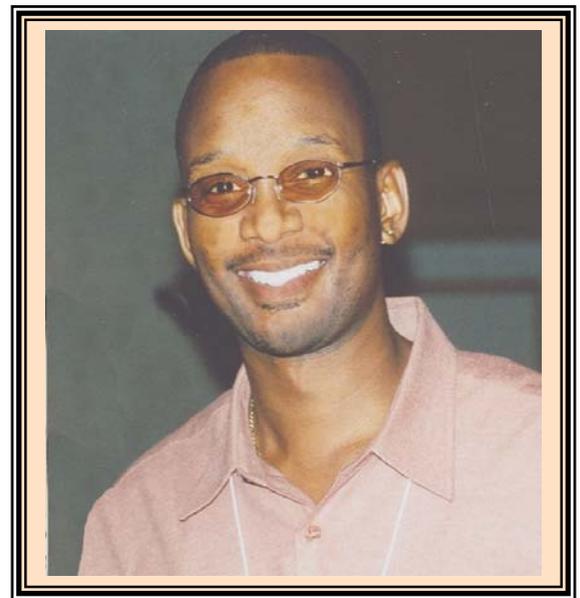
NRCS Conservation programs and provide direct assistance to their farmers groups and organizations. The Alabama Chapter, in conjunction with the State Conservationist, nominated Mr. Jacob Waddy for the National Farmer of the Year Award.

Submitted by:
Andrew Williams
Outreach Coordinator, Auburn SO

Personnel

“Gone But Not Forgotten”

In Loving Memory
Of



Mr. Sebastian O'Neal Thomas

November 14, 1968 ~ May 25, 2006

Sebastian passed away on May 25, 2006 of heart failure. He had been a member of “The Organization” since 1993. As a member of the Alabama Chapter of NOPBNRCSE, Sebastian held the position of Historian. Sebastian will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and he will be especially missed by the Alabama Chapter.

Personnel (continued)

SUMMER INTERNS

We had two students that were attending 1890 colleges employed this summer as interns.

The summer interns were: Esthesis Smith, who worked in the Geneva County Field Office. Esthesis better known as "E" attends Tuskegee University and is majoring in Environmental Science. Christopher Joe, who worked in the Eutaw County Field Office. Chris attends Alabama A&M University and is majoring in agribusiness.

Congratulations and Best Wishes



Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Ford

The Alabama Chapter would like to congratulate our President, Christopher Ford and Ms. Wichaune Porter as they were united in Holy Matrimony on Saturday, August 19, 2006.

Membership

The Alabama Chapter is extending an invitation for you to become a member of our State Chapter of The Organization. Remember – membership is open to all persons.

You must be a member of the National Organization to become a member of the State Chapter. National dues are \$45 and State dues are \$35.

SPECIAL
New Employees and First-Time Members Only. A special one-time deal - state membership dues for \$10.

Membership applications are available online under the Alabama Chapter's website or you may contact:

Herbert L. Ross, Chair, Membership Committee
USDA-NRCS, State Office
3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn, AL 36830
Phone: 334-887-4585

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS!!!

Alabama Chapter Members

July – December 2006

July

3rd Phillip Slater
15th Craig Johnson

August

4th Shirley Hall-Cole
19th Winford Andrews
29th Johnny Trayvick

September

14th April Hill

November

23rd Andrew Williams
24th Anthony Hudson

December

15th Sarah Walker



NEWSLETTER

If anyone has articles of interest you want in the next newsletter, send articles to Deloris.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Deloris Jones
Winford Andrews