



NRCS Alabama Current Developments

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From the State Conservationist - Dr. William Puckett



This year has been a whirlwind of activity and of great accomplishments. As of October we exceeded goals in 8 of 10 performance areas, were more than 90% complete for the two remaining areas, and have made great strides in programs and special initiatives. I want to say "thank you" to everyone. Without your hard work and dedication this year would not have been a success.

This year has also been one of personal accomplishment for several of our employees. Jamie Carpenter, Greg Dansby, and Mike Gunn have been selected for the Emerging Leaders Development Program in Washington D.C. This program, which meets several times throughout the year, will introduce them to management and leadership techniques and concepts that will be useful throughout the rest of their careers.

Another highlight was the All Employees Meeting. Not only did we have the opportunity to recognize people within the organization for their accomplishments, we recognized partners that support NRCS. Without their help this organization would not be as effective in its duties.

As you reflect on this year, I hope you look back at the challenges we faced as an organization and feel proud of how you responded to them.

Happy holidays to you and your family!

Governor Signs 75th Anniversary Commendation

Governor Bob Riley signed a Commendation honoring Alabama NRCS on their 75 years of conservation legacy of "Helping People Help the Land." Conservation leaders present at the signing included (l-r) Steve Cauthen, Executive Director of Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee; Roy C. Kendrick, President Alabama Association of Conservation Districts; George Robertson, Jr., Vice-Chair, Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee; Dr. William Puckett, NRCS State Conservationist; Gregg Glass, and Noopie Cosby.



State Office News

Joint Agency Press Conference

Alabama Agriculture and Industries Commissioner Ron Sparks and NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett held a joint press conference to announce the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative.

“Ron Sparks initiated this request to Washington and was instrumental in working with USDA officials to expand enrollment and include incentives in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) for migratory birds.” said Puckett.

“This program will be beneficial not only to migratory birds, but also Alabama agricultural producers, landowners, our environment, the ecosystem, and our economy,” said Commissioner Sparks. “I want to thank Secretary Vilsack and NRCS Chief Dave White for putting this program on the fast track for Alabama.”



(l-r) Dr. William Puckett and AL Ag and Industries Commissioner Ron Sparks hold press conference.

NRCS Honors Dr. Richard Guthrie

A retirement reception was held in the NRCS State Office for Dr. Richard Guthrie. He was presented a plaque by the NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett thanking him for the Leadership and Commitment in Preserving Natural Resources in Alabama.

Guthrie began working with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1962, after receiving a bachelor's degree in agronomy and soils. He completed a master's in soil science from Auburn in 1965 and a Ph.D. in soil science from Cornell University in 1968. After a number of years with USDA-SCS in Alabama, Texas, and Washington, D.C., Guthrie returned to Auburn in 1983 as professor and head of the Department of Agronomy and Soils. From 1985 to 1988, he served the College of Agriculture as acting dean before being appointed associate dean of international programs in 1988, a position he held until his first official retirement in 2003.



Dr. Guthrie (r) accepts plaque from NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett.

Guthrie came out of retirement in 2005 to become dean of the College of Agriculture and director of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station. He is a friend to conservation and a respected leader in the soils community and continues to have roots in NRCS.

State Office Picnic

One day during the summer, all State Office NRCS employees left the building...no, it wasn't a fire drill, we traveled to attend an all State Office employee's picnic at Auburn University's North Auburn Picnic area. It turned out to be one of the most pleasant days we've had for some time. Gentle breezes blew on the low 80's day while Steve Musser and Herbert Ross grilled the meat. Dr. Charles Mitchell, Extension Specialist and Professor in the College of Agriculture's Agronomy and Soils, gave a presentation about the history of soils. After everyone had as much as they could eat of hotdogs and hamburgers with all the trimmings; covered dishes of slaw, potato salad, baked beans, cobbler; and other delicious eats, John Curtis performed a favorite event of the day, a "watermelon cuttin" with melons from his own patch. It was agreed that the day was a great success.



Alabama NRCS Hosts Land Judging Workshop for Agriscience Teachers

Alabama NRCS hosted a 2-day workshop for the Alabama FFA Association's Land Career Development Event (CDE), commonly known as land judging event. Twenty-nine high school agriscience teachers from across the state joined the workshop, making it the largest attended workshop ever.

The first day was an indoor session devoted to clarifying and updating the CDE rules and how to improve and promote the event. Every teacher had the opportunity to express how to make the rules clearer and the competition a better learning experience and more enjoyable for their students. In the afternoon, NRCS State Administrative Officer Heather Abeyta joined the group to discuss career opportunities available with NRCS.

The second day was spent in the field with NRCS technical staff and participating in demonstrations on four sites--forestland, homesite, cropland, and pastureland. The ag teachers had the chance to discuss with the experts how to sharpen the skills of their students to better prepare them for the competitions.

NRCS staff included State Staff Forester Tim Albritton, State Agronomists Eddie Jolley and Eric Schwab, MLRA Soil Survey Leader Lawrence McGhee, and Elmore, Coosa, and Tallapoosa Counties District Conservationist Pam Mason.

Tim Albritton said, "The teachers seemed to enjoy the training and found it worthwhile. We had an excellent group and some new faces."

For more information on the Alabama FFA Association Land Career Development Event, visit their website at: <http://www.alabamaffa.org/>.



Agriscience teachers attend land judging workshop hosted by Alabama NRCS.

Two Gullies Stabilized Under ARRA

NRCS received funds to stabilize two large gullies in south Alabama as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The sites are Camp Branch Site 8 in Dale County, and North East Yellow River Site P-11 in Covington County. Stabilization measures have been designed and construction contracts have been awarded to repair both sites.

The contract for Camp Branch Site 8 was awarded May 2010 and construction has begun to stabilize a large gully encroaching on County Road 71. The gully is about 400 feet long and has a 14 foot high headcut. Erosion at this location is primarily due to concentration of surface runoff by a road culvert and concrete ditch flumes. The headcut has advanced to within 60 feet of the road surface and has destroyed a portion of the concrete flumes. If left unchecked, the advancing gully would eventually migrate into the road, creating a safety hazard and necessitating a much more expensive repair. Stabilization measures include installing an earthen embankment, a concrete pipe drop structure, a concrete pipe stilling well, and corrugated plastic pipe, along with associated appurtenances. The old road culvert will be replaced with a new pipe furnished by the Dale County Commission. The new road culvert will be extended and connected to the drop structure, creating a continuous pipe system from the upstream side of the road to a stable grade in the gully bottom. After construction is complete and the disturbed areas are vegetated, this site will no longer be a source of sediment for the Little Choctawhatchee River. The project is expected to take about three months to complete.

North East Yellow River Site P-11 was awarded in June and work began in late July. The project is unique in that it consists of a gully repair and pond dam rehabilitation. A large gully formed when a portion of the drainage area was diverted around the pond, resulting in tons of sediment being discharged into Poley Creek and the Yellow River basin. The pond is in danger of failing through the gully because it is so close. If the pond should fail, many more tons of sediment will enter the Yellow River basin.

Repairs will divert all runoff from the drainage area back into the pond and the head cutting gully will be filled. The pond will be rehabilitated to comply with current criteria and restored to a maintainable condition.

To repair the dam, the pond will be drained, trees will be removed, and it will be raised about two feet. Compacted earth fill will be added to the dam and the surface will be reconstructed to flatter slopes that can be more easily maintained. The existing principle spillway pipe will be completely filled with cement grout material and a new principal spillway system consisting of two twelve inch siphon pipes will be installed. The project is expected to take four months to complete.

The completion of these projects will eliminate sediment from entering Little Choctawhatchee River and Yellow River and the sites will be stable and maintainable. The cost for construction of the two sites is about \$230,000.

NRCS Chief Dave White Visits Alabama

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

NRCS Chief Dave White visited Alabama to meet with NRCS personnel and to attend the United South and Eastern Tribe's (USET), Inc., semi-annual meeting in Mobile, AL.

Upon arrival to the Mobile SWCD/NRCS office, NRCS Soil Con Tech Marshall Colburn gave Chief Dave White a tour of the cooperative garden planted behind the Mobile County Service Center. Others in the group included NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett, ASTC-FO Charlie Ramsey, Public Affairs Specialist Fay Garner, Mobile County SWCD DAC April Griffin, along with Steve Cauthen, J.O. Norris, and Frank Nalty, Jr. of the AL Soil and Water Conservation Committee; and Roy C. Kendrick, President, AL Association of Conservation Districts.

The garden was in full bloom and displayed many varieties of fruits, vegetables, and flowering plants in composted dirt and raised beds. The area is irrigated by a cistern that harvests rainwater from the Service Center buildings. The garden is tended by area youth who plant and harvest the produce. The garden is a beautiful place to stroll and provides Service Center personnel fresh snacks just outside their door.

Later the group toured conservation practices in Mobile County and met up with NRCS Assistant Chief Walt Douglas, NRCS Tribal Liaison David Elliott, and Baldwin County DC Joey Koptis to view a WRP site.

Tim Martin, Chief Executive Officer of Poarch Creek Indian Enterprises; and Tribal Elder Billy Smith joined the tour on the Poarch Band of Creek Indian's (PBCI) reservation (a federally recognized tribe in Atmore, AL) to view practices installed using NRCS financial and technical assistance on the property. The sites included

cross-fencing, watering facilities, and livestock shade structures on Perdido River Farms and improvements on the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve's timber property and recreational facilities.

After a breakfast with Soil and Water Conservation District personnel from Mobile and Baldwin Counties, Chief White spoke to the USET Board of Directors to renew NRCS's commitment to providing technical and financial assistance to implement conservation activities on Tribal lands that conserve soil, water, air, and wildlife resources. He also helped present the PBCI with three forestry management awards for the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve.



Above: The group looks at asparagus plants in the Service Center garden. (l-r) Marshall Colburn, J.O. Norris, Steve Cauthen, Bill Puckett, and Chief Dave White.

Below: A harvesting system collects rainwater from the Service Center's roof system to irrigate the garden.



Billy Smith (c), Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Elder and Manager of the Tribe's Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve, talks with NRCS Chief Dave White (r) and AL NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett (l) on the visit to the reserve.



Poarch Band of Creek Indians Receive Forestry Honors

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Leaders of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) in Atmore, AL, were surprised that they had achieved three prestigious certifications for their stewardship and forest management activities on the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve. At the United South and Eastern Tribe's (USET) meeting in Mobile, the PBCI received certification for the Alabama Natural Resources Council's TREASURE Forest Award, the USDA-Forest Service's Forestry Stewardship Program, and the American Tree Farm System's Tree Farm Program.

The TREASURE Forest award is a flagship program of the Alabama Natural Resources Council, a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partner. The award, developed in 1974, to recognizes landowners who are practicing sound sustainable multiple-use forest management. To date, about 2,000 landowners have received the TREASURE Forest certification, representing just over 2 million acres in Alabama. With almost 400,000 non-industrial private forest landowners in the state; to be one of the 2,000 landowners to have achieved this status is quite an accomplishment.

In presenting the certifications, Linda Casey, State Forester with the AL Forestry Commission, said, "I want to recognize the hard work that has gone into receiving not only the TREASURE Forest Award but also the Tree Farm and Forest Stewardship certifications. This is the first time that a landowner has received all three certifications (at one time). I commend the Tribe for this achievement."

Dr. William Puckett, NRCS State Conservationist, said, "The PBCI are the epitome of good land stewards. They have put their commitment of preserving our natural resources into action. NRCS is proud to be a partner with the PBCI."



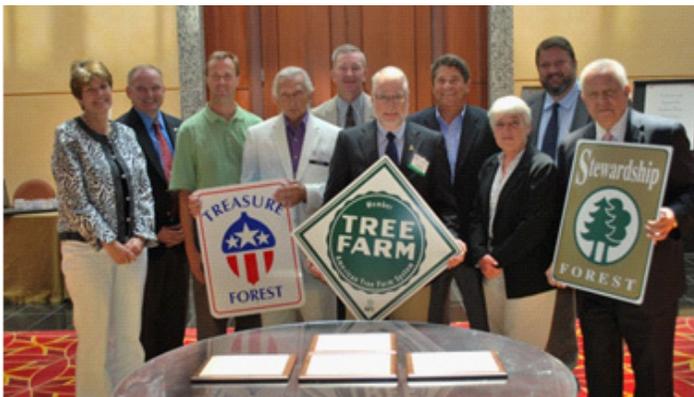
Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve forestry improvements.

The Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve is mostly timberland and is used as a recreational area for the Tribe and their guests. By working with various state and federal agencies, the Tribe has sustained, protected, and enhanced 4,156 acres of timberland and 50 lakes. The PBCI partnered with NRCS to secure financial and technical assistance for site preparation on 800 acres planted to longleaf pine, and to install firebreaks and prescribe burn over 1,200 acres of pine plantation. The wildlife accomplishments included planting 30 acres of food plots to cool and warm season forages, building numerous wood duck boxes and bird houses, and thinning 1,280 acres to improve wildlife habitat.

PBCI Chairman Buford Rolin accepted four plaques to display in Tribal offices and three signs to post in the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve forest to demonstrate the Tribe's commitment to land stewardship. Chairman Rolin said, "The projects that we have worked with NRCS on have really been rewarding to the Tribe. I encourage all of the USET Tribes to take advantage of this agency, because they have a lot to offer." When addressing the USET board members, Chairman Rolin said, "We just want everyone to know how much we appreciate this recognition, but more importantly, we want to share with our other Tribal people to take advantage of NRCS. They have a lot to offer. They are our friends."

Additional information on the TREASURE Forest Award, Forest Stewardship Award, and the Tree Farm Certification can be found at:

http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/tree_farm.aspx
<http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/stewardship.aspx>
http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/treasure_forest.aspx



The PBCI were awarded the TREASURE Forest Award, the USDA-Forest Service's Forestry Stewardship Program, and the AL Forestry Association's Tree Farm Program.

From The Field

NRCS Staff Hit the Conservation Trail for Scouting's 100th Anniversary

Alabama NRCSers Carl Pennington, Randall East, and David Stewart trekked to Virginia to help staff the National Boy Scout Jamboree. Since 1981, NRCS has been a part of helping educate Boy Scouts from across the nation about soils and erosion on the Conservation Trail. The Scouts learned about opportunities with Earth Team and got their passports stamped to work toward their Soil and Water Conservation Merit Badge.

Beltsville Plant Materials Center donated more than 600 native species for a new pollinator garden stop.

The 10-day celebration transformed about 3,000 acres into a bustling city of 18,000 tents, 3,600 patrol kitchens, about 50,000 Scouts and leaders, and more than 250,000 Scouts and visitors.



(l-r) Randall East, NRCS Chief Dave White, Carl Pennington, and David Stewart attend the National Boy Scout Jamboree.

Exploration for All

By Merry Buford, NRCS DC, Oneonta, AL

Imagine 845 students going through a soil tunnel in 5 hours! Well, Blount County employees can tell you from experience, there is no down time in making this happen. DAC Polly Morris and Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator Mark Butler took the District's Soil Tunnel to the fifth annual Kid's Day on the Farm, an event held annually to teach 2nd graders in Blount County about the importance of agriculture and where it starts--SOIL! This was the first year that all schools in the county have participated, including eight elementary schools and students from the Multi-Needs Center.

All students can enjoy and learn from the exhibit. It is a great way for students to think "outside the box" while sitting inside the box, literally. The tunnel is full of illustrations of what is under our feet including a well, gravel pit, plant roots, bugs, and other creatures. Polly and Mark interacted with each class telling them the importance and components of soil, and the difference between soil and dirt.



Student uses a flashlight to explore the Soil Tunnel to discover what goes on underground.

Butler County Holds Natural Resources Youth Camp

Thirty students from across Butler County recently spent some time in the deep woods. One camper put as, "An experience of a lifetime!"

The Butler County Natural Resources Youth Camp hosted a three-day, two-night, "hands-on" camp for 30 area sixth graders. The camp gave kids the opportunity to learn more about the forest environment and how it relates to Alabama's economy, as well as the important role it plays in our everyday lives. For 15 years, the Butler County Forestry Planning Committee (FPC), with tremendous support from the forest community, local businesses, and interested individuals, have sponsored the camp. Camp instructors come from the FPC and other state and local forestry related organizations who donated their time.

Courses this year included soil quality and water quality education; wildlife identification and management, wildlife trapping; and tree, wildlife tracks, and bird identification.

NRCS DC Ben Moore, Soil Con Beth Chastain, and Soil Con Tech Jimmy Massey gave a soil education demonstration entitled “Dig It” that shows how different land covers affect soil and water movement and how the soil movement could eventually impact soil and water quality. A second activity taught the students about soil layers and each camper made an edible soil profile.

Callaway Gardens staff presented the campers with an up-close encounter with various birds of prey. Power-South Energy Cooperative gave campers a hands-on experience with some of Alabama’s local inhabitants including a King snake, a Pine snake, toads, and legless lizards.

After courses in hunter ethics and firearms handling and safety, the third day was devoted to learning to shoot skeet, black powder guns, 22 rifles, and bow/arrows. Awards were given in each category. This was the first time that some campers ever shot a firearm or pulled a bow. For some campers this was the first night they ever spent in the woods or spent away from home. The FPC declared this another great year. All campers went home tired, happy, and with memories of new friends and experiences.



Alabama Forestry Commission personnel educate attendees at the field day.

The tour featured six educational stops hosted by expert speakers including representatives from the National Wild Turkey Federation, Longleaf Alliance, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, NRCS, and the Alabama Forestry Commission. The stops included information on prescribed burning, longleaf establishment and management, managing forests for wildlife enhancement, food plot management, endangered wildlife habitat management, invasive plant control, and turkey management. More than 22 vendors displayed forest and wildlife management products and services and 16 agencies partnered to provide this event.

A lunch of “Low Country Boil” with shrimp and the county’s famous “Conecuh Sausage” was followed by information given by Mrs. Linda Casey, AFC State Forester—“Selling Your Timber”; Mr. Corky Pugh, Director of ADNR Division of Wildlife and Fresh Water Fisheries —“The Role of Hunter/Landowner’s in Natural Resources Stewardship”; Mr. Robert Schaffeld, Transmission Planning and Operations VP Southern Company—“The Power of Partnerships”; and Mr. Luke Lewis, NWTF Regional Biologist—“Wild Turkeys in Longleaf.” At the end of the day a drawing was held for door prizes provided by vendors and local businesses.

During the day, time and again it was spoken how this was “a perfect example of how to partner for a common goal and see it become a successful realization.” This statement surmises what has occurred as a result of the efforts of the Conecuh County Forestry Council. Footage from this event was featured on the Outdoor Channel.



Students learned in classroom settings and in the forest.

Wildlife Management and Longleaf Restoration Field Day in Conecuh County

Bridget L Cain, DAC, SWCD/NRCS, Conecuh Co, AL

Conecuh County SWCD/NRCS and the Forestry Planning Committee hosted a wildlife management and longleaf restoration field day at Saloom Properties, Booker’s Mill, AL. The field day was an excellent opportunity for the 300 outdoor enthusiasts including hunters, landowners, and foresters from all over south Alabama and northwest Florida to learn about managing forests for wildlife and timber production when touring the 2,000-plus acre Saloom Properties on a truck-drawn trailer.

Day on the River

By Mark Butler, Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator, Blount County, AL

“Day on The River 2010,” an environmental educational event for students in grades 3-6, was held at King’s Bend on the banks of the Locust Fork River. This is the 10th year Friends of the Locust Fork River has sponsored the event. It has become bigger and better every year- with more activity stations, more children and parents, and more learning and fun.

The Blount County SWCD presented the Soil Tunnel. The tunnel is designed to promote environmental education by students crawling through the Soil Tunnel with the aid of a flash light to see for what is hidden below their feet. After naming everything inside the Soil Tunnel, they discussed functions of soil.

The presentation concluded with a discussion of conservation practices that help conserve our natural resources for future generations. For more information about the Soil Tunnel and how to request a demonstration, contact the Blount County SWCD.



Demonstration of a stream built from a stream kit.

Education funding through the CAWACO RC&D was used to purchase the stream kit that will be used to study living ecosystems in streams and ponds. All elementary schools in Walker County received a stream kit. The kits will be used by individual schools for a variety of water studies such as the one at T.S. Boyd Elementary, or to study erosion effects on water quality, water sampling, etc.

The children are excited about the new school additions and educators hope to see an increase in knowledge and interest in science.

Cogongrass Seminar Held In Coffee County

By Sue Leverett, SWCD Education Specialist, Coffee County, AL

The Coffee County Forestry Advisory Committee and the Coffee County SWCD/NRCS sponsored a seminar on the identification and control of cogongrass at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Elba. Patrick Waldrop of the Alabama Forestry Commission presented on the basics of recognizing and treating cogongrass. Attendees learned some facts about the invasive species that destroys wildlife habitats and invades forest land as well as other land and 50 landowners toured a patch of cogongrass in bloom. After the tour, grilled hamburgers with all the trimmings were enjoyed by all. Landowners were asked to call the Alabama Forestry Commission at 334-894-6734 if they thought they may have cogongrass on their property.



Students ask questions at one of the stops.

New Lab Improves Science Scores

Katherine Patton, DAC, SWCD/NRCS, Walker County, AL

T.S. Boyd Elementary/Jr. High School has a new science lab that was christened on Earth Day to help teach students more about the earth and its inhabitants. A “fish pond” is in a new classroom that was formerly used to store supplies.

The lab experience was a first for many of 6-8 graders.

Outreach at Alabama A&M

By Brenda Wigginton, DAC, SWCD/NRCS, Limestone County, AL

Limestone County NRCS was invited to Alabama A&M University to talk to Dr. Joseph Befacadu's Careers in Agriculture class about various employment opportunities and who NRCS is and what they do. Brandon McCray, NRCS Soil Con, gave a PowerPoint presentation that detailed who NRCS is and how the agency came to be. Also, the presentation described the various employment opportunities available upon graduation, and internships possible while students are in school. The students were very interested and asked lots of questions. Contact and employment information was given out to interested students.

As a result of the talk, student Kyle Stanford came by the SWCD/NRCS office and DC Mark Swafford signed him up as an Earth Team Volunteer in the Athens field office this summer.

Career Day Held at Cherokee High School

By Etta Mask, DAC, SWCD/NRCS, Colbert County, AL

Jamie Carpenter, Colbert/Franklin Cos. NRCS DC; Charlie Meek, Coordinator, NW AL RC&D; Dana Hester, Farm Service Agency; and Johnny Everett, Alabama State Forestry attended a Career Day at Cherokee High School in Colbert County.



Students rotated through the many exhibits set up in the gym. During lunch and breaks students were encouraged to visit and speak to presenters who explained what they do and how they got interested in their careers. Students were attentive to hear career path they could pursue if they have a passion and follow their dreams.

Alabama NRCS State Conservationist Visits Lauderdale County

NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett visited Lauderdale County. On both days of his visit, Dr. Puckett experienced the vast diversity of Lauderdale County.

The state conservationist was accompanied by NRCS DC Renea Dyer and ASTC-FO Judy Hill to a stone wall that was built by Tom Hendrix to memorialize his great-grandmother's, Ta-la-ney, journey and tribulations on the Trail of Tears located in the beautiful Natchez Trace area. Mr. Hendrix conducted the tour and told the story of his great grandmother's plight from and back to Alabama.



Marshall County FSA and NRCS employees observed Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage. They sampled food from the region as well as learned some interesting facts about Asian traditions and culture. (l-r) Drew Wright-NRCS, Shawn Manning-NRCS, Lynn McKelvey-FSA, Jessica Mills-NRCS, Belinda Woods-FSA, Bucky Howe-NRCS, and Angie Jones-FSA.



In a joint effort, Colbert and Lauderdale Counties SWCD DACs Etta Mask and Brenda Hand took part in Earth Day 2010. Sammy Soil and Ruby Raindrop were a hit with the children. This year's Earth Day 2010 featured many local vendors and local entertainment. Magician Steve Trash was the favorite of the day.



(l-r) ASTC-FO North Judy Hill, STC Dr. Bill Pucket, President of Clemmons and Hamner Seed Co. Greg Hamner, SC Brandon McCray, and DC Renea Dyer.

On Dr. Puckett's final day in the county he was taken to Killen to see Clemmons and Hamner Seed Company, Inc. President Greg Hamner gave a tour of the seed company's high tech and diversified operations, and the seed farm's precision agricultural equipment. The day concluded with a BBQ lunch at Out Post 72.

Students Receive Safety Tips at Progressive Agriculture Safety Day

Colbert County 3rd graders received safety lessons at the North Alabama State Fairgrounds, many of which were designed to help prepare them for summer activities. The Franklin County SWCS/NRCS helped organize the safety day that is in its second year. Jamie Carpenter said that interest has grown, along with the number of participants, and that students enjoy it and have fun. He said that they also know to take the information seriously.

Hundreds of students from city and county school districts, as well as Covenant Christian School, learned tips on everything from bicycle, watercraft, and ATV safety, to what to do in a case of fire in their homes. Students made their way through seven stations, each offering demonstrations or hands-on activities.

The information is valuable for students and means more coming from experts in the fields. Several prizes were given away through drawings, including boy's and girl's bicycles and helmets, and gift cards.

NRCS Celebrates Earth Day with Selma School

By Wendy Smith, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician; and Kristen Duke, DAC; SWCD/NRCS, Dallas County, AL

Carolyn Pickett, a 4th grade teacher in the Selma City School system at Knox Elementary School, invited the Dallas County SWCD/NRCS to participate in the school's first ever, Earth Education Day.

The 220+ students in Pre-K through 5th grade received "Sammy Soil, A Coloring Book Story", "An Invitation to Healthy Schoolyard," "For the Good of the People" booklets containing fun facts about farmers and ranchers, and bookmarks with website information about "S.K. Worm and Backyard Conservation." Each classroom received a "Pollination Equation" poster. SWCD DAC Kristen Duke and NRCS Soil Con Wendy Smith shared with the students the nature of conservation work and how it relates to the environment. They discussed the importance of soil and asked the students to pass on the information they received about conservation to others. Students through 2nd grade visited with a special guest, Sammy Soil!

The students were eager to learn and had big smiles on their faces as they exited the soil tunnel. They hugged Sammy Soil who helped the students make the connection to soil.

The session was hosted by members of the Dallas County Natural Resource Coordinating Council, the Alabama Forestry Commission, Dallas County SWCS/NRCS, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES).



Students and a few of the teachers explored the Soil Tunnel.

Classroom in the Forest in Valley Grande at Kenan's Mill

By Callie Nelson, Dallas County Extension Coordinator, ACES.

Fifth-graders from Valley Grande Elementary learned about the five layers of a forest and much more as they got up close to the wonders of nature in the "Classroom in the Forest." This program helps educate the students on the wise management of forest resources. They also learned the importance of natural resources and the many resources used daily from the forest.

During the three-hour session conducted in the forest, students selected data, recorded observations and predicted possible outcomes, learned how human activities impact wildlife habitat, and learned the history of Kenan's Mill. Conducted at Buchanan Timber and Forestry and Kenan's Mill, students not only gained knowledge, but they enjoyed applying what they learned in the classroom to real life situations. The session was conducted by members of the Dallas County Natural Resource Coordinating Council, the Alabama Forestry Commission, Dallas County SWCD/NRCS and ACES.



Students explore the "Forest in the Classroom."

Outdoor Classroom at Cleveland High

By Mark Butler, Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator, Blount County, AL

The Blount County SWCD/NRCS went to Cleveland High School to present water monitoring and the Enviro-scape to Mrs. Caffee's 8th grade science classes. The students spent 25 minutes at each station.

The great weather and the school courtyard made a perfect setting as the students built an outdoor classroom complete with a small fish pond.



NRCS District Conservationist Merry Buford presented the Enviro-scape.

An Enviro-scape demonstration showed the students where their drinking water comes from, and how drinking water and waste water are treated. They were also presented ways to conserve and protect the water supply for current and future generations.

District employees Polly Morris and Mark Butler presented a Water Monitoring demonstration. Each student used a monitoring kit provided by the SWCD to take samples directly from the fish pond.

Donated Plants Thrive

Planters containing pollinator plants were given to the NRCS State Office and Mobile and Baldwin Counties field offices by the Brooksville Plant Materials Center in Florida. The CMO staff created stakes to identify the different plants and Mother Nature did the rest.



Before and after photos of the plants growth at the State Office.

Water Festivals Across The State

Blount County 2010 Groundwater Festival

By Mark Butler, Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator, SWCS, Blount County, AL

Thanks to all the hard work from 80+ volunteers, the 2010 Blount County Groundwater Festival "WATER: Building Blocks of Life" was a great success. The festival was held at Wallace State Community College for over 728 Blount County 4th grade students and their teachers.



The students participated in two hands-on learning activities-Edible Aquifers and the Water Cycle Bracelets.

The Superintendent of Blount County Schools, presented the T-shirt design winner Jayleigh Tawbush, from Locust Fork Elementary, a gift card and certificate. The students were entertained by Steve Trash, a professional green entertainer, kid comedian, and illusionist who presented an environmentally and conservational friendly magic show for the students.

7th Annual Lee County Water Festival

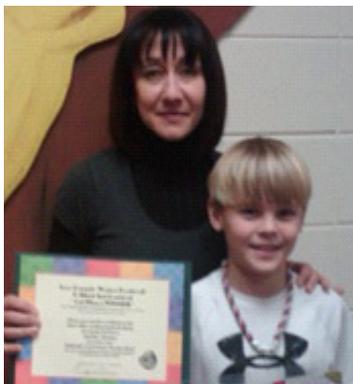
By Anne Miller, Lee County Water Festival Leadership Committee, Auburn, AL

The 7th annual Water Festival at Auburn University's Haley Center was attended by more than 1,900 Lee County 4th grade students and teachers.

The students rotated between three activities to help them understand the importance of clean water, The Water Cycle Bracelet, Edible Aquifers, and Water Filtration.

The event was topped off by a magic show by an environmental magician.

The "Make Every Drop Count" t-shirt was designed by 4th grader Graylin Karabasz of Ogletree Elementary School.



5th Annual Coffee County Ground Water Festival

By Sue Leverett, SWCD Education Specialist, Coffee County, AL

Thanks to the assistance of the Wiregrass RC&D working closely with the Coffee County SWCD, the 5th Coffee County Ground Water Festival was held for about 225 fourth graders, 12 teachers, and 29 volunteers. The event is designed to educate students and their families about all aspects of ground water and other related natural resources.



Students enjoyed visits from Sammy Soil and Ruby Raindrop. They participated in making Edible Aquifers, Water Cycle Bracelets, and experimenting with Water Filtration.

DACs Have a Laugh

By Kathy Walker, SWCS DAC, Marshall County, AL

Some people just have fun whether they are working or playing! DAC's Kathy Walker of Madison County and Karen Hayes of Marshall County took a break from registering the almost 2,000 students attending the 13th annual festival to pose with the Chick-Fil-A Mascot. Chick-Fil-A has been a sponsor of the county water festival for several years.

The two-day festival was held at the University of Alabama Huntsville. Kathy said, "Without the support of our wonderful sponsors and NRCS/SWCD volunteers, we could not continue to present this annual event."



Alabama 2010 Summer Interns

Jessica Mills

Jessica interned during the summer with Tim Williams, Resource Engineer, in the Guntersville Field Office as an Agricultural Engineering Trainee. She is majoring in Biosystems (Agricultural) Engineering with a minor in Agronomy and Soils at Auburn University, and plans to graduate in December 2011. She hopes to pursue a career with the NRCS.



Josh Halpin

Josh interned in the Lee County SWCD/NRCS Office. He has an undergraduate degree in Agribusiness from the University of Georgia and is seeking a Master's Degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University. While working in Auburn he studied Native Warm Season Grasses. He graduates December 2010 and hopes to work for NRCS.



Jonjala Jackson



Jonjala interned this summer with Christopher Ford, MLRA Project Leader, in the MLRA 18-3 Soil Survey Office as a Soil Scientist Student Trainee. She is majoring in Environmental Science, with concentration in Environmental Health and a minor in Chemistry at Alabama A&M University. Jonjala expects to graduate in May 2011, and plans to pursue a Masters

degree upon graduation.

Darnae Hopkins

Darnae was a Student Trainee-Soil Science intern with Lawrence McGhee and the MLRA 15-4 Soil Survey Office in Auburn. She is a Junior Soil Science Scholar at Alabama A&M University majoring in Environmental Science-Soils and expects to graduate in December 2011.



Work experiences she gained during the summer include, soil descriptions, landscape observations, field tours, scanning soil survey publication for digital displays, and entering access data for evaluation of existing soil surveys. She was a great asset to MLRA.



Clay Jones

Clay interned in the Montgomery Field Office as Soil Conservationist trainee with NRCS DC April Jones. He attends Auburn University, majoring in Agricultural Business and Economics. Clay plans to graduate in December 2011 and hopes to continue working with NRCS.

Clay worked in many areas including measuring a pipeline from a well to a trough for a grazing management system in Montgomery County.

Jamie Keith

Jamie interned as a Soil Conservationist with District Conservationist Pam Mason in Elmore, Tallapoosa, and Coosa Counties. She is a Tuskegee University Scholar majoring in Environmental Science. Jamie helped with many projects including teaching wildlife education to students at the Alabama Nature Center in Millbrook, AL.



Demetris Johnson

Demetris Johnson was a Soil Conservationist trainee in Eutaw, AL. He attends Tuskegee University. Demetris helped with many projects, including inspecting construction certifications of watering facilities.

Alabama Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society

Annual Meeting in Huntsville

By Fay Garner, Public Affairs Committee, AL Chapter of SWCS, Auburn, AL

The annual meeting of the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) was held in Huntsville. The theme "Managing Our Soil and Water Resources," provided members and guests with information about water laws and regulations, soils data, managing water and stormwater, and other natural resource subjects.

The meeting opened with Don Dukemineer of the Huntsville/Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau welcoming the group to Huntsville. The sessions, moderated by President Renea Dyer, featured speakers from ACES, Geological Survey of Alabama, Assistant Attorney General for State Geologist of Alabama, and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). The topics included managing soil and water, aquifers and water supplies in Alabama, laws and policy of water resources, and water regulations.

A field tour on Thursday included a bridge construction and the Alabama A&M Experiment Station to see a rainwater harvesting irrigation system, growing shitake mushrooms and specialty crops, and viewing a soil pit and Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) station. At the Bragg Farm the attendees were awed by the magnitude of a 10 acre reservoir being built for irrigation water using the USDA-NRCS Agricultural Water Enhancement Program. The last stop before lunch was at the North Huntsville Industrial Park to view water management structures and some braved the humid day to stroll along a nature walking trail to view other conservation measures.



Climate Station

The group ate lunch at the Belle Mina Experiment Station, before viewing precision agriculture, residue management, and crop rotations. Later the group visited a local farmer's cotton field that was planted into burned down clover, a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) project on the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge that is used to manage and protect waterfowl, and a construction site at Alabama A&M campus.

The group met in the evening at Alabama A&M for a catfish dinner with all the trimmings cooked by Milton and Henrietta Taylor. After dinner, the group enjoyed popcorn and candy while viewing the film, "Dirt-The Movie."



Rainwater collection demonstration.

Officers for FY2011 are President Elect Brian Lessiter from the Alabama Department of Transportation, Secretary Josh Elliott from NRCS, and Treasurer Lea Duzy from USDA-ARS.

The late morning technical sessions included using and finding soils data, better grass establishment on highway rights-of-way, and construction stormwater management. The silent auction brought in \$240 to benefit SWCD student chapters on college campuses.

Next year's meeting will be held in Mobile.

Alabama SWCS Receives National Awards

At the 2010 SWCS Annual Conference in St. Louis, MO, the Alabama SWCS Chapter received two awards.

Alabama was recognized as the Outstanding Chapter for sustaining and growing membership, developing communications, supporting students, and promoting developments in resource conservation at their annual meeting.

The Chapter Professional Development Award was given to Alabama for (1) the Clear Water Alabama Seminar and Field Day, (2) the Alabama Handbook for Erosion Control, Sediment Control & Stormwater Management, and (3) the Field Guide for Erosion and Sediment Control in Alabama, and (4) providing the CPESC Exam Review Course and Exam twice through the AL Chapter CPESC Committee.

Jim Gulliford, National SWCS Executive Director, said, "I am very pleased that the Alabama Chapter received these awards and extend my sincere congratulations."

Marketing Association Annual Meeting

Northwest Alabama RC&D Coordinator Charlie Meek participated in the 4th annual meeting of the Alabama Agricultural A+ Marketing Association, hosted by Tri-State Rabbit Growers, Alabama Goat Meat Producers, and Alabama Sheep Producers at the Winfred Thomas Agriculture Research Station in Hazel Green, AL. State and federal agency leaders shared ideas and expressed support for A+ Marketing Association. Everyone enjoyed lunch that included goat and lamb burgers, lamb and goat sausage, and side dishes.

For more information on this meeting, visit: https://ssl.acesag.auburn.edu/etp/eval_public_view.php?id=4c222dda19bdd



Serving Up Chevon, Lamb, and Rabbit

NRCS DC Jamie Carpenter; Northwest AL RC&D Coordinator Charlie Meek and Program Assistant King Heath; Lauderdale County Extension Area Specialist Robert Spencer; and members of the Alabama Agricultural A+ Marketing Association helped with the 4th annual "Taste of Chevon, Lamb, and Rabbit" event at the Farmers Market at Spring Park in Tuscumbia. The tasting event increases in popularity every year.

The meat varieties were grilled and tasting was offered to the general public to help promote the products and heighten consumer awareness of these lesser known types of meat. Heath King helped with all aspects of planning and hosting of the event. Jamie, Charlie, and Robert helped cook, and both Charlie and Robert gave presentations about locally raised meat.

Goat meat is the most consumed red meat throughout the world and is a healthy alternative meat, but only a small percentage of Americans are familiar with it. This



Different variations of the alternative meats included lamb burgers, goat sausage and tamales, and rabbit kabobs.

tasting event helps create consumer education and awareness.

Over 150 servings of alternative meat products were served. Fresh Alabama grown and processed goat and lamb meat was available for retail sale, including fresh goat cheese made in Elkmont, AL.

Successful Conservation Partnerships

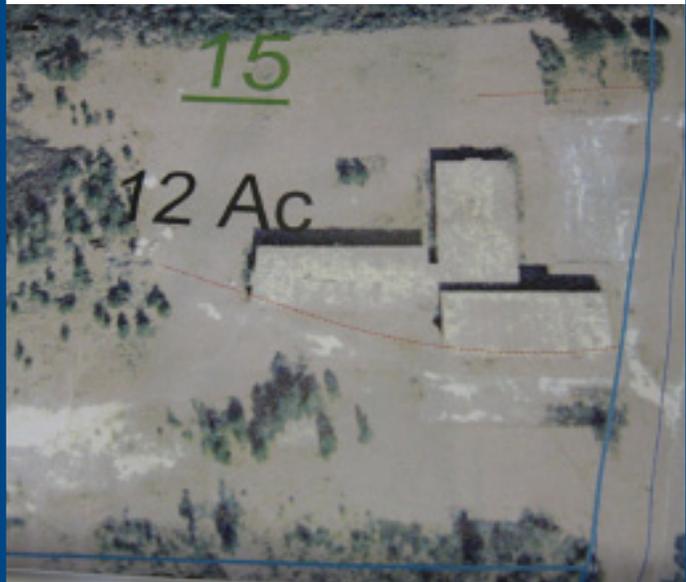
ALA-TOM RC&D entered into a Cooperative Agreement with NRCS to promote partnerships and enhance outreach to the underserved. ALA-TOM RC&D Coordinator Greg Dansby contacted and established partnerships with several community-based organization leaders across the state to assist in implementing the agreement. This outreach effort has increased underserved participation across the state and many underserved groups and individuals have been reached; informed of NRCS programs, enrollment procedures, eligibility criteria, and introduced to other conservation partners; and are enrolling in various USDA-NRCS programs.



Outreach News from Alice Love



Future site for Community Center in Macon County. The late Irish and Bertha Chisholm, parents of Kathryn Chisholm, donated the land for the Chisholm School over 50 years ago. With the assistance of the commission and various USDA agencies, the school is well on its way to becoming a Community Center, a well accepted facility in the community.



Model layout of Community Center



Future pond site located on the Community Center property.



The George Washington Carver Museum Phase II - Through a Cooperative Agreement between Tuskegee University and AL NRCS, a touch screen Kiosk is being installed to further develop public awareness of Soil Science at the Carver Environmental Laboratory in the museum. The university has contracted the project with Southern Custom Exhibits.



Tuskegee University Annual Goat Day Workshop. Goat Specialists were available to inform and demonstrate the goat evaluations/grading process to participants at the workshop.





Student Mentoring - Alabama NRCS Soil Scientists mentor Kendall Roger (r), recent Washington Carver High School graduate, in college majors relating to natural resources with the primary focus on Soil Science. Kendall plans to attend college in the fall. He recently visited the Macon/Bullock Counties SWCS/ NRCS office to sign up as an Earth Team Volunteer. The Bullock County SWCD, with funds through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program, employed Kendall as a District Technician. (l-r) Charles Love, State Soil Scientist/MO15 Leader and Lawrence McGee, MLRA SS Leader.



Dallas County hosted a conservation tour to demonstrate the county's first Limited Resource Producer accepted for a Seasonal High Tunnel (hoop house) through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP.)

The producer informed participants about attending an Outreach Information meeting sponsored by ALA-TOM RC&D, in partnership with local community-based organizations and NRCS, and how the information he received assisted him. Since Seasonal High Tunnels (hoop houses) are a pilot practice offered through EQIP, the producer was able to give fellow producers a better understanding of the work involved in the installation of the practice along with financial assist available through USDA/NRCS Programs. This outreach effort has also increased communications between federal, state, county, and local conservation partners.

ALA-TOM RC&D Coordinator Greg Dansby has demonstrated the successes of outreach through direct communications at the grass roots level, and promoting our mission of "Helping the People Help the Land."



United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation Tribe outreach program information meeting hosted by Alabama NRCS.



Rebecca Comer Elementary School (first African American School in the Barbour County) is now an Activity Center on 1.6 acres. Deloris Peterson (l), resident of Battle Community, and McDonald Comer (r), are descendents of Rebecca Comer.



Former Rebecca Comer High School, home of the mascot "King Kong's" sits on about 33 acres. Outreach efforts are underway to address owner and community goals for renewing site for community activities.

Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) Stations in Alabama

By Sylvia A Long, Soil Scientist, MLRA 15-4, Auburn, AL

Accessing “real-time” soil climate information solidifies opportunities for best assessment and planning options to ensure that private and federal lands benefit from conservation and restoration, and are made more resilient to climate change.

The Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) is a robust kind of geodata gateway and platform capable of remotely integrating a focus of current data, and variations for use in assessments and planning. The SCAN uses meteor burst telemetry to obtain remote site “real-time” data. There are currently 21 “real-time” SCAN sites in Alabama, and numerous others in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

SCAN is designed to collect soil moisture and climate information for crop production, forecast and prediction models, support of Soil Survey activities, irrigation and water management, and other natural resource management uses by farmers, and environmental and agricultural professionals. The system data generated is primarily for agricultural areas in the United States. SCAN focuses on monitoring soil temperature and moisture content at 5 sub-surface depths. In addition, soil-water levels, air temperature, relative humidity, solar radiation, wind, precipitation, and barometric pressure are measured.

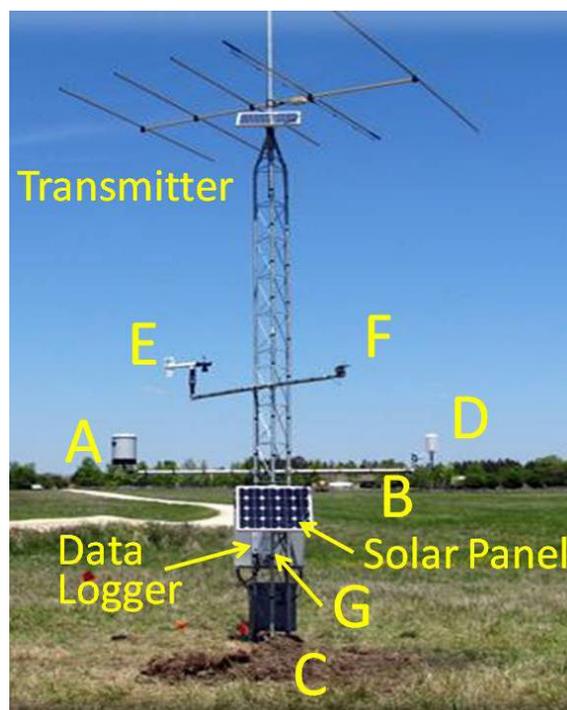
SCAN began in 1991 as a Soil Moisture and Soil Temperature pilot project and has developed into a long-term national network. NRCS will apply SCAN data to develop products for use to make sound resource decisions for drought monitoring, soil classification, engineering applications, global circulation models input, soil moisture accounting and risk assessment, monitoring and prediction of change in terms of soil moisture and temperature, prediction of shifts in irrigation requirements and water resource decisions. Also, SCAN data is necessary to predict shifts in wetlands, changes in runoff relative to flooding and flood control engineering, and the ability to predict long-term sustainability of cropping systems and watershed health. In terms of data acquisition, and the processing sensors and instruments utilized, each station is equipped to automatically record, and upload captured data at regulated intervals. Scan sites established in Alabama

from 2003 to current (2010) installation, were constructed with standard configurations identified as follows:

- A. Cumulative daily precipitation is measured in “hourly” files from a storage-type gage/tipping bucket sensor.
- B. Current air temperature and the previous hour’s maximum, minimum, and average temperatures are recorded from a Shielded Thermistor.
- C. Soil moisture and soil temperature are collected at depths of 2, 4, 8, 20, and 40 inches below the surface. Soil moisture is collected (as percent water) by volume using a dielectric constant measurement device; and soil temperature are collected and recorded by an encapsulated thermistor.
- D. (Current) relative humidity and the previous hour’s maximum and minimum relative humidity are recorded by a thin film capacitance-type sensor, raised six feet from the soil surface.
- E. Wind speed and wind direction are collected by a propeller-type anemometer. The instrument is raised 10 feet from the surface, and hourly maximum and average values are computed from continuous measurements.
- F. Solar radiation is measured as hourly average readings of total incoming solar energy, and computed. A pyranometer sensor, raised 10 feet from the soil surface collects data.
- G. Barometric pressure is recorded hourly from a silicon capacitive pressure sensor.

SCAN meteor burst communications transmit data logs to Stoneville, MS; Tifton, MO; Mt. Gilead, OH; and Alabama A&M University, Huntsville, AL. The transmitted data is managed in two stages. First, an assigned computer automatically validates the received data value against limits and flags any outlier values. Statisticians examine outliers, and makes corrections. Finally, all parameters are graphed, and compared to ensure that sensors are producing data within an acceptable range.

Current and historic data logged for each SCAN site, soil pedon information, site picture, and a link to the National Soil Survey Center Laboratory database can be accessed at: www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov.



Alabama NRCS All Employees Meeting

Alabama NRCS held an all employees meeting in conjunction with the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) annual meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama. The AACD awards banquet honored the following District and NRCS employees:

- Conservation Education District - Conecuh County SWCD
- Outstanding District Employee - Dr. Nicole Mashburn, Morgan County
- Alabama Earth Team NACD Partnership Award – Cullman County SWCD
- Alabama Earth Team RC&D Partnership Award – Gulf Coast RC&D Council
- Alabama Earth Team Individual – Billy Milstead, Ala-Tom RC&D
- Alabama Earth Team Group – Madison County Water Festival
- Alabama Team Earth Team Award – North Team
- Chief's Field Award – Wetumpka/Alex City Field Offices
- Jerry L. Johnson Award – Rodney K. Goode, District Conservationist, Bessemer Field Office

On Monday, Leonard Jordan, NRCS Regional Conservationist, was the keynote speaker during the AACD general session.



Leonard Jordan addressed the group.

NRCS employees attended standing committee meetings and then a conservation leadership luncheon where Steve Robinson, National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) was the keynote speaker.

The NRCS meetings began on Monday afternoon with a welcome from State Conservationist Dr. Bill Puckett and a national leadership report from Leonard Jordan.

After the evening meal, Dr. Puckett honored the Alabama NRCS/AACD/SSWCD partnership by presenting the officers with framed conservation photos. The Alabama Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) members were also honored. Later, NRCS attendees interacted with speaker David Weber during his presentation "Life's Goliaths." Weber gave each person a black smooth stone to remind them that the challenges of "Life's Goliaths," could be conquered.

Gwen Lewis, Chair of the Alabama Civil Rights Advisory Committee, welcomed everyone on Tuesday with a



David Weber entertained and engaged the group.

Civil Rights update and introductions of the FY11 CRAC members. Dr. Samuel Betances followed with a presentation on "Cultural Competencies."

Dr. Walter Hill, Dean of Agricultural, Environmental, and Natural Sciences from Tuskegee University, gave a presentation about the importance of Outreach. Greg Dansby, Ala-Tom RC&D Coordinator, gave a report on the Alabama Outreach commitment. The meeting ended after Steve Musser and John Curtis gave program updates.

The meeting allowed NRCS employees to gain insight into the AACD/SSWCD partnership and facilitated networking with fellow and district employees. The meeting was enjoyed by all, and we're looking forward to the next one!



Dr. Puckett thanked Dr. Hill for speaking to the group about Outreach and the conservation partnership between NRCS and the University.

Feds, Farmers, and Friends Feeding Families

The Office of Personnel Management, partnered with Federal agencies and departments to encourage employees to donate food items to the “Feds, Farmers, and Friends Feeding Families” food drive. This year USDA expanded the focus to locally-grown fresh produce. The top contributor across government agencies was USDA which donated 435,535 lbs. The total for all Federal donations was 1.7 million lbs. Alabama employees donated a total of 5,725 lbs.

State Office - The Alabama NRCS State Office’s food drive was tallied twice: once for cupcakes to the winners and once at the end of the campaign. The Technology and Programs staff won both events. The total for the state office was 3,482 lbs. for the local food bank.



(l-r:) Edie Hester, Shannon Weaver, Teresa Paglione, Tim Albritton, Eric Schwab, Rick Zellmer, and Bill Puckett.

Madison County - The Charles Stone USDA Service Center agencies combined forces to gather 232 lbs. of food for the local food bank.



Blount County - The Blount County USDA Service Center and the O’ So Good Bar-B-Que Restaurant participated in the food drive where 120 lbs. of food was collected for the Day Star Church in Good Hope, Alabama.



(l-r:) Mark Butler, Polly Morris, Janice Otinger, Dawn Hoagland, Jimmy Tucker, Gina Harris, Merry Buford.

The Dallas County SWCD and NRCS collected 30 lbs. of food for the local Christian Outreach Food Pantry.



(l-r:) Wendy Smith and co-worker collect food.

North Team - At a North Team training session, NRCS and partners pooled resources to support the food drive and collected 207 lbs. for the Good Samaritan Fund in Hartselle, Alabama.



Alabama TREASURE Forest Association's (ATFA) Annual Meeting

By Tim Albritton, State Staff Forester, NRCS, Auburn, AL

NRCS helped sponsor the ATFA Annual meeting, and it was a success. The indoor sessions were very informative and the rodeo event by the Troy University Rodeo Team was fun for all. The field day on Saturday was promoted on WSFA-TV.

Several landowners came by the NRCS display and asked questions. It was good to be represented at this event and to offer support to the ATFA.



Congratulations NRCS Retirees

Randy Martin
Agricultural Engineer,
Ozark, AL



James T. Moses
Soil Conservation
Technician, Athens, AL



Herbert Ross
Resource Inventory
Specialist, Auburn, AL



Mark Swafford
District Conservationist,
Athens, AL



Rick Zellmer
GIS Specialist,
Auburn, AL



Welcome New State Office Employees

Jason Forrester
Human Resources
Assistant



Leslie Nalty
Administrative Clerk



Crystal Blackburn
Contract Specialist



Marty Bright-Rivera
Human Resources Officer

Personnel

Accessions

Alberto Atienza-Reyes, Agricultural Engineer, Troy, AL
Jason Childers, Soil Conservation Technician, Athens, AL
Michelle Floyd, Soil Conservationist, Cullman, AL
Jason Forrester, HR Assistant, Auburn, AL
Larry Hardy, District Conservationist, Pearl, MS to RC&D Coordinator, Tombigee RC&D, Tuscaloosa, AL
Edith Hester, Legal Instruments Examiner, Auburn, AL
Robert Kerr, Soil Conservation Technician, Talladega, AL
Jesi King, Soil Conservation Technician, Auburn, AL
Gregory Scull, Soil Conservation Technician, Centre, AL
Jared Worthington, Soil Conservation Technician, Greensboro, AL

Promotions

Scott Anderson, Soil Scientist, Auburn, AL to Senior Regional Soil Scientist, Auburn, AL
Evelyn Bostick, Human Resources Specialist, Auburn, AL
Renea Dyer, District Conservationist, Florence, AL
Jeremy Edmonds, Soil Conservation Technician, Scottsboro, AL
David Elliott, Soil Conservation Technician, to Tribal Liaison, Brewton, AL
Joshua Elliott, District Conservationist, Monroeville, AL
Pam Fleming, Soil Conservation Technician, Carrollton, AL
Fay Garner, Public Affairs Assistant to Public Affairs Specialist, Auburn, AL
Blake Garner, Soil Conservationist, Camden, AL
Michael Gunn, District Conservationist, Livingston, AL
John Halbrooks, Program Assistant, Decatur, AL
Bucky Howe, Soil Conservation Technician, Guntersville, AL
Pamela Mason, Soil Conservationist to District Conservationist, Wetumpka, AL (for Elmore, Tallapoosa, and Coosa Counties)
Jimmy Massey, Soil Conservation Technician, Luverne, AL
Danny McNeil, Soil Conservation Technician, Dothan, AL
Joshua Reed, Soil Scientist, Jackson, AL
Wendy Smith, Soil Conservation Technician, Centre, AL
Jean Sparks, Procurement Technician, Auburn, AL
Shea Strickland, Soil Conservation Technician, Abbeville, AL
Wade Williams, Soil Conservation Technician, Livingston, AL
Terry Williamson, District Conservationist, Carrollton, AL
Michele Wood, Program Assistant, Grove Hill, AL

Reassignments

Crystal Blackburn, Contracting Officer, Salinas, Kansas, to Contracting Specialist, Auburn, AL
Marty Bright-Rivera, Human Resources Specialist, Columbia, SC to Human Resources Officer, Auburn, AL
Christopher Joe, Soil Conservationist, Andalusia, AL to Soil Conservationist, Montgomery, AL
James Currington, District Conservationist, Geneva, AL to RC&D Coordinator, Ozark, AL
Joseph Forrest, Agricultural Engineer, Bessemer, AL to Grove Hill, AL
Blake Garner, Soil Conservationist, Camden, AL to Jackson, AL
Jerome Langlinais, Soil Survey Project Leader, Tuscaloosa, AL to Bay Minette, AL
Amy Moncus, Agricultural Engineer to Soil Conservationist, Moulton, AL
Jeff Thurmond, Wildlife Biologist, Auburn, AL to State Biologist, Auburn, AL

Resignations

Zachry Adams, Soil Conservationist, Geneva, AL
Cortez Brundage, Contract Specialist, Auburn, AL
Mike Flynt, Soil Conservation Technician, Centre, AL

Retirees

Randy Martin, Agricultural Engineer, Ozark, AL
James T. Moses, Soil Conservation Technician, Athens, AL
Herbert Ross, Resource Inventory Specialist, Auburn, AL
Mark Swafford, District Conservationist, Athens, AL
Rick Zellmer, GIS Specialist, Auburn, AL

Death

Maurice Johnson, Soil Conservation Technician, Greensboro, AL

Student Trainee Reassignment

Joshua Halpin, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation), Auburn, AL to Andalusia, AL

Return to Duty from Deployment

Anthony Hudson, District Conservationist, Huntsville, AL
Adam Sconyers, Soil Conservationist, Auburn, AL

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Rodney Goode Receives Jerry L. Johnson Award

Rodney (Rod) K. Goode, NRCS District Conservationist of Jefferson and St. Clair Counties, is this year's recipient of the Jerry L. Johnson Award. He received a one-of-a-kind wood carving at the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts Award Banquet at Orange Beach, Alabama.



The award, established in honor of the late Jerry L. Johnson, is given to an individual that shows "excellence in public service through one's family, employment, profession and community." Other qualities considered include: initiative, vision, unselfishness, teamwork, faithfulness, enthusiasm, discipline and confidence. Goode is recognized as an individual that exemplifies these qualities.

More information about Rod and the award criteria is on the Alabama NRCS website: www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/about/so_sect/tech/johnson_award.html

Notice to Retirees:

We want to ensure that everyone receives the AL NRCS State Conservationist's newsletter "Current Developments."

Printing and mailing fees are escalating and we want to streamline the process as much as possible. **If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail**, call (1-800-342-9893, ext 4506), e-mail (fay.garner@al.usda.gov), or send a note (Fay Garner, Public Affairs, USDA-NRCS, P.O. Box 311, Auburn, AL 36831) and we will keep you on the mailing list.

If you receive the newsletter by regular mail, but would like to receive it electronically, please send us your e-mail address by one of the above methods. When a new newsletter is posted, we will send you the hotlink.

• Next Issue

Submissions for Current Developments, potential success stories, and news releases are welcomed, and appreciated anytime.

Contact the Communications, Marketing, and Outreach (CMO) staff with questions or submissions by email:

AL-nrcs-publicinfo@one.usda.gov



Dr. William Puckett
State Conservationist

Julie Yates
Director of Communications,
Marketing, and Outreach

Fay Garner
Public Affairs Specialist

Alice Love
Agricultural Outreach Liaison

Jillian Stephens
Communications Specialist



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