

NOPBNRCSE



"The Alabama Link"

October 2009

NEWSLETTER

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

From My Desk to Yours

Greetings!

I consider the opportunity to serve as your Chapter president both an honor and a privilege. It is with great enthusiasm that I accept this challenge, and ask for the continued support and dedication of each individual member. Looking back on my years of involvement with NOPBNRCSE, there are highlighted areas of obvious success and areas in which we will endeavor to improve. It is my immediate hope that we will all make every effort to network more, publish information regularly, and promote sound agricultural practices daily, both in our respective offices and communities.

As you all may already know, this year's National meeting has been delayed. The meeting is now scheduled for March 2010 in St. Louis, Missouri. The 2010 meeting will be a joint venture with other professional and employee organizations such as: NOPBNRCSE, APIO, AWSS, American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS, and others. It is important that we all make plans to meet the registration deadlines. This meeting is one of the more public ways that we can put Alabama "on the map." I ask that each of us that are able to attend, please do so.

I want to encourage each of you to remain actively engaged in our scholarship and recruitment efforts. Providing the scholarship allows the organization the opportunity to give back directly to those that will engage in our future livelihood. We do want to keep in mind that resources are limited, in many instances, but giving is always one of our goals; whether monetary, of our time, or otherwise.

Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve in this capacity. I look forward to this rewarding journey that we have embarked upon. If there is a need please feel free to contact me. Otherwise, I look forward to working with each of you in the very near future.

With kindest regards,

Craig B. Johnson

"Never let pride be your guiding principle; let your accomplishments speak for themselves."

~Morgan Freeman~

CHAPTER GOALS

To achieve development opportunities through networking, education and training for Black employees within NRCS and thereby enhancing community development in natural resources management.



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MEETINGS

Alabama Chapter of NOPBNRCSE Annual Meeting - Atmore, Alabama

The Alabama Chapter of The National Organization for Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPBNRCSE) held its Annual Meeting at The Muskogee Inn in Atmore, Alabama, July 30-31, 2009. The theme for the meeting was **"Embracing Change and Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow."**

Hosted by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, the meeting was spearheaded on Thursday afternoon with a very informative tour of the nationally recognized Poarch Band of Creek Indian's Federal Tribal lands. The tour was hosted by David Elliot, NRCS Liaison; Robert Thrower, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, and bus driver Roxanne of The Poarch Band Creek Indians. The Poarch Band of Creek Indian Federal Lands is located in the northwest portion of Escambia County, Alabama.

David Elliot showed the group some of the conservation practices on the Tribal land. Some of the practices include cross fencing and installation, designing irrigation systems, watering facilities, livestock shade structures, filter strips, and numerous forestry management practices. The Tribe owns the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve. This property is mostly timber land consisting of more than 4,700 acres. The tribe's goal for this property is to provide a recreational area for the Tribal members and other guests. The Tribe used the Gulf Coast Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) programs to install two canoe landing ramps on the Wildlife Reserve property. Mr. Thrower narrated a very informative tour of the Tribal museums and Tribal facilities. He concluded the tour with an inspiring prayer for our group in his native tribal language.

The technical session on Friday was highlighted with comments from Ben Malone, Assistant State Conservationist- Central Team; Charles Ramsey, Assistant State Conservationist-West Team; Andrew Williams-ACES Outreach Employee; and Lawrence McGhee-MLRA Staff. A working lunch was highlighted with keynote Speaker Deborah A. Thomas, Program Coordinator for Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama Inc. (FOCAL); and Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice (SRBWI).

Special thanks to Johnny Trayvick for coordinating this very informative and enjoyable meeting in his native hometown.

OFFICERS 2009-2011

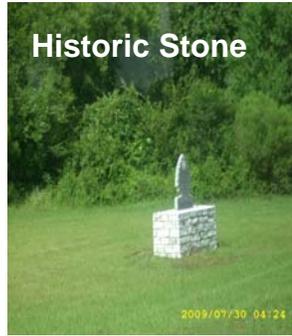
President	Craig Johnson
Vice President	Joe Norris
Recording Secretary	Shirley-Hall Cole
Assistant Secretary	Sarah Walker
Treasurer	Lawrence McGhee
Parliamentarian	Winford Andrews
Past President	Phillip Slater

Submitted by :
Lawrence McGhee

PICTORIALS FROM ANNUAL MEETING Atmore, Alabama July 30-31, 2009



Pictorials (Continued)



Attendees Pictured: L-R: Ben Malone, Johnny Trayvick, Craig Johnson, Deloris Jones, Winford Andrews, Shirley Hall-Cole, Lawrence McGhee, Phillip Slater, Herbert Ross. Not Pictured: Andrew Williams, Charles Ramsey, and David Elliott. Special guests were Wilma Ross and Jaylon McGhee.

NOPBNRCSE TRAINING CONFERENCE

The Annual Training Conference of the NOPBNRCSE will be March 15-20, 2010, in St. Louis, Missouri. This training conference will be a combined meeting with other professional organizations. Details of this meeting will be forthcoming. Everyone that can is encouraged to attend this meeting.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Federation of Southern Cooperatives 42nd Anniversary August 13-15, 2009

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives held its 42nd Anniversary in Birmingham, Alabama. During the event, the Annual Fish Fry and Live Auction fundraiser was held at the Rural Training and Research Center in Epes, Alabama. For the auction, the Alabama Chapter of NOPBNRCSE donated a hand-crocheted Afghan.

These two days consisted of educational workshops, displays, and presenters targeting concerns of Rural America. Among the guest speakers were USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Dr. Joe Leonard; and USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development, Mr. Dallas Tonsager. Mr. Ben Malone, Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service (AL-NRCS) Assistant for Field Operations—Central Team, was among local USDA Managers serving on a panel discussion to address participants concerns relating to various USDA programs. Ms. Alice Love, Agricultural Outreach Liaison (AL-NRCS) was among other conservation partners displaying USDA information targeting underserved groups or individuals. Her one-on-one contact provided individual assistance to participants seeking information about NRCS programs.

The Federation is well known for its continuous efforts to promote social and economic justice in Rural America. This event attracted over 400 participants from various states.

As acknowledged by President Barack Obama, the Federation has woven itself into the fabric of the rural South by educating and assisting farmers and low-income communities to become economically self-sufficient.

USDA Secretary Of Agriculture, Mr. Thomas Vilsack, acknowledged the Federation for their vision, steadfastness, and advocacy, which contributed to the passage of the historic Section 2501 of the 1990 Farm Bill, which for the first time targeted outreach and technical assistance to minority producers.

It is an honor for AL-NRCS to be affiliated with such an outstanding conservation partner.



NRCS hosted a table at the 42nd meeting of the Southern Federation Cooperatives Meeting in Birmingham, Alabama.

*Submitted by:
Alice Love, Soil Conservationist
USDA-NRCS, Auburn, AL*

MEMBERSHIP

The Alabama Chapter is extending an invitation for you to become a member of our State Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE.

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.

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

*Herbert Ross
Chairman, Membership Committee
USDA-NRCS, Auburn, Alabama*

THE LES HILLIARD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM RENAMED

The Les Hilliard Scholarship Program has been renamed the Les Hilliard/Sebastian Thomas Scholarship Program. This program is designed to provide a one-time monetary payment to a student pursuing a degree in agriculture, nature resources, and related sciences.

Donations for the Les Hilliard/Sebastian Thomas Scholarship are always welcomed and accepted. Anyone wishing to make a donation should contact:

*Shirley Hall-Cole, Chairperson
Les Hilliard Scholarship Program
USDA-NRCS, Auburn, Alabama*

Congratulations!

to Christopher and Wichaune Ford on the latest addition to their family.

It's a Boy!!!



Christopher Z. Ford, Jr.

Born: January 6, 2009
Weight: 6 lbs. 4 oz.
Height: 19 in.

NEWSLETTER INFO

If anyone has an article(s) of interest and would like it put in the next newsletter, please send to Sarah Walker at the Alabama NRCS State Office.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

*Sarah Walker
Deloris Jones
Winford Andrews*

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