



**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

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Conservation Volunteers Honored During National Volunteer Week

AUBURN, April 11, 2016 - USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is celebrating National Volunteer Week April 10-16, 2016 by thanking and honoring its Earth Team volunteers for their service to conservation.

Earth Team is the agency's volunteer workforce, and nationally, in fiscal year 2015, more than 23,800 people donated 294,306 hours of service to NRCS valued at over \$6.8 million.

"Volunteers work closely with our staff, and they play an important role in our state's conservation work," said State Conservationist, Ben Malone. In fiscal year 2015, more than 1,430 volunteers served an impressive 10,182 hours in Alabama.

The AmeriCorps routinely volunteer for the Urban Forestry and Conservation Fair as well as the Water Festival in the metro-Birmingham area. Both events are hosted by the Jefferson County Conservation District. The AmeriCorps volunteers provide a range of assistance from acting as assistant coordinators, class guides, activity presenters and assistant presenters. These events would not be as successful without their wonderful assistance. We are so glad to have them as volunteers each year.

Earth Team is a program that partners volunteers with NRCS employees. It was created in 1985 and offers many opportunities to individuals 14 and older who are interested in volunteering to improve the nation's natural resources. Earth Team volunteers help NRCS conservationists provide private landowners and others a range of services from conservation technical assistance to teaching and generating awareness about conservation through community projects.

Earth Team Volunteers allow NRCS to stretch available resources and help put additional conservation practices on the ground. Volunteer efforts help improve land and wildlife habitat and contribute to cleaner water and air for everyone.

-More-

Learn more about the Earth Team Volunteer Program online at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/earthteam> or by calling (toll-free) 888-526-3227. For more information on NRCS visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

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*Note: The Value of Volunteer Time to the Agency is \$23.07/hour as established by the Independent Sector and utilized by the Federal Interagency Team for Volunteerism.