

CONSERVATION MATTERS

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 200 N. High Street, Room 522, Columbus, Ohio 43215 (614) 255-2472

Winter 2008

From the Office of Ohio
State Conservationist
Terry J. Cosby



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Winter header photo taken by
Rebecca Duncan in Sandusky County, Ohio



Our Great Lake . . . Ohio has many valuable natural resources. Our soil, forests, and water sustain us and people around the world. These resources provide products and income to better the lives of all Ohioans. One of the most precious and important of these resources is Lake Erie, our Great Lake.

Lake Erie is part of the Great Lakes System, which contains 20 percent of the world's freshwater. Lake Erie seaports generate approximately \$1 billion in revenue annually. Sport fishing is likewise reported to generate \$1 billion, and Lake Erie tourism generates \$7.4 billion annually. Lake Erie is able to produce more fish for human consumption than the other four Great Lakes combined. Many Ohioans owe their livelihood to a clean and productive lake. Eleven million people drink from it.

Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes as well as the warmest and the most productive. Numerous studies have identified Lake Erie as impaired due to excessive loadings of sediment and nutrients. On average, \$2.2 million is spent each year to dredge 850,000 cubic yards of sediment from just the Port of Toledo.

Additional serious problems facing Lake Erie right now include harmful algal blooms. These blooms are a Western Basin issue. A significant human health issue is *Microcystis*, a form of blue-green algae that produces the toxin microcystin. The algal blooms are exacerbated by resurgence in soluble phosphorous leaving the watersheds with runoff which enters Lake Erie. Nonpoint source runoff from Ohio farms is a significant source of the nutrients entering the lake.

NRCS in Ohio has undertaken a major effort to work with other Federal, State, and local partners to improve the health of Lake Erie and its ecosystems. NRCS, in conjunction with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, formed and is leading the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) Partnership. This partnership serves as a model for interagency cooperation and as a vehicle to attack resource management problems spanning many political boundaries and jurisdictions. For more information on this exciting venture, visit our website at: www.wleb.org.

It is very important that we succeed in efforts to allow Lake Erie to remain the most productive of the Great Lakes and one of Ohio's most valuable natural resources. Ohio NRCS is dedicated to doing just that.

Terry J. Cosby

Focus on the Field - An Area Update

Area 2, Deb Berger, ASTC-FO, Medina Area Office

The NRCS tagline “Helping People Help the Land” has been our Mission Statement since being introduced in 2006. In order to get this “Conservation on the Land,” we utilize a number of tools. The Soil Data Mart tool has been successfully placed on a public domain website and has a link from the Ohio NRCS site. The Data Mart has become the official NRCS Soil Data site, which allows every county to view and print data previously found in their hardbound soil survey publication. NRCS employees use the site for official planning data, including map unit descriptions and interpretations, current legends and engineering, and soil chemical properties. The prime farmland and locally important soils lists, as well as the official hydric and non-hydric with hydric inclusions lists can also be viewed and printed. Our Area 2 Resource Soil Scientist, Jon Reedstrom, noted that, “With all new map units, we now have perfect joins between counties that can be utilized in our Geographic Information System (GIS) files.”

This past year, Area 2 has also implemented a unique tool in the form of a mobile van to aid our new Grassland Specialist, Erika Harold, in completing a large number of Grazing Management Plans. The van is fully equipped with a desk for her laptop, printer, external hard drive, GPS unit, and necessary grazing equipment. Erika travels throughout Area 2, meeting producers on site and collecting the data necessary to complete the plan.



Some of the best tools, though, are actually the staff we employ. Some changes in our staff the past few months include:

Eric Schultz, Natural Resource Specialist, Medina FO

Mike Patterson, Erie Basin RC&D Coordinator,
Norwalk FO

Danielle Balduff, Wetland Team Leader, Massillon FO

Jonathan Mauk, Soil Conservationist, Wooster FO

John Knapp, District Conservationist, Wooster FO

Congratulations on your new assignments.



Fully equipped mobile van aids new Grassland Specialist, Erika Harold (left), in completing a large number of Grazing Management Plans in Area 2.

Passion In The Workplace? NRCS Sure Has It!

Submitted by Chris Coulon, PAS, State Office

NRCS has just kicked off a new national campaign entitled “Conservation—Our Purpose, Our Passion.” And that passion has surely been obvious.

The campaign highlights stories from farmers and ranchers who share their excitement of working with NRCS employees to improve the land and bring back healthy vegetation and wildlife populations and restore water quality and quantity. The campaign includes stories from employees who have obvious enthusiasm for the work they do with their farming and ranching customers. The campaign shows the pride this government agency takes in improving and protecting private lands across America.

For example, take Scott Stoller from Wayne County. Working with NRCS to develop a grazing system enabled him to transform his operation from traditional dairy to organic, opening up a new market. He also participates in CRP. Scott explains, “I used to collect pencils, and I sold them one day to buy a bunch of little trees to plant. We call it a riparian buffer now.”

Bob Parkinson, State GIS/Resource Inventory Coordinator in the Columbus State Office exemplifies the passion NRCS employees have for their work. Bob has mapped over 370,000 acres in 5 Ohio counties and 20,000 acres in Alaska. As a data manager, Bob served with 6 others on the initial SSURGO development task force in 1995, and has managed the National Resource

Inventory (NRI) for Ohio since 1990. In his current position Bob says, “As State GIS Specialist, it’s exciting to see the rapid adoption of geospatial technology by NRCS, USDA, and society at large.”

Jon Reedstrom, Area Resource Soil Scientist in Area 2, has the passion too. Teachers frequently ask Jon to visit their schools to give presentations, which he has done for a range of age groups, from third graders up to college students in ecology classes at the Kent State University Stark campus. Jon says, “I feel that opening up the world of soils to teachers allows me to reach many students.”

Jon and his fellow employees are passionate about what they do.



Scott Stoller and his family, of Wayne County Ohio, are a featured customer in the NRCS national information campaign, Conservation—Our Purpose, Our Passion.

Scott Stoller and his fellow farmers are passionate about taking care of the land. Working together with customers and other conservation-minded partners, they have quietly been improving and protecting natural resources for more than 70 years. They are proud of their success. Just ask them. They’ll tell you. Conservation—Our Purpose, Our Passion.



Wayne County farmer Scott Stoller



Bob Parkinson (l) shows Scott Jerrome (r) how to use a GPS unit.



Jon Reedstrom is opening up the world of soils to teachers and students.

CONSERVATION

**Our Purpose.
Our Passion.**

The Human Story

Dan Ross, Urban Resources Conservationist (Old Conservation Guy), Medina Area Office

Silt fences, sediment basins, waterways etc. . . we can design, inspect, and implement these Best Management Practices. We can tell you what a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is and how it should work. We can define water quality, riparian corridors, and other environmental terms. But are these the important items?

Can you tell that I may have been in this business too long – or at least, approaching the end of my career? YEP – after 31 years in the Conservation business, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. It is a time for reflection and pondering the past, but also looking into the future.

As I review my career so far, I started to put on paper some of the things that affected my job. I found this somewhat bothersome because I thought I would be writing about special projects that I've had the pleasure to be involved in.

Instead, the thing that kept coming up was – PEOPLE! It was that landowner with a particular problem which needed solving. But, it was also that person who wanted to go beyond the basic requirements. She (or he) wanted to try that new thing that they heard about or wanted to see the land truly left to future generations in better shape.

I guess it did bring me back to special projects in the end. But, it was those special INDIVIDUALS who made it happen. My job was more of a technical conduit to make their perceptions become reality.

If you would bear with me, I'd like to relate some of these HUMAN stories to illustrate my point. There was a farmer in his 50s who had farmed all his life. He had tried no-till corn, but wanted to go totally NO TILL, which involved soybeans, small grains, hay, and pasture. I cautioned him because there were some issues to address – including drainage, erosion, and fertility. He said whatever needed to be done, he was willing to do. We laid out a 3-year plan to go totally no till.

But, it did NOT work out. Instead within ONE year, all the items were addressed and every crop was NO TILLED. During the first year of total no till, there were many problems – insects, high rainfall, and equipment. Most farmers would have given up and gone back to the traditional methods. Not him. He came out with a vengeance. He came up with an integrated pest program, bought his own no-till equipment instead of renting, and kept a close eye on the weather. That year, he ended up having the best yields ever.

I was at that location for 3 more years, and every year he was doing more conservation. It was my pleasure to co-nominate this farmer for National Conservation Farmer which he won the year I left that location. It was this HUMAN Story that made a lifelong impression on me.

Later, I had just started at a new location in an urban setting. Early in my training career, I had worked in the Cleveland Metropolitan Area, so urban conservation was not new to me. But, this was the first time I was the office manager in an urban setting. At this time, there were no clean water requirements, such as NPDES Phase 1 and Phase 2 – SWPPPs were called Erosion Control Plans (ECP) – now I am dating myself.

One of the first developments I worked on was a new one with over 30 percent in wetlands. Wetland legislation, Section 404, was just starting to be implemented. I was working with this developer on how his consultant was going to develop his ECP and wetlands came up in the discussion.

Even though this was not our responsibility, we reviewed the present laws and requirements. He pointed



Water Quality Basin converted from a Detention Basin in Twinsburg, Ohio.

out to me it was a waste of time to save these SWAMPS, he wanted a beautiful LAKE instead.

Because the wetland legislation was new, I suggested that he review his plans with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He looked at me very strangely. Believe it or not, he reviewed the plans with the Corps. In fact, they had a meeting on the site. He was going to get a permit to make a lake.

During this same time, he brought in his ECP. At this time, developers did not have to get our approval, only our review and comments – dating myself again! Well, he wanted us to approve them, which we did after some modifications. We spent more time talking about why these SWAMPS were so important.

In the end, he not only implemented his ECP with our approval – he never built the lake. He kept the SWAMP that he marketed as a Forest Wetland Preserve. He made beautiful signs with a wood duck on them stating that these were protected wetlands. The lots bordering the wetland were the highest priced lots on the development. I had the pleasure 5 years later to nominate him for Developer of the Year, which he won. The HUMAN Story – it just keeps coming back to me.

Finally, everyone has a mentor(s). I have been very lucky in my career to have had many people who have greatly influenced me. My first mentor was at my first full-time conservation job. He was an individual who not only had the technical skills, but also the communication skills, to work with anyone.

It was great to watch how he could teach conservation to young people in the sixth grade in the morning, run a training session for engineers in the afternoon, and give a speech to the Mayors' Association that night.

Also, this is TRUE – he and I came up with the “PET ROCK IDEA” before it was marketed. I’m still looking into how that idea did not get credited to us.

THE HUMAN STORY is so important. We can’t do anything that does not involve it. I am one of those people who think that we are part of the natural ecosystem - not separate from it. *How does the HUMAN STORY affect you?*

Tuskegee Airman Speaks at NRCS-Ohio Black History Program

By John Williams, Black Emphasis Program Manager

On February 21, 2008, the Hoosier-Buckeye Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) employees sponsored a Black History Month Program to commemorate African American History and achievements. The event took place at the NRCS State Office in Columbus, Ohio, where Mr. Charles Feaster, a retired military officer of the 332nd Fighter Squadron, better known as the Tuskegee Airmen, graced us with his amazing presence as our featured speaker. Mr. Feaster shared his military experiences that he encountered as he journeyed from Louisville, Kentucky, to Tuskegee, Alabama. He continued his tours of duties during World War II in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and other places abroad.

During his presentation, Mr. Feaster stated he knew that he and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen had to do well in every challenge they encountered because they were setting an example for future squadrons. He also mentioned he thought recognizing the past efforts of his squadron would enable other young men and women to soar to new heights. He retired from the military in 1987 and to this day regrets that he did not re-enlist. When asked if he could do it all over again with the many trials and tribulations he encountered, he replied “Yes, I would do it all over again.”



State Conservationist Terry Cosby presents Charles Feaster with a Certificate of Appreciation

over 40 employees from NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (throughout Ohio), enjoyed listening to an astonishing man who has made a mark in American History.

Acting Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner Visits USDA Employees in Columbus

Submitted by Christina Coulon, PAS, State Office

After speaking at the Ohio Farm Bureau's annual meeting at the Columbus Convention Center, Acting Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner had a change in his itinerary which allowed him to make an unscheduled stop. State Conservationist Terry Cosby, who accompanied the Secretary throughout the day, suggested the Secretary stop by the USDA offices in the Federal Building in Columbus. Employees from the Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Inspector General, Office of General Counsel, Rural Development, Farm Service Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service gathered and met with the Secretary for about a half hour. Employees asked questions about topics ranging from budgetary issues to alternative energy.



*Acting Secretary of Agriculture
Chuck Conner and State
Conservationist Terry Cosby*

The Secretary complimented the employees of USDA on the work they do as public servants in the "People's Department." He said he's worked in the government for a long time in many different capacities, but in USDA he feels a family atmosphere that is lacking in other government departments.

Senator Sherrod Brown, who has an office in the Federal Building, stopped by to visit the Secretary as well. In addition to speaking with the Secretary for several minutes, he made a point to also personally greet USDA employees with handshakes and introductions. The Secretary and Senator offered a photo op to those present, which many took advantage of. The visit was an exciting and rare opportunity for USDA employees in the building to meet the decision-makers guiding USDA and representing Ohio citizens.

** Since this event in December, 2007, USDA has a new Secretary of Agriculture. Ed Schafer was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 28, 2008.



*Senator Sherrod Brown and State
Conservationist Terry Cosby
(above). NRCS employees with
Acting Secretary of Agriculture
Chuck Conner (left).*

*(l-r) Michelle Lohstroh, Nancy
Jervis, Terry Cosby, Shirley
Yarbrough, Chuck Conner, Moi
Sanford, Shawn Anderson, John
Armentano, and Doug Zehner.*

Researchers Get the “Dirt” on Soils

By: Don Burgess, Soil Scientist, Findlay MLRA and Frank Gibbs, Resource Soil Scientist, Findlay Area Office

Resource Soil Scientist Frank Gibbs and MLRA Project Leader Don Burgess presented information on soil survey updating activities in northwestern Ohio at the Oak Openings Research Forum held at the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library on January 26. The purpose of the forum was to highlight research relevant to the Oak Openings Region, a 130-square mile area of northwestern Ohio that contains a variety of unique ecosystems, including oak savanna and wet prairie. This area supports the highest number of rare and protected species of plants and animals in Ohio, and has been the focus of extensive preservation efforts. Approximately 100 people attended the forum, including a variety of researchers, graduate students, naturalists, and metro park volunteers.

The presentations, which included a 20-minute speech and a poster, highlighted the recent update of the Spinks soils of northwestern Ohio. One finding of this study was that these soils contained fewer and thinner clay-enriched bands known as lamellae which can have an effect on water retention and movement. As a result, these soils were reclassified to the Colonie series and more accurate and representative data on soil properties and interpretations were developed.

Another focus of the presentations was to emphasize potential uses of soil survey information for habitat preservation and restoration. An example presented involved efforts to reestablish communities of wild

lupine, a threatened native plant and vital food source of the endangered Karner Blue butterfly. Early efforts were unsuccessful due to low transplant success. Investigations of existing populations of wild lupine revealed that the majority were found on lower backslope positions of Ottokee soils. When restoration efforts were focused on landscape and soil areas similar to these, plant establishment was much improved.



Resource Soil Scientist Frank Gibbs discusses soil properties during the poster viewing session.

The New Soil Survey

By Richard Gehring, State Soil Scientist, State Office

The first soil survey in Ohio was conducted in Montgomery County and was published over 100 years ago in 1900. It contained one soil series, Miami, separated into five different phases or map units. Soil scientists have learned a lot about the soils in Ohio since those early days. The Soil Survey of Montgomery County, Ohio, published in 1976, has 38 series and 106 map units. When Montgomery County was SSURGO certified in 2004, an additional 22 map units and 7 new series were added to the legend. This was the result of information available from several newer, adjacent soil surveys and stop-gap measures to ensure a seamless join when using GIS.

In the first century of soil survey, projects were based on a county extent. There could be as much as 30 years difference between

the publication dates of adjacent counties. Because of the variation in publication dates, field mappers, technology, and policy, this last generation of soil survey has resulted in a patchwork of soil series, map unit names, and symbols.

Today's soil survey is using a new approach. Using the latest tools and technology, soil scientists are reviewing existing data, deciding where additional information is needed, and collecting this information to try and make sense of soils across a geomorphic surface. Additional properties and characteristics are being collected to help meet the demand for new uses of soil information that was never imagined 100 years ago. The end result will be a soil survey for the State that is coordinated, consistent, and seamless.

Images from the Land...a Concert

Submitted By: Sandy Hoelscher, PR Specialist, Shelby SWCD

Ask most nine year olds where their food comes from and they will say, “the grocery store.” This perception is not reserved for children; most adults are three generations removed from agriculture. Because of these facts, the agricultural community in Shelby County is initiating a unique approach to educate our fellow residents about our business.



Blending agriculture and music, “Images from the Land,” is a free concert with a cinematic pictorial review of modern day agriculture in Shelby County. The show will be displayed on a “big” screen while the Sidney Civic Band performs beneath. The concerts, held at Sidney High School, are on Saturday, March 29 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 30 at 2 p.m. The show is a family event that will also feature local 4-H, FFA, and FCCLA programs.



By combining the skill of photographer Pat Elsass and the everyday business of seven local farm families, the show will portray how our food gets from the gate to the plate. Elsass followed farm families for a year to get a personal look at the people who transform seeds into salads and pastures into pints of yogurt. The concert’s music and imagery will follow the seasons of the year, with the awakening of the land to the great rest of winter.



Please bring your family and friends to celebrate the arrival of spring with “Images from the Land...a concert. “Join us on March 29 and 30 at Sidney High School for this **free** event.

“Images from the Land” is presented by:

- The Gateway Arts Council
- Shelby Soil and Water Conservation District
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- Shelby County Farm Bureau
- The Ohio State University Extension of Shelby County



Storm Water Information Translated by Columbus Public School Students

*Submitted by Chris Coulon, PAS,
State Office*

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District worked with seven students from Columbus Public School's McGuffey Welcome Center to both help improve the student's English skills and to provide environmental information to non-English speakers.

Barqadle Egal from Somalia, Keily Olivares from El Salvador, Francisca Martinez from Honduras, Mariama Diallo from Guinea, Hawa Ba from Mauritania, Mustafa Ashur from Ethiopia, and Lavie Koubaka from the Republic of Congo translated the brochures about storm water pollution into Spanish, Somali, and French. Along with translating the brochures, the students also studied a storm drain model that will accompany the brochures at county events. Sally Joslyn, a school nurse at the Welcome Center, is encouraging the students to practice their public speaking skills by presenting the model and the pollution message to their communities.

According to a news release issued by the Franklin SWCD, staffs at both the Welcome Center and the SWCD share a desire to develop a long-term partnership to encourage students at the Welcome Center to consider careers in natural resources. For more information about this partnership or about the brochures, contact Jennifer Fish at the Franklin SWCD, 614-486-9613.

Farmer Youth Initiative Hunt a Success!

By: TJ Oliver, Soil Conservationist, Lancaster Field Office

Hocking County OSU Extension, in cooperation with Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District, held its first Farmer Youth Initiative program during the youth deer gun season November 17. Eight youth participated with five youth harvesting deer. The program was started by the Washington Soil and Water Conservation District 4 years ago. The goal of the program is to teach youth the importance of being an ethical hunter and aid the landowner in deer population management. Youth were matched with landowners and were required to meet with them and obtain written permission to hunt during the youth deer season. The program seeks to build open communication between the young hunter and landowner, develop respect for the hunting and farming tradition, and reinforce the idea that hunting on private land is a privilege that should not be taken for granted.

Youth were required to attend a mandatory Orientation Day on November 10 to review gun safety, proper field dressing and food safety, outdoor preparedness, and gain some shooting experience before entering the field. Wildlife officers answered questions related to laws and ethics.

Youth were outfitted with their hunting license and deer permit, hunter orange vest and hat, hand warmers, socks, maps, a disposable camera, snacks, and education to ensure a safe and successful hunt. Youth needing a guide were



*Participants in Hocking County's
first Farmer Youth Initiative
Program*

matched with qualified individuals. Volunteers included members from local hunting associations, local agencies, and landowners. The program was made possible by a Step-Outside Grant from the Division of Wildlife and a George W. Broughton Natural Resources Program Fund Grant.

A dinner for the youth and their families was held at the Hocking County Youth Center on the fairgrounds the evening of the hunt. Venison chili, cornbread, carrots, applesauce, and dessert were served along with hot beverages. Each youth also walked away with a deer hunting gear door prize. Area individuals and businesses contributed by donating free meat processing to the youth who harvested deer and door prizes for the dinner.

Area 5 Mine Land Soils Workshop

By: Joe Koehler, Soil Conservationist,
Hillsboro Field Office

Area 5 staff Gordon Gilmore and Charlie Frazier recently conducted a workshop on mine land soils in Gallia County. Reclaimed strip mines are being used for purposes ranging from home sites to pasture. In some cases, this land is being used or purchased by people who have little or no idea as to these soil limitations. Often we are asked to provide information and planning assistance on these sites. This workshop focused on mine spoil properties, reclamation activities, and the management strategies being applied on a reclaimed mine site. This training focused on what these soils are, how much information we have about these soils, and how planning on these soils is more complex and site sensitive than the other soils we normally work with.



During our first visit to an active strip mine site, we saw what an active mine looks like and learned what takes place during a strip mine operation. In addition, we learned the steps that go into reclaiming a strip mine.

The next stop was a grazing operation on a site reclaimed in the late 1970s. At this site, the landowner and the local District Conservationist Ralph Crawford were there to describe what practices and challenges they have faced on this operation. On this farm, they installed practices such as

erosion control structures, spring developments, water tanks, heavy use pad, access road, and pipeline.

This workshop proved to be valuable to employees working in counties where these soils exist, those who may eventually work in strip mine counties, as well as new employees. This is just one of a series of workshops planned for Area 5 employees.

Caring for Rural Lands: Post Drought

By Mark Reynolds, Soil Conservationist, Marietta Field Office

First, let me provide you with some good news. Yes, I said good. Here's the deal. Ask yourself this: "What was the grass doing during the drought?" NOTHING!! Absolutely nothing! It's the same thing grass does in the winter. It was DORMANT. "So what?" Well, when grass is dormant, it has all (most) of its energy reserves stored in its roots. As a result, the entire top of the grass plant to ground level can be removed without significantly damaging potential for future growth, but this can be done only when the plant is dormant. This means that pastures may recover quite nicely this coming spring as we have gotten adequate moisture to correct the drought

situation from a forage standpoint. However, I do not recommend ever grazing grasses shorter than 2 inches (for the most part 3 inches), except in specific cases, as damage to plant crowns may occur. Creating a sacrifice lot and reseeding it is much safer.

Now that I have raised your spirits that pastures will likely come out of the drought this year not much worse for wear, here's the bad news, or at the least a strong word of caution. Everyone is short on hay, which is obvious. As a result, many producers will want to get livestock out on the new grass ASAP once it begins to grow. **MORE DAMAGE CAN BE DONE TO**

YOUR PASTURES BY DOING THIS THAN THE DROUGHT DID ALL LAST YEAR. When grass begins to grow in the spring, there is a critical growth period that it goes through. During this time, the energy reserves which the grass has stored while it has been dormant are pushed up into the growth of the leaves. Until the leaves become mature enough and begin replenishing the reserves in the roots, the plant is susceptible to extreme setbacks if the leaves are removed, either by grazing too early or by a hard freeze after growth has begun. This leaves the plant with no reserves and no way to restore them.

Ohio Outreach Program

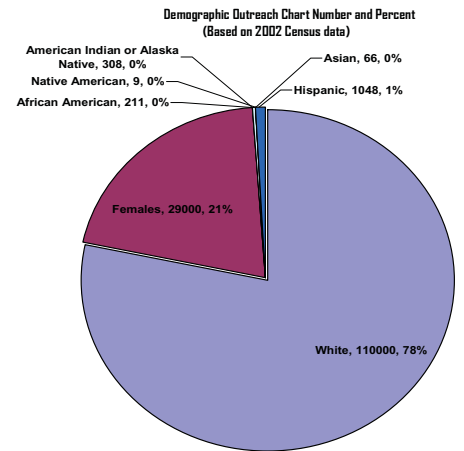
By Clarence Bunch, Acting Outreach Coordinator, State Office

In Ohio, we are committed to making our Outreach Program accessible to all customers. We aspire to implement an effective program that informs as well as educates existing and potential NRCS customers about available programs and services. More importantly, we will strive to ensure that our programs and services are made accessible, fairly and equitably, with an emphasis on reaching the underserved and socially disadvantaged Ohio farmers.

Based on 2002 census data, there are more than 140,000 land operators in Ohio. Of this number,

there are over 29,000 landowners or 21 percent, classified as part of the minority farming population (27,840 females, 1,048 Hispanics, 308 American Indian or Alaska Natives, 211 African Americans, 66 Asians, and 9 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders). This number does not include the Amish/Mennonites or the Appalachian population in Ohio.

Recent data from a Performance Results System (PRS) report indicated that we extended only 2 percent of our services to the minority population in FY 2007. This system is not capturing the hard



work and commitment our field, area, and State office staffs provide to our underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers across Ohio. Every year many of you work with our minority population and take measures to ensure that we are providing fair and equitable services to all of our customers.

State Endangered Plant Preserved in Euclid Creek

By Jim Storer, District Conservationist, Valley View Field Office

A State listed endangered plant is now preserved through the work of a partnership agreement with the Friends of Euclid Creek, Mayfield School Board of Education, and the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District with technical support from the NRCS Valley View Field Office. Over 12.5 acres of high quality wetlands, one of the last remaining wetland systems in Euclid Creek, and the Dusty Goldenrod will be preserved under a conservation easement. The site, located in Highland Heights in Cuyahoga County, is the only known location in the State of Ohio where the Dusty Goldenrod (*Solidago puberula*) is found.

This effort was a result of the effective coordination between Cuyahoga SWCD, Friends of Euclid Creek,

and the Mayfield School Board to find the best approach to preserve this great natural resource, with NRCS providing technical support on the formation of the conservation easement agreement. The project was made possible by funding provided by Clean Ohio Fund, temporary funding by Conservation Fund, Kent Smith Charitable Trust, and additional technical support by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. To completely finalize the project, the Friends of Euclid Creek has launched a capital campaign to raise funds to fully complete the funding obligations for the project. This project has demonstrated a truly successful collaboration and the significant landscapes still present in Cuyahoga County worth preserving.

In order to have an accurate reflection of our outreach efforts, NRCS will roll out a new outreach vision and mission this year, which will incorporate strategic objectives and obtainable goals to guide our collective efforts in reaching out to all potential NRCS customers. Our 5-year goal will be to implement an effective outreach process that will allow NRCS to market our programs and services. In addition, we will establish a process to: (a) capture our local efforts, (b) report our hard work, and (c) communicate our programs success.

“Outreach” denotes the resilience and commitment an organization have towards expanding services to a wider section and population of people. NRCS in Ohio is committed to Outreach; it is a way we conduct business. Keep up the good work!

YMCA Wetland WHIP'd into Shape

Submitted by Chris Coulon, PAS, State Office

Camp Kern, a facility owned and operated by the YMCA of Greater Dayton, is located on 485 acres in the Little Miami River Valley of Southwestern Ohio. Various activities, including summer camp, equestrian programs, and field trips take place at the camp each year.

The staff at Camp Kern has a long standing relationship with NRCS and the Warren County SWCD; the 10-acre recreational pond/lake was constructed with NRCS/SWCD assistance over 40 years ago.



More recently, Camp Kern staff approached NRCS for assistance with creating a 3.5-acre wetland on the camp property. Civil Engineering Technician John Lafferty and District Conservationist John Tkatschenko in Warren County worked with the camp to provide both financial and technical as-

sistance for creating the wetland. The financial assistance came in the form of a Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) contract and technical assistance was provided for the wetland design.

The staff at the Camp will use this wetland as an outdoor education centerpiece for the 7,500 middle school students and 30,000 others who visit the camp every year. The camp has plans for constructing a 250-foot boardwalk, planting 2 acres of prairie grass around the wetland, building a bird observation blind, and interpretive signs to heighten the learning experience centered on the wetland.

NRCS Recognized Wyandot SWCD

Submitted by Bill Clinger, Office Manager, Upper Sandusky SWCD

The Wyandot SWCD was recognized by NRCS at the NRCS Area 1 Awards Banquet held in Toledo on January 10, 2008. NRCS honored the Wyandot SWCD for its efforts in working with ODOT to address drainage concerns along the new U.S. 30 highway project.

In 1999, the Wyandot SWCD began working with ODOT on U.S. 30 plans. Over the years, the SWCD probed tile, surveyed, and designed drainage projects that included a total of 51,314 feet of tile east of Upper Sandusky and a total of 76,976 feet of tile west of Upper Sandusky.



(l-r) NRCS State Conservationist Terry Cosby; NRCS District Conservationist Tami Hastings; Wyandot SWCD's Dale Reinhart, Bill Clinger, Jeff Hohman, John Lininger, Angie Ford, Larry Passet, Eileen Kuenzli, and Jeff Bowen; and NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Tomika Walker.

Water Management Association of Ohio (WMAO) Fall Conference

Submitted by Deba Mohler, Heart of Ohio RC&D Coordinator,
Delaware Field Office

The 36th Annual Fall WMAO Conference was held November 14-15, 2007. NRCS was responsible for chairing this year's conference with Scott Jerrome and Deba Mohler serving as co-chairs of the planning committee. The theme 'Water is Trendy' was introduced by an excellent presentation from Keynote Speaker Dr. Allen Davis, University of Maryland. Dr. Davis presented his retrospective review of Low Impact Development and green engineering. Over 130 were in attendance.

During the awards luncheon, WMAO recognized Arthur M. Brate, P.E. Senior Engineer with Brate Consulting, LLC and former State Conservation Engineer for NRCS, as the 2007 inductee to the Ohio Water Hall of Fame. Art was

instrumental in partnering with Ohio agencies, committees, and organizations to provide engineering guidance and leadership. He dedicated his time and talent to help others sustain agricultural production and simultaneously address water quantity and water quality concerns.



Former NRCS State Engineer Art Brate (r) was inducted into the 2007 Ohio Water Hall of Fame at the WMAO Fall Conference.

The President's Service Award was presented to Deba Mohler, Heart of Ohio RC&D Coordinator. Deba was recognized for her outstanding contribution to the WMAO Board of Directors and the WMAO membership by participating in WMAO business and event planning. As an NRCS employee, Deba has provided statewide leadership in the program and technology divisions for the past 10 years. Deba has set a superb example of how to balance professional, work-related duties with volunteer groups such as WMAO.

WMAO also provided conference attendees with an additional benefit of acquiring training accreditations. This year's conference content was approved for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by ODNR, according to the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) Criteria and Guidelines.

HR PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Name	Position	Action	Grade	Location	Date
Felicity Weatherspoon	Resource Conservationist	Reassignment	GS-12	State Office	12/23/07
Ruth Gilmore	Administrative Coord.	Retirement	GS-7	Coshocton AO	12/31/07
Roger Darrah	Construction Inspector	Retirement	GS-9	Van Wert FO	01/03/08
Denise Lange	Soil Conservationist	Reassignment	GS-11	Van Wert FO	01/20/08
Gary Mathes	District Conservationist	Retirement	GS-11	Mansfield FO	02/01/08
Harry Kenney	District Conservationist	Promotion	GS-12	New Philadelphia FO	02/03/08
Diana Kurey	Budget Analyst	Transfer Out	GS-11	State Office	02/03/08
Susan Spencer	Secretary	Reassignment	GS-7	Mgt Staff - SO	02/03/08

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