



NRCS Alabama Current Developments

What's Inside:

Pages 2-3

- CFC Kickoff
- Dust Bowl Screenings
- Allred Receives NRCS Award
- Agroforestry in Perry County
- Archaeological Investigation

Pages 4-5

- PCBI Receive Award
- FAC Meeting
- Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Engineering News

- EWP Sites Completed
- Sub-surface Drip Irrigation
- Bridges of Pickens County

Pages 6-7

- Building Irrigation Reservoirs
- Pleasant Home School
- Address - Award for Her Father
- County Land Judging Contests

Pages 8-9

- Conecuh Farm-City Luncheon
- North Region Field Day
- Cultural Resource Meeting
- Joining Forces for Fair Booth

Pages 10-11

- Widner SWCD Outstanding Employee of the Year
- Farming Field Day in Morgan County

Outreach News

- Jewel Bean
- Thomas Oliver Farm Workshop
- Seasonal High Tunnels in Randolph County
- Organic Partners Meet
- Partnership Meeting in Tuskegee
- Summer Intern

Pages 12-13

- PAWC Meeting in Tuskegee
- White Oak Vineyards Outreach
- Small Farmers Coop
- Barbour County Field Day
- Jolley and Woodland Grazing
- AL Small Farmer of the Year
- STC Presents at Kiwanis Club
- AL National Small Farmer of the Year

Pages 14

- Gotcher Family Receives Farm Award
- Personnel
- In Sympathy

From the State Conservationist - Dr. William Puckett



The Field Office of the Future is Bright!

As you know, we are in a continuing resolution until March 28, 2013. We have received some program allocations and are continuing to implement conservation on the ground. It is important that we put together good conservation plans and designs, follow policy, and ensure that we exhibit integrity in all that we do.

I am proud to announce that Alabama's nomination, Earl and Charisse Snell of Dale County, received the 2012 National Lloyd Wright Small Farmer of the Year award during the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) meeting in Jackson, Mississippi, in December 2012. Lloyd Wright, who founded NOPBNRCSE and is the namesake of the award, presented the Snell's with an engraved silver bowl. The Snell's were selected as the 2011 Alabama Small Farmer's of the Year for their environmental stewardship, innovations, and community leadership.

In an effort to empower people from rural counties, like the Snells, Alabama was chosen by Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack as a StrikeForce state. Through this initiative, USDA is working to ensure all producers have access to programs that can help them thrive, including proven conservation programs. In partnership with local community-based organizations, three Alabama USDA agencies—NRCS, Farm Service Agency and Rural Development, are working to improve our outreach to these communities in order to increase their access to, and participation in, our programs.

Through StrikeForce, we are meeting with Alabama USDA agency leaders and other partners to put together a plan to address the persistent poverty in 22 Alabama counties. The intent is to enhance the opportunities for communities in these counties to thrive economically and to increase the quality of life so that they are places where people will want to live. The NRCS staff in these counties will be asked to work closely with StrikeForce staff and partners to make this initiative a success.

As we move into the new year, with much uncertainty about the economy, changes in our nation, the fiscal cliff, sequestration, and Farm Bill battles; remember, our customers and partners are our first priority. We will continue to follow our conservation conscience and Help Alabamians Take Care of the Land.

From The State Office

CFC Kickoff

By Jason Forrester, CFC
Project Manager, NRCS,
Auburn, AL

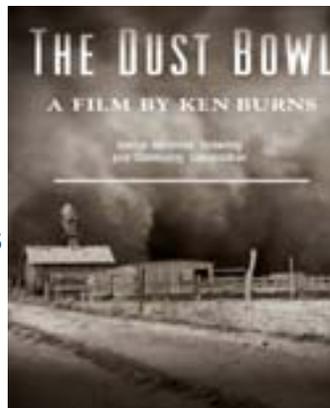
Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) kicked off with a short presentation in October 2012. Employees from the State Office attended. We talked about the things that CFC helps accomplish in the world.



We were challenged by CFC with another large campaign goal of \$6,750. Thanks to the generous giving of many employees, and a great silent auction/bake sale, we raised 148% of our goal, for a total of over \$9,000. Thank you so much for all those who continue to support this great cause!

Dust Bowl Advanced Screenings

In November 2012, three special advanced screenings and community forums for "The Dust Bowl," a new documentary film by filmmaker Ken Burns were held a few days before PBS stations televised the film. The screenings were held in Birmingham, Huntsville, and Mobile.



The Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC), the Alabama Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), and NRCS launched the community forums to explore the history and lessons of the dust bowl. At each screening, NRCS personnel told about conservation practices that protect America's soil today.

The film chronicled the environmental catastrophe that destroyed the farmlands of the Great Plains throughout the 1930's. The prairies were turned into deserts and deadly dust storms reached as far as the east coast of America. To the residents within the area, it probably seemed never ending.



(l-r) Dana and Jeff Allred, and Alabama NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett.

Allred Receives Alabama Top Honor

Jeff Allred received the 2012 Jerry L. Johnson Award. This annual award, given in honor of the late Jerry Johnson, retired State Staff Forester, recognizes an NRCS employee who exhibits excellence in public service through employment, profession, community, and family.

Allred, the Resource Engineer for the Central Team in Bessemer, was nominated by Wildlife Biologists Jeff Thurmond and Jim Schrenkel.

Agroforestry Practice Reviewed in Perry County

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

Agroforestry practices are not widely known or practiced throughout Alabama. We like to promote them and highlight their use whenever we have the chance. In September, Richard (Rich) Straight, the Technology Transfer Lead with the USDA's National Agroforestry Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, came to visit Alabama.

Rich had other visits to make in Alabama. While he was here he wanted to visit agroforestry practices in action. I had previously worked with Perry County District Conservationist (DC) Sutton Gibbs and knew of a landowner that had recently converted a pine



(l-r): Tim Albritton, NRCS State Staff Forester; Roy Barnett, landowner; Charles Holmes, SWCD Board; Rich Straight, USDA National Agroforestry Center, Nebraska; Sutton Gibbs, Perry County NRCS DC; and Cedric Hudson, Alabama Forestry Commission.

stand into silvopasture under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The landowner, Roy Barnett, was very pleased with the improvement to his grazing potential using silvopasture.

Rich's visit provided an opportunity for others interested in the silvopasture to come together and review the practice and discuss its many benefits. I presented some information on converting a pine stand to a silvopasture. Eddie Jolley, NRCS Conservation Agronomist; and Brigetta Giles, Forester with the Alabama Forestry Commission, were also present.

We discussed the practices we saw along the way to make sure the stated goals and objectives are being accomplished. It was unanimous; the silvopasture practice is working wonderfully. Everyone agreed that it was a good visit.

Archaeological Investigation in Cleburne County

By Teresa Paglione, Cultural Resources Specialist, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Earth Team volunteers from members of the Alabama Archaeological Society helped determine the nature of several archaeological sites in Cleburne County. Fieldwork was conducted on a September weekend under the supervision of Jason Mann (Troy University archaeologist) and me, along with a dozen undergraduate and graduate students from Auburn and

Troy Universities and friends and neighbors of the landowners.

Several late 19th to early 20th century historic sites are on the landowner's property, including a moonshine still and an old house site with a dug well adjacent to a historic roadbed. In addition, there are several prehistoric sites, two of which were previously recorded.

Perhaps most interesting was the report of an unrecorded bluff shelter (not reported in the ASSF at Moundville). The previous landowner had allowed digging at the shelter decades earlier and artifacts were removed. What kind or how many were not determined.

Two 2-foot square trowel tests were excavated inside the shelter. Three inches were carefully scraped and screened and contained seven flakes, flecks of charcoal, two pieces of graphite, an Etowah Complicated Stamp pottery sherd, and plain sand tempered potsherd. The Etowah Complicated Stamp potsherd clearly indicates that it was used during the Mississippian time period, circa AD 1150–1350. This pottery type is well known from the Etowah mound site located in Cartersville, Georgia.

It seems likely that this Bluff Shelter was used as a campsite in previous time periods, perhaps over thousands of years - or possibly just a hundred years before de Soto and his entourage roamed Alabama and the Southeast looking for gold. Return visits are being considered to further investigate this archaeologically significant site.



Perhaps most interesting on the investigation was the previously unreported bluff shelter (opening is visible behind group).



(l-r) Keith Martin, Tribal Council Member and Billy Smith, Tribal Elder, accept the limited edition print.



Dr. William Puckett (standing) addresses the FAC group.

PBCI Receive Forestry Award

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) received the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award for the South Region at the Alabama Natural Resources Council (ANRC) Awards Banquet on February 8, 2013, in Auburn. This award recognizes the most outstanding TREASURE Forests in Alabama, with respect to their educational value and use.

FAC Meeting

The Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) met in Montgomery on January 24, 2013, to discuss the selection of Alabama as a USDA StrikeForce state for 2013. NRCS, FSA, and RD, will partner with other federal agencies and organizations to provide financial and technical assistance to 22 persistent high-poverty counties in the state. Ben Malone is leading the strike-force effort in Alabama. A plan has been developed and submitted to Washington for approval.



(l-r) David Elliott, Program Analyst/Tribal Liaison, Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI), NRCS, Atmore, AL; Robert Thrower, PBCI Tribal Historic Preservation Officer; Shannon Weaver, Assistant State Conservationist (ASTC)-Technology, NRCS, Auburn, AL; Frank Nalty, Chair, Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee; Dr. William Puckett, State Conservationist, NRCS, Auburn, AL; Michael Martinez, Special Assistant to the Chief, NRCS, Washington, DC; and Steve Musser, ASTC-Programs, NRCS, Auburn, AL.

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

NRCS and other partners and agencies attended the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's first public meeting in December 2012 at the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel, in Mobile, Alabama. The Council will develop and help implement a plan to restore the ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This meeting gave the public a forum to discuss issues with participating state and federal representatives.

Final EWP Sites Completed

By Jessica Mills, Resource Engineer, NRCS, Guntersville, AL

The tornado outbreaks of April 2011, caused sudden impairments of watersheds throughout north and central Alabama. The Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) was implemented in multiple counties to remove debris from streams in order to protect property from flooding and erosion.

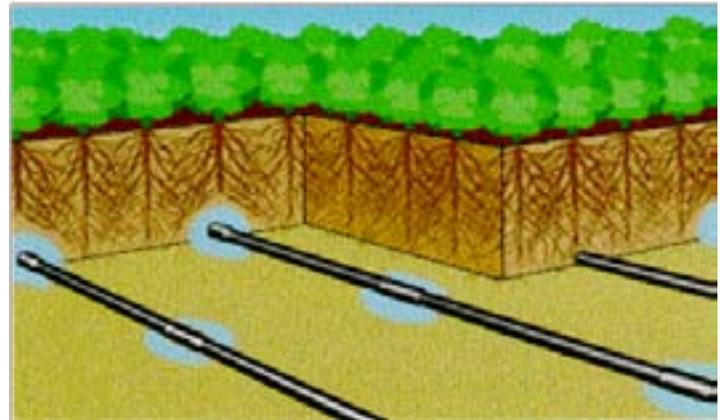
The presence of two endangered snail species was discovered at three of the EWP sites in Limestone County. Debris removal was delayed until a thorough investigation by contracted fish and wildlife experts was completed and delivered to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for review. The armored snail and slender campeloma found on the sites have been on the endangered species list since February 2000.

A plan was mutually drafted by the USFWS and NRCS to remove storm debris while maintaining and protecting the snails' habitat. As with all EWP sites, no equipment was permitted to operate in the stream. At least 20 foot buffers were maintained. Debris was not dragged from the stream, but lifted out of the water instead. Before removing debris, it was shaken over the water allowing snails to detach and drop-off. These precautions allowed for the remediation of blocked waterways without compromising the existence of the two endangered species. The sites were successfully completed on December 4, 2012.



An EWP site after debris was removed.

Slender campeloma were found on three sites.
(photo by Jeff Selby, AST Engineering, Decatur, AL)



Sub-surface irrigation allows precise application of water.

Sub-surface Drip Irrigation Project

By Perry Oakes, State Con Engineer, NRCS, Auburn, AL

Alabama NRCS's first Sub-Surface Drip Irrigation (SSDI) project will be installed in Limestone County, Alabama. SSDI has proven to be successful at Agricultural Experiment Stations throughout the Southeast and is finding its way into fields beyond the experimental phase.

Since Alabama NRCS had limited knowledge of this type system, we required the system design and installation certification to be performed by a Certified Irrigation Designer (CID). Design review assistance was provided by Dr. Hamid Farahani, Water Management Engineer at the East National Technical Service Center; and Randy Odom, NRCS Agricultural Engineer at Moultrie, GA. Dr. John Fulton with Biosystems Engineering at Auburn University also provided SSDI information to NRCS. The approximate 100 acre system will operate in 3 zones with a pump flow rate of just over 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm). The sub-surface tape will be installed using RTK (Real Time Kinematic) guidance technology. The surface water supply will require an extensive sand filter to ensure the water will not clog emitters. The proposed SSDI system is expected to be installed and functioning by the end of the year.

The Bridges of Pickens County

By Fay Garner, PAS, NRCS, Auburn, AL

In November 2012, the Pickens County SWCD/NRCS field office and the state office engineering section, hosted a tour to provide information about two farm

bridges constructed for two landowners through a 2011 pilot program using EQIP financial assistance.

The tour consisted of state office and field staff, District Supervisors, US Fish and Wildlife personnel, local agencies, and landowners.

The first part of the tour began with a presentation given at the Pickens County Service Center, followed by a barbeque lunch. Because of a short time frame, the participants were able to visit only one bridge site; “Cow Creek Ranch” owned by Joy Reznicek.

When Reznicek heard about the bridge program, she signed up to install a wooden bridge across a span where an old culvert-type crossing was located that needed continuous maintenance over the years and was no longer safe to navigate. She said, “We have not been able to harvest forage in the field across the stream because we were unable to get equipment over to it.”

The new practice provided a tremendous learning curve for the Pickens County DC Terry Williams. The pilot program required him to quickly learn the ins and outs of constructing the only NRCS funded wooden bridges built in Alabama. Terry indicated that being the first county to do so took a lot of research and hands-on development. Sometimes, he said, it was a challenge just to locate the materials to meet the strict construction specifications. Some materials were not available locally and had to be mail-ordered. Other materials had to be custom made.

The bridge practice provides an environmentally friendly way to keep livestock and equipment out of the stream when used in a pasture or a crop field situation. The downside of constructing a wooden bridge is the high cost, even with financial assistance. But to the landowners, the cost is worth it because the practice allows accessibility to land that was otherwise landlocked.



The tour group at the new bridge stream crossing at Cow Creek Ranch in Pickens County, AL.

Building Quality Irrigation Reservoirs

By Alberto Atienza-Reyes, Ag Engineer, NRCS, Troy, AL

Irrigation is becoming a more vital part of Alabama agriculture. It not only increases yields, but also increases the probability of a successful crop.

There are two major components in irrigation, a water source and some type of irrigation system to convey water from the water source to the plant.

One type of water source is a storage reservoir which can be used to capture runoff and/or store water pumped from other sources (wells or streams). These storage reservoirs need a site specific evaluation and design depending on water needs and the size of operation. Through the Alabama Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) producers who are struggling to find enough water to irrigate, can apply for technical and financial assistance from NRCS to construct irrigation reservoirs.

Many factors are to be considered in the design of a quality reservoir. They include topography of the area, soils, drainage area, rainfall data, land slope, ground cover, reservoir storage, and construction materials. Soils are most important because they will determine if the reservoir will hold water or not.

The first thing needed to build a quality reservoir is a good engineering design that evaluates all of these factors. Designs include a set of drawings, construction specifications, and operation and maintenance guidance. NRCS and professional engineers have been developing such designs for AWEP.

Once designed, a qualified contractor must construct the reservoir. The compaction and borrow material selection are critical for a successful project. A qualified inspector is needed in critical stages of the project to ensure the quality and placement of materials.



AWEP pond being constructed in Coffee County, AL.

From the Field

County Land Judging Contests

Lauderdale County SWCD/NRCS held their Annual Land Judging Contest on Lawrence Smith's farm on County Road 222 in November 2012. The four schools participating were Lauderdale County, Lexington, Rogers, and Florence Freshman High Schools (HS). Florence Freshman won first place and will compete at the District level.



Mr. Smith hosted teachers and students from participating schools for the land judging contest.



Florence Freshman wins contest. (l-r) Matt Ball, Teacher; Brenda Hand, Lauderdale Co. DAC; student Josh Pannel; Lawrence Smith, District Supervisor; and students Brandon Rieff, Shelby Atwood and Jacob Graham.



Pleasant Home School

By Patricia Gable, District Educational Specialist, SWCD, Andalusia, AL.

NRCS/SWCS staff led a hands-on lesson with 2nd graders at Pleasant Home School. They created and labeled the parts of a tree and then discussed the importance of trees and the forest habitat.

Andress Accepts Award for Her Father

At a recent Franklin County Farm-City Banquet, Sharon Andress, Conservation Program Manager, NRCS, Russellville, AL, accepted an award inducting her father, Thomas Harbin, into the Franklin County Agriculture Hall of Fame. He is a former Vice-Chair of the Franklin County SWCD.



(l-r) Jack Hargett, FCSWCD Board member and FC Cattleman director; Orland Britnell, FC Cattleman director; Frank Mitchell, FCSWCD Board Member and FC Cattleman director; Sharon Andress, NRCS employee and daughter of Thomas Harbin; Greg Smith, FC Cattleman director; Jimmy Murphree, FCSWCD Board Chairman, and David Welborn, FCSWCD board member.

Blount County held their contest at the Jerry Marsh Farm in October 2012. Five teams competed: Appalachian, Cleveland, J.B. Pennington, Locust Fork, and Susan Moore High Schools. Holly Pond HS from Cullman County joined the competition as a warm up for their county contest the following week.

Conecuh Farm-City Conservation Appreciation Luncheon

Conservation partners joined forces as the Conecuh Farmers Federation, SWCD/NRCS, and Midroc Corporation hosted a Farm-City luncheon in December 2012, at the Old Depot in downtown Evergreen. The luncheon helps promote partnership and provides information to local community leaders and representatives. It also serves as a way of saying thank you for the continued support of the mission of the SWCD/NRCS.

At least 56 people gathered for the luncheon. We were honored to have Alabama Representatives Harry Shiver and Charles Newton to join us. In addition, local leaders such as the County Commissioners, Evergreen Kiwanis Club members, Alabama Cattlemen, and Evergreen City representatives attended.

Ron Shumack, Chairman of the Conecuh SWCD, welcomed the crowd and made introductions. An invocation was offered by local minister Rev. Wayne Nevlous. Alabama Farmers Federation Governmental and Agricultural Programs Director Mitt Walker addressed the crowd during the luncheon. He gave a briefing of the Farm Bill, its purpose, and how funding is broken down in the Bill by percentages.

During lunch, served by local caterer June Stinson, the group interacted with leadership and partners that attended.

The District values the partnerships of everyone with whom we work.

The group is welcomed to the meeting.



Students from participating Blount County, AL, teams.

The Blount County SWCD furnished lunch for the teams at Locust Fork Park. After eating and a short time of fellowship, the group went to the Jerry Marsh Farm to judge four sites: forestland, pastureland, home site, and cropland.

At the cropland site, the teams had visitors, a nearby yellow jacket nest. Thank goodness they were friendly.

With the help of employees from Blount County SWCD/ NRCS, and the Alabama Forestry Commission, the contest went smoothly.

The Blount County SWCD/ NRCS gives out thanks to Jerry Marsh for hosting the competition, District 4 Commissioner Waymon Pitts and the Blount County Commission for preparing the competition sites; and NRCS Resource Conservationist Tracy Cole for judging the competition.



Cleveland HS (pictured) finished first, Appalachian HS second, and Locust Fork HS third.

North Region Forestry Field Day

By Jimmy Tucker, Soil Con Tech, NRCS, Oneonta, AL

The North Region Forestry Field Day was held in October 2012, at Mountain Shadows Farms in Blountsville. Jerry Jones Sr. and Jerry Jones, Jr. welcomed everyone to their beautiful wildlife farm.

The field day event began when guests were transported by trailers to four teaching stations. The first station was "Native Grass and Wildlife" presented by Jim Schrenkel, Certified Wildlife Biologist, working with the NRCS. The second station was "Wetland Management" covering Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resource Management presented by Andrew Baril, Regional Extension Agent. The third station was "Timber Management for Wildlife Issues" presented by Jonathon Bartlett, Wildlife Biologist, Alabama Department of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. The fourth station was "Invasive Species" presented by Dr. Nancy Loewenstein, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University (AU) and Dr. Stephen Enloe, Assistant Professor of Agronomy and Soils, Weed Management Extension Specialist, Invasive Plant Specialist, AU.

After rotating through all the stations, guests were transported back to the main tent where they spent time with vendors and enjoyed a Whisker's Catfish lunch provided by the Blount County Natural Resources Planning Committee (NRPC).

Following lunch, Merry Gaines, NRCS DC, introduced Allen Varner with the Alabama Forestry Commission. Varner made presentations and the following awards: Stewardship Forests, TREASURE Forests, Tree Farm, Outstanding Planning Committee, and the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award.

Vendors and sponsors provided door prizes for the 130 attendees. The Blount County NRPC organized the event with leadership from the Alabama Natural Resources Council, Alabama Forever Forest Foundation, and the Alabama Tree Farm Committee.



(l-r) Drs. Stephen Enloe and Nancy Loewenstein explains different types of invasive plants and how to control them.

Cultural Resource Meeting

Wendy Smith, American Indian/ Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program Manager, hosted a Cultural Resource meeting in December 2012 in Montgomery.

Information was offered to NRCS employees about Indian Heritage.



Dream catcher winners (l-r) Erika first place and Louis second place.

A dream catcher contest was held for all NRCS employees who wished to participate. First place with four hours time off went to Erika Justiniano-Velez, Agricultural Engineer, Grove Hill, AL; and second place of two hours time off went to Luis Cruz-Arroyo, DC, Jackson, AL.

Erika said, "It is difficult to do dream catchers, especially working with sinew, beads, and feathers, they get everywhere. But I had a great time working with it. Luis even carved a cemi out of wood!" (The cemi represents the Taino's religion and gods. The Taino Indians were the indigenous people in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.)

Counties Join Forces For Fair Booth

By Renea Dyer, DC, NRCS, Lauderdale County, AL

SWCS/NRCS from Lauderdale, Franklin, and Colbert Counties teamed up to host a booth at the Northwest Alabama State Fair in September 2012. The booth was staffed the entire week to answer questions and let the community know what we do. This year, we used a national soils display. The display was three dimensional and could be seen on both sides to give the community an idea of how important our soils are. We gave away lots of informational brochures on various topics in both English and Spanish. We potentially reached more than 1,000 customers over the week-long event.





Deborah Widner Named Outstanding Employee of the Year

By Wesley Halbrooks, Program Assistant, NRCS, Decatur, AL

During the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts' Area One Annual Meeting in Madison County, Chairman Charles Butler of the Madison County SWCD recognized Deborah Widner as the Alabama Association of Conservation District Outstanding Employee of the Year.

Deborah is the Cullman County SWCD Certified District Administrative Coordinator. She started working for the district in 1998 as an Assistant District Administrative Coordinator. In 2005, she was promoted to District Administrative Coordinator, and in 2010 she completed training as a Certified District Administrative Coordinator.

Deborah has served as Treasurer of the Southeast District Employees Association, Area I Director, and chairperson of the Association Director-Handbook Committee for the Alabama Conservation District Employees Association, and on additional committees. She is on the planning committee for the Cullman County Ground Water Festival and is the treasurer for the Cullman Forestry Planning Committee.

Farming Field Day in Morgan County

By Summer Stidham, SWCD Education Coordinator, Morgan County, AL

Where does our food come from? Just ask the 700 third grade students that attended Farm Field Day, at the Morgan County Celebration Arena in Decatur in November 2012. The students visited several



Amanda Griffith, with Southwest Dairy Farmers, uses the Mobile Dairy Classroom, a traveling milking parlor, to demonstrate how to milk a real cow. She describes how milk goes from the farm to consumers. She answered questions from the audience. This is an innovative program that brings the dairy experience directly to children.

educational stations where they learned the basics of farming and how it results in food at their lunch room table.

This Farm Field Day featured education on cotton, forestry, aquaculture, dairy cattle, beef cattle, poultry, farm equipment, bees, horticulture, and horses. Participating organizations were Morgan County Extension, Limestone County Beekeepers Association, Southwest Dairy Farmers Mobile Dairy Classroom, Hartselle High School FFA, and The Haystackers 4-H Horse Club.

The field trip and transportation was free to students. The event was organized by Summer Stidham, Education Coordinator with MSWCD and was sponsored by the Morgan County Environmental Education Foundation, Morgan County Farmers Federation, Morgan County Cooperative Extension System, and Alabama Farmers Co-Op, and the Morgan County State Products Mart Board.



Local sheep farmer Curt Stidham introduced the students to his sheep "Nacho" and her twin lambs.

Outreach News from Alice Love



Jewell Bean (r) is proud of her greens crop grown in her hoop house installed using financial assistance through EQIP. Victor Kahn (l), Tuskegee University Horticulturist/Plant Breeder, and advisor to producer looks on. This is the second harvest in a year.



A conservation partner stakeholder meeting was held in Montgomery to discuss targeting small farmers with interest in organic cropping systems.



At a workshop held at Thomas Oliver Farm in Randolph County, Alabama, Eddie May (l), Executive Director, Coosa Valley RC&D, demonstrates planter adjustments. Victor Kahn (r), talked about various crops suitable for hoop house production. Conservation practices were planned/installed through a farm plan that was developed by Oliver and former DC, Craig Johnson, who has since relocated to Linden.



2012 Forestry and Natural Resources Council partnership meeting was held at the Kellogg Conference Center at Tuskegee University.



Victor Kahn (r), conducts onsite training on the fundamentals of Seasonal High Tunnel production and maintenance in Randolph County, AL.



Zackery Hayes (l), Soil Scientist, Normal, Alabama, shares work experiences with students within the College of Agriculture at Tuskegee University. He achieved career work experiences through summer internships with USDA Forestry Service and NRCS. He emphasized how summer internships can result in a career conditional/permanent appointment upon graduation.



(top) USDA-NRCS Regional Conservationist Leonard Jordan speaks to participants at the 2012 Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) in Tuskegee, AL.

(bottom l-r) USDA-NRCS panel at 2012 PAWC: Ronald Harris, USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach; James Tillman, Georgia State Conservationist; Dr. William Puckett, Alabama State Conservationist; Ann English, South Carolina State Conservationist; Terry Cosby, Ohio State Conservationist; and Leonard Jordan, NRCS Regional Conservationist.



Tuskegee College of Agriculture and Extension Staff work with producers to form a Small Farmers Cooperative.



Don Nelson, NRCS DC for Barbour County, AL, informs field day participants of the Farm Bill status relating to Fiscal Year 2013 USDA-NRCS programs.



Coosa Valley RC&D hosts Outreach Information Meeting at White Oak Vineyards in Anniston, AL.



Eddie Jolley, NRCS Conservation Agronomist, hosts a preplanning meeting with partners to discuss recommended changes to woodland grazing criteria.



(l-r) Dr. William Puckett and Duane Andrews-Alabama NRCS-presented Small Farmer of the Year Award to Richard and Prentella Smith.

The Smiths applied for and received financial assistance through NRCS to install conservation practices such as micro-irrigation, a water well, a seasonal high tunnel (or hoop house), and an organic activity plan.

Richard was very appreciative of the Small Farmer of the Year Award and the help he has received from NRCS. He said, "I appreciate the NRCS staff in Marengo County, they have always been very helpful. They are always willing to try and help with my farming needs. Some of the goals for my farming operation could not have been met without them."



NRCS STC Presents at Kiwanis Club

In November 2012, NRCS State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett (l) was asked by retired NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Morris Gillespie (r) to speak to the Kiwanis in Auburn. Dr. Puckett talked about the programs and services offered by NRCS. The attendees appreciated the visit and the presentation was well received.

AL 2013 Small Farmer Of the Year

Richard Smith of Marengo County was named the Alabama NRCS 2013 Small Farmer of the Year. An engraved clock was presented to him and his wife, Prentella, by Dr. William Puckett at the Federation of Southern Cooperative's 45th Annual Meeting at their Training Center in Epes, Alabama.

The Smith's are recognized as good stewards of the land and are a value to their community. On their 190 acre farm they grow watermelons, purple hull peas, okra, and other vegetables. Through the family business they have employed community high school students who desire to learn the agricultural business. The extra hands also help the Smiths provide the local community with fresh locally-grown produce.

National Small Farmer of the Year

Earl and Charisse Snell of Dale County, Alabama, received the 2012 National Lloyd Wright Small Farmer of the Year award during the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) meeting in Jackson, Mississippi, in December 2012.

Lloyd Wright, who founded NOPBNRCSE and is the namesake of the award, presented the Snell's with an engraved silver bowl.

The Snell's were selected as the 2011 Alabama Small Farmer's of the Year for their environmental stewardship, innovations, and community leadership.



(l-r) Lloyd Wright presents Earl and Charisse Snell with the 2012 National Lloyd Wright Small Farmer of the Year award.

NRCSer Receives Local Recognition

Our very own Kathy Gotcher, NRCS DC in Lawrence County, Alabama, and her family received the 2012 Colbert County Extension "Farm Family of the Year Award" during National Farm-City Week.

As lifelong residents of Colbert County, Alabama, this award shows they have deep roots in agriculture. I am sure that Kathy's conservation knowledge helped the family sustain the award-winning farm.

Her experience also allows her to work closely with farmers and ranchers in Colbert County. Way to go Kathy and family!

(l-r) Henry, Will, Marc, Ben, Kathy, and Danny McWilliams, ACES coordinator, Colbert County, AL.



Personnel

Promotions

Zackery Hayes, Soil Scientist, Huntsville, 2/24/13

Jesi King, Soil Conservation Technician, Auburn, 1/13/13

Codie Yelverton, Soil Conservationist, Livingston, 1/27/13

Darnae Hopkins, Soil Scientist, Auburn, 2/10/13

Michelle Floyd, Soil Conservationist, Jackson, 7/29/12

Jessica Cleveland, Soil Conservation Technician, Athens, 9/9/12

Alexander Johnson, Soil Conservationist, Alex City, 8/12/12

Adam Threatt, Soil Conservation Technician, Troy, 8/26/12

Term Appointment

Daniel Collins, Soil Conservation Technician, Andalusia, 12/2/12

Daniel B. Dearmon, Soil Conservation Technician, Mobile, 12/16/12

Reassignment

Youlanda Caudle, HR Specialist, BMLP/Huntsville, 9/23/12

Jimmy Lewis, HR Specialist, BMLP/Bessemer, 9/23/12

Ebony Ricks, HR Specialist, BMLP/Bessemer, 9/23/12

Marshall Colburn, Soil Conservation Technician, Mobile/Greensboro, 11/18/12

Edgar Mersiovsky, Soil Scientist, Auburn, 10/21/12

Crystal Blackburn, Contracting Officer, Auburn/NHQ, 10/7/12

Jared Worthington, Soil Conservation Technician, Greensboro/Montana, 11/18/12

Demetris Johnson, Soil Conservationist, Ozark/Troy, 12/16/12

Jimmy Lewis, HR Specialist, Bessemer/Ohio, 2/24/13

Charlie McAlpine, Reassignment, Outreach Coordinator, Auburn, 1/27/13

Wesley Halbrooks, Reassignment, Program Assistant Huntsville/Auburn, 2/24/13

Joe Frank Cochran, Reassignment, Soil Conservationist, Bay Minette/Brewton, 9/23/12

Resignation

Leslie Nalty, Admin Clerk, Auburn, 9/13/12

Termination

Alden Harris, Admin Clerk, Auburn, 9/24/12

Retirement

Randy Hale, District Conservationist, Troy, 10/3/12

Leon Wages, Soil Conservation Technician, Andalusia, 10/3/12

Robert Beaty, Soil Conservationist (Easement), Auburn, 10/31/12

Linda McGraw, Office Management Assistant, Bessemer, 12/29/12

Betty Walker, Secretary, Auburn, 12/31/12

Bennie Moore, District Conservationist, Luverne, 1/3/13

Carl Pennington, Resource Conservationist, Grove Hill, 1/3/13

Susie Daniel, Secretary, Auburn, 12/31/12

In Sympathy

John Fuller, retired Technician from DeKalb County, Alabama, passed away on November 18, 2012. He was 82 years old.