



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, D.C. 20013

---

June 28, 2004

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 260-4-20

SUBJECT: INF – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Purpose. To distribute the April – June issue of Current Developments.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2004.

Attached is the April – June 2004 issue of Current Developments with a slightly different format. The July – August issue of Current Developments will be posted on the website. More information about the Current Development Website will be forthcoming.

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Attachment

DIST: AE



## **Minnesota NRCS Current Developments**

**April/May/June 2004**

---

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

375 Jackson Street, Suite 600, St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

**Our Mission:** The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

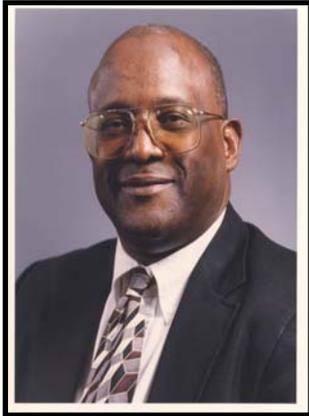
**Our Vision:** Harmony between people and the land.

*Source: USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service Online. National Website.*

### **In This Issue:**

<b>State Conservationist's Message.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> Annual Ladies Night.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Safety and Health.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Networking .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Digital Camera Tips and Pictures.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Spring Digital Camera Pictures.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Jottings from Julie MacSwain, PAS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cinco de Mayo .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2004 Civil Servant of the Year Award .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Package of Encouragement .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Afraid of Public Speaking?.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Notable Quotes.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Federal Women's Program Report.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WesMin RC&amp;D Council New Owners of Smokey Timbers Youth Camp.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>AREA 1.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>AREA 2.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>AREA 3.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>AREA 4.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>AREA 5.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>AREA 6.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREA 7.....</b>	<b>18</b>

## State Conservationist – William Hunt



Over the last few months our MN NRCS employees and conservation partners have been busily preparing conservation plans, contracts and implementing various NRCS programs. This has required extra time and effort on the part of each and every one of you. This extra effort has brought forth conservation accomplishments all over our Minnesota landscape.

Minnesota served as the National CSP training host for the June 7 – 10, 2004 training session in Bloomington, Minnesota. Close to 500 people from all over the United States participated in this worthwhile training sessions. Employees who attended the session are excited with the program and are looking forward to the first roll out for CSP in Minnesota.

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) will begin its signup July 6<sup>th</sup> through July 30, 2004. The Blue Earth River Watershed which encompasses Minnesota and Iowa was one of 18 selected watersheds in the country to roll out CSP during FY 2004. CSP will be a success in Minnesota and this will be due in part to our NRCS employees and conservation partnership working together.

I encourage you as employees to become more familiar with the information that can be obtained on my.nrcs website. This web site will be the place where new information for NRCS will be unveiled.

Enjoy your summertime in Minnesota. I do hope that you can take the time to enjoy the resources and activities which are plentiful throughout Minnesota.

*April 22, 2004-Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Bruce Knight from Washington DC, William Hunt, State Conservationist, Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist (Farm Bill), and others prepare to celebrate Earth Day at the Glacial Ridge project, east of Crookston.*



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Hunt".

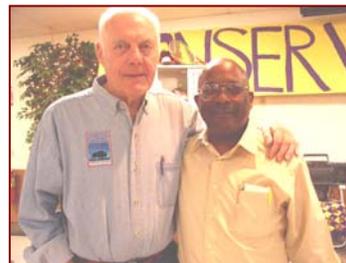
William Hunt  
State Conservationist

## ◆◆◆ 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Ladies Night – Join the Conservation Team! ◆◆◆

WesMin RC&D helped sponsor the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Ladies Night in April for close to 450 ladies in Wahpeton, North Dakota. The Conservation Team, made up of the Richland SWCD and the Wilkin SWCD, thanked all of the sponsors for *showing their interest in the conservation of all our natural resources for future generations.*

Former Viking Head Coach, Bud Grant, shown here with William Hunt, served as the motivation speaker.

Ladies Night has provided the venue for name recognition in the arena of conservation. This special outreach activity has made the general public aware of the various conservation partners in North Dakota and Minnesota.



## Safety and Health

*By Laurie Otte, State Safety and Health Officer – State Office*

Please welcome the 2004 Safety and Health committee members

- Area 1 – Debra Walchuk
- Area 2 – Darlene Drayana
- Area 3 – Michael Walczynski
- Area 4 – Michael Vasquez
- Area 5 – Paul Bridgland
- Area 6 – Randall Nelson
- Area 7 – Thomas Steger

The committee provides us with safety and health bulletins and keeps Area staff current on their training requirements.

## Networking – “*Some Secrets for Personal and Professional Success*”

*condensed by Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist*

► **Focus on people as they are introduced** to you so that you remember their name and who they are. People don't always care how much you know, but they know how much you care by the way you listen.

► **Be gracious and courteous** to everyone you meet. Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy.

► **Receive and give acknowledgments daily.** The people who are successful are those who are grateful for everything they have.

► **Ask for and use the support of others.** You were born into a sea of life existing in harmony with others. You usually do things best when you do them with others, in cooperation, mutual trust, joy and satisfaction.

## Digital Camera Tips and Pictures

*By Julie MacSwain, Public Affair Specialist*

Looking for a source of simple digital photo composition rules? Then this web site may be of possible interest to you. <http://www.bobbrooke.com/DigitalStudio/simplecomprules.htm>. Looking for a source of digital glossary information? Then this web site may be of possible interest to you. <http://www.bobbrooke.com/DigitalStudio/glossaryofterms.htm>

### Spring Digital Camera Pictures

**April 22, 2004-** *Earth Day at Hidden Falls Park in St. Paul. The State Office partnered with Harding High School, St. Paul Park and Recreation, and the Farm Service Agency. Cutrina Moreland was Chair of this Earth Day activity.*



**May 11, 2004-** *Brett Coleman and Bill Lorenzen from the State Office drove through this dust storm west of Willmar in May.*

### Jottings from Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist

Over the last several months, various articles have been posted on the MN NRCS Web site as well as on national NRCS web site for NRCS Today. As an employee of NRCS if you know of any possible news worthy items please let Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist, know at the NRCS State office. Contact Julie via email at: [Julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov](mailto:Julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov) or call Julie at 651-602-7859.

### Cinco de Mayo

*By Contessa Garcia, Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager*



Cinco de Mayo celebrates the anniversary of Mexico's *Battle of Puebla* in 1862, when a small Mexican army defeated the larger, better-equipped invading French forces. Although the defeat wasn't long-lived, festivities are still held throughout the country celebrating this defeat. The West Side of St. Paul held their annual Cinco de Mayo celebrations May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendar for next year's celebration in May.

## **2004 Civil Servant of the Year Award**

**Robert Marthaler, *Civil Engineering Technician, Pipestone, MN***



Mr. Marthaler has dedicated 40 years of his life to the USDA's NRCS. He has been instrumental in promoting, designing and installing conservation practices on farm fields across Southwestern Minnesota. When local landowners have resource concerns on their farms, they put Bob's expertise to work in fixing the problem. Bob's complete service that he provides to the people he serves has been impressive. In today's fast paced world it's easy to provide canned solutions to problems, however Bob does not. He spends time with the people, on the farm, viewing the resource concern first hand, and hearing their concerns. He provides valuable advice and long-term solutions. When Bob completes a project you can trust that it will be done right and the landowner will be satisfied with the final result.

**John Brach, *State Conservation Engineer, State Office, St. Paul, MN***

John Brach oversaw the construction of a \$9.7 million flood control project by supervising staff, coordinating design, contracting and inspection. Brach has encouraged diverse individuals in 4 locations to work together to implement solutions. When a design deficiency was identified during construction, the candidate took immediate action; revised plans were prepared within a two-week period, preventing any construction delays.

This year the agency was directed to complete competitive sourcing studies. The candidate was chair of the largest study in the state with 10 contracts covering 80 staff years. All of the positions were retained within the agency. John Brach is praised by the engineering staff for sound advice, and quick response with real leadership in engineering issues, excelling in both technical and managerial duties.



**Lawrence J. Svien, *Area Resource Conservationist, Rochester, MN***



Mr. Svien's initiative and extra efforts was one of the reasons that NRCS in Minnesota led the entire Midwest with the total number of farm bill program dollars invested in conservation and natural resources for 2003. He provided technical guidance to the 11 southeast counties of Minnesota to develop and/or implement conservation practices on 3500 federal contracts with individual farmers through six (6) different farm bill programs. He provided excellent support to management in working with non-federal sources which assisted NRCS in providing technical assistance to farmers throughout the private sector Technical Service Providers (TSPs) as a new initiative for the agency which is part of President Bush's Management Initiatives. Clients and conservation partners speak highly of Larry Svien and support they receive from him.

## Package of Encouragement

By Carl Dunblazier, Marshall Area Office

Area 5 partners recently shipped *packages of encouragement* to soldiers serving with the military in Iraq. One of our partner employees and a close relative of theirs had been deployed to Iraq in February. To show support and gratitude, Area 5 employees assembled a collection point and began donation items needed or desired by these two individuals. Items donated included books, skin and eye care items, non-perishable food items, playing cards, craft items, sports items (deflated basketball, football, Frisbee & softball), magazines, and beanie babies. Donations also paid most of the shipping costs. To date, four boxes of approximately 12 pounds each have been shipped to these two. Response to this effort has been good with many people commenting that this is a patriotic gesture and that it, "means a lot to those people." If you would like to start a *package of encouragement* in your office, contact Cal Dunblazier in the Marshall Area office for details.



## Afraid of Public Speaking? Read this!

What is the Number One Fear of Adults living in the Western World?

Strange as it may seem to you, what human beings fear more than death is public speaking! Most people believe that talking in front of a group provides one of the greatest opportunities for humiliation. Most of us are simply afraid of saying the wrong thing and maybe making fools of ourselves. However, we all admire those who can confidently get up in front of large gatherings, and talk without notes, as though the situation were a one-to-one conversation. The fact is we are **all** capable of developing better skills at public speaking. We can **all** be more confident and effective in communicating our ideas to a group; however, this can only happen if we are willing and able to practice.

We all remember situations where we aren't sure what to say. It's embarrassing to be speechless. The stress of the position we are in often makes it hard to concentrate. Sometimes we try so hard to remember everything we want to cover that we end up forgetting everything.

In NRCS field offices, area offices and certainly in the state office, there are plenty of opportunities to hone our skills at public speaking. When presented with the opportunity of saying something do your best to consider giving it a try!

## Notable Quotes

*It is not strange that we fear most that which never happens; that we destroy our initiative by the fear of defeat; when in reality, defeat is a most useful tonic and should be accepted as such?*

**- Napoleon Hill**

*The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.*

**- George Bernard Shaw**

## Federal Women's Program Report

By Sandy Jerzak, FWPM



I'm happy to report that someone made use of the Ann Bancroft foundation grant information that I sent out earlier. Mary Reetz sent in an application and was recently notified that the Ann Bancroft foundation approved funding this applicants' request. So it can happen!!!! Be a mentor and encourage girls to take a chance in capturing their dream by checking into the Ann Bancroft foundation.

<http://www.annbancroft foundation.org/dtdgrants.html>

▲ We had ten NRCS employees attend the Federal Executive Board Diversity Day on May 25, 2004 at the St. Thomas University campus. (Sitting left to right: Cynthia Morales, Sandy Jerzak, and Curtina Moreland. Standing left to right: Mao Thao, Laurie Otte, and Susan Glende. Picture taken by Karin Nordling. Missing from photo are John Nicholson, Steven Cole and Karen Mueller). The FWP budget paid for their registration.

The FWP committee had a meeting the day before the Diversity Day to review our business plan, committee member terms, recruitment activities, career coaching/mentoring, promotion opportunities etc. Sandy shared information from the Special Emphasis Program Managers and EEO training. We discussed area activities that need to be included in the FWP Annual Report. Steve Cole reported on the Ladies Night Out event. The Women Land Stewardship Meeting is in July and the SW Women's Day will be in September.

I recently received The Willmar – Conference for Women brochure presented by SkillPath@Seminars. This will be held on August 9 at the Kandi Entertainment Center in Willmar. Check on-line <http://www.skillpath.com/onsite/SemDetail.html?ST=CONW> If you are interested, contact me. A special training request (MN-PER-025) would need to be approved and perhaps the FWP or Joe Wiltsey training budget could pay the enrollment fee.

## WesMin RC&D Council New Owners of Smokey Timbers Youth Camp

Dean Schmidt, WesMin RC

What seems like the impossible has finally been achieved!! WesMin RC&D Council has been working on a very difficult project to purchase a youth camp previously owned by the Land of Lakes Girl Scout Council in St. Cloud. The Camp had been donated to the local girl scouts by a farm family in 1958. The Land of Lakes Girl Scout Council, for financial reasons, had decided to sell the camp. Numerous local girl scout leaders, lake association members, and other youth supporters petitioned WesMin RC&D to help save the camp.

*View of Lake Miltona at Smokey Timbers Youth Camp. ►*



The camp sits along beautiful Lake Miliona, a pristine fishing and recreational lake located north of Alexandria. Like many lake shore properties, with its 21 acres of woods and shoreline, it was destined to become just another property development.

WesMin RC&D entered into the picture with the thought of assisting the Land of Lakes Girl Scout Council to keep the camp for the girl scouts by writing grants to improve the camp. Instead the property was put up for bids, and WesMin decided to take on the very huge challenge of raising funds and bidding on the entire property. WesMin place a contingent bid on the property for \$566,000. They were then given time to raise funds and write grants to try to purchase the property without using council operating funds. WesMin, working with volunteers and support groups in the area, completed approximately a one year long fundraising campaign to purchase the camp. They were nearing the deadline of May 1 with nearly \$300,000 left to raise. Over \$250,000 had been raised from fundraising events, raffles, pancake feeds, and private donations. It did not appear that the goal would be met, so the citizens redoubled their efforts and a anonymous donor donated nearly \$300,000 to finalize the purchase of the camp a couple of weeks before the deadline.

WesMin is happy to announce that on April 28, 2004 at 1 p.m., WesMin RC&D Council closed on the property, purchasing it from the Land of Lakes Girl Scout Council. Not only does WesMin own the camp but they also received a \$250,000 grant from a Foundation to make improvements and help operate the camp for the first two years. Sheila Barsness was recently commended by the Council for her efforts on this project. For a RC&D council to raise this amount in this short period of time and to actually purchase property to be used for youth, environmental learning, and camping is unique. Very few councils own property this valuable or have raised this large amount of money in this short period of time. This project is a great achievement. Thanks to the many volunteers, partners, citizens, and sponsors of the project.

## News from the Field

### **AREA 1**

*Glen Kajewski, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*

#### New Employees to the Area:

**Krystal Leonhardt** is a new SCT located in the Bemidji Field Office. Krystal's position is shared between Beltrami, Hubbard and Clearwater Counties.

**Michael Douglas** started work as a Student Trainee in the Bemidji Field Office in May. Michael is working on his degree from the University of Minnesota – Crookston.

**Ron Spiering** started his tenure as a Soil Conservationist Student Trainee on May 17. He has one year of college left at U of M Crookston, majoring in Natural Resources w/ Water Resources Emphasis.

**Russ Kleinschmidt** began as a Student Trainee in Crookston in Mid May. Russ is also a student at U of M- Crookston.

**Jayne Mork** is a student trainee at the Red Lake Falls field office. A native of Wisconsin, Jane is pursuing her 4 year degree at the U of M- Crookston.

**RC&D News-** Pembina Trail RC&D completed the Dead Animal Project. Seven truckloads were collected and hauled to the rendering facility in Blue Earth. Composting of dead animal mortalities is being done on one dairy farm and one dairy operation.

Pembina Trail RC&D is cosponsoring an organic tour on June 23rd. Stops will be made on several organic farms. One of the stops is the compost plots that Pembina Trail RC&D has with grant assistance from the Minnesota Department of Ag.

**Local Food System Assessment** – Giziibii RC&D received a Minnesota Department of Agriculture grant administered through the Minnesota Association of Resource Conservation & Development. These funds were used to host a listening session in April 2004 with local food system stakeholders in the Giziibii RC&D region. This session will provide a baseline to identify what barriers exist to the expansion of sales of local foods in the local food system. The outcome of this session will be a strategy to strengthen the local food system. Meat producers, truck farmers, food processors, food distributors, consumers and others interested in the local food system were invited to the listening session. Follow-up meetings were held in May and June to further develop strategies.

**Goods from the Woods** – Giziibii RC&D is again partnering with the Blandin Foundation and several other partners to host the second annual “Goods from the Woods” event promoting special forest products. This year’s event will include many workshops on alternative forest product topics starting on June 8<sup>th</sup> and going through September 10<sup>th</sup>. Training sessions will culminate in a two-day marketplace where special forest product craftsmen can showcase and sell their products. Giziibii RC&D is serving as fiscal agent for the project.

The Goods from the Woods organizing committee is again utilizing the Giziibii RC&D’s “Special Forest Products” web site to advertise their event. More information is available at: [www.specialforestproducts.com](http://www.specialforestproducts.com)

In 2003, Giziibii RC&D worked with the “Goods from the Woods” planning committee to host a 2-day workshop and product marketing forum. The 1st annual “Goods from the Woods” conference was held in the fall of 2003 in Grand Rapids. Saturday events included workshops on everything from sap collecting and sustainable harvesting to marketing products from the forest. Over 150 people attended the hands-on workshops. Sunday events included a marketplace showcasing over 125 wood crafters, artisans and service providers. Demonstrations, storytelling and music were scheduled throughout the day. Over 2000 people attended the 2003 event. This year’s event is expected to be even more successful.



◀ *Sand Hill Cranes at Glacial Ridge Project*

**Outreach activities:**

The Bemidji Field Office has developed another EQIP contract with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa for the amount of \$181,000 (pending Regional Conservationist approval). The contract incorporates forest management, water quality and grazing management components.

The education season is here again! DC Johnsrud has given presentations at the Hubbard county Freshwater Festival, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Education Day, served as a judge at the Area 1 Envirothon, along with a couple presentations to Park Rapids high school classes on soils.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> NRCS, Hubbard County Extension, MN DNR Wildlife, and MN DNR Forestry conducted a Wildlife Food Plot workshop. This workshop was well attended with approximately 50 landowners and a number of vendors in attendance. The workshop focused on the technical aspect of designing and installing both annual and perennial food plots, fertility, site

preparation, and the down side of having food plots (drawing too many animals) in populated areas. This workshop has resulted in 8 to 10 field visits for DC Johnsrud as well as numerous other contacts for the other presenters. The consensus was that this has been a very successful event!

## **AREA 2**

*James R. Ayres, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*

### PERSONNEL:

**Richard Berscheid** is now the Soil Conservationist Trainee in Todd County. Rick hails from the Long Prairie area and is attending Southwest State at Marshall.

Area II was successful in filling our Grazing Specialist Position, scheduled to be located in the Detroit Lakes Field Office. **Mark Hayek**, currently an SCT at the Roseau FO, will begin his new duties on July 25<sup>th</sup>, serving the needs of livestock producers of both Areas I & II. Welcome to Area II, Mark!

**William Marken** was recently selected to become Area II's new GIS Specialist. Bill starts his new duties on July 12<sup>th</sup>. Welcome to Area II, Bill!

### CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES:

Most Area II SWCD's are reporting excellent tree planting season's as the spring started off extremely dry and most Districts got their trees planted in record time. Traverse County wrapped up over 50 tree plantings, Todd County reports 43 different sites planted and Grant County SWCD finished planting trees about 2 weeks early thanks to a dry April and May, totaling over 57,000 trees. Wilkin County SWCD is busy installing fabric on over 24 miles of field and farmstead windbreaks.

District Conservationist Bob Koltjes reports that CCRP signup has slowed to a crawl now that average cash rent rates exceed CRP payments by \$10-\$15/acre on average.

EQIP-EQIP-EQIP. Most of the spring time was spent discussing the EQIP program with landowners and taking and evaluating their applications. All Area II Offices are "looking for" additional EQIP dollars. Every FO in Area II did an excellent job of encumbering their County allocated funds and we currently have over \$2 million of additional unfunded contract requests. Many landowners in west central Minnesota have fully utilized the incentive practices comprised of no-till, mulch till, residue management, organic farming and nutrient management.

Jeff Lepp reports that the Fergus Falls FO has been busy processing 54 EQIP applications this spring, requesting more than \$640,500 in cost share requests.

Wetland problems and issues just don't go away. Morrison County is currently addressing WCA wetland violations with five cease and desist orders and five additional restoration orders.

John Voz and Bob Usgaard continue to do a good job of signing up landowners into the WRP program. Both were recently at our St. Paul State Office making sure all of the available WRP money was being used for approved contracts.

Crow Wing County staff continues to shepherd efforts to start a much needed soil survey for their County. Numerous meetings have been held and attended, including a hearing with the LCMR Commission and staff.

Steve Lutes has been assisting the Glenwood FO to set up manure application demonstrations for the Westport Field Day scheduled for August 12<sup>th</sup>. Steve is busy with the calibration and application of both dairy and hog manure on corn ground which will then compare yields with different levels of commercial fertilizer applications.

#### OTHER:

DC Stan Musielewicz remains "perfect" as he has succeeded in harvesting his fourth Tom Turkey in as many years. The 22 pound Tom was outsmarted this spring in southeast Minnesota.

The Annual Wilkin and Richland County SWCD's "Ladies Ag. Night" was held on April 1<sup>st</sup> at the Wahpeton Eagles Club. Former pro basketball player, pro football player, former Minnesota Vikings head coach and NFL Hall of Famer, Bud Grant, was the featured speaker. NRCS guests to this special annual event were STC Bill Hunt, ASTC Ann English and PAS Julie MacSwain. A good time was had by all.

### **AREA 3**

*B. Kevin Daw, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*

#### PERSONNEL:

**Michelle Wohlers** has moved to the District Conservationist position in Farmington. I want to thank Michelle for her years of service to conservation in Chisago County.

**John Zinn** has been selected as the new Grazing Specialist located in Grand Rapids. John starts on August 8, 2004. Welcome to Minnesota and Area 3!

Several students have joined us for a summer tour with NRCS.

**Gail Bong** has returned to the Duluth Field Office.

**Clyde Day** is working in the Virginia Field Office.

**Joni MacIntosh** is working in the Area Office.

**Aki Kappenman** is working at the Center of Excellence.

We trust they will find many rewards from this work experience.

**Jessica Stoll** has graduated and is serving her first tour at the Hinckley Field Office. Congratulations!

A special thank you to Yamika Stokes, Soil Conservationist in Lewiston, for assisting in Mille Lacs County. Yamika did an excellent job with acting DC responsibilities.

#### CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Conservation planning, cost share sign-up and contract development have dominated field activities this quarter. Record levels of conservation were approved for installation.

Pine County has committed funds for a once over soil survey in order to leverage State dollars. NRCS is planning to announce a project leader position this summer.

## AREA 4

*Timothy Wilson, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*

*Pat Foley* reports the Benton and Sherburne SWCD's, in cooperation with NRCS and MPCA, have purchased a manure spreader that is capable of applying poultry litter at agronomic rates. The spreader, which was delivered April 27, 2004, is being used to set up side-by-side manure management demonstration plots in the Elk River Watershed. Landowners with demonstration plots are allowed to use the spreader on additional acres when it is available. Due to the late arrival of the spreader we were only able to get seven test plots set up this spring, but additional plots will be started this fall.

*Steve Sellnow* reports that April and May were conservation education and outreach months for the NRCS/SWCD conservation team in Waite Park. Ten presentations/outreach activities were completed by the team and other partners reaching over 1,550 elementary and secondary students in Stearns County.

### Calendar of Events

- **April 22 and 30**, 140 third and fifth grade students at Holy Family Elementary in Sauk Center and Brooten Elementary learned about watersheds using the Environscape model.
- **April 30**, 40 third graders from Melrose Elementary planted 50 white spruces with Brad Wenz, SWCD and Lee Zabinski, NRCS to commemorate Arbor Day.
- **May 6**, three staff members from Stearns NRCS/SWCD assisted with the Area 4 Environthon at the University of Minnesota Arboretum in Chaska. Five teams participated from Stearns County.
- **May 6**, 120 Technical High students learned about the Lake George shoreline restoration project featured earlier this year on the NRCS home page. The project continues to serve Technical High students as an outdoor classroom.
- **May 7 and 8**, 450 seventh and eighth grader students from ROCORI assisted with planting and mulching restorations along Cold Spring Creek. Several plant species from the NRCS PMC were used on the project.
- **May 14**, the ROCORI Water Festival was held. One hundred fifty elementary students learned about natural resources and conservation. Melanie Dickman staffed the "Pesky Pollution" station.
- **May 14**, Greg Berg and Riley Maanum staffed the Shore land station at the Paynesville Water Festival. One hundred fifty fifth grade students attended this event.
- **May 20**, Brad Wenz, SWCD and Lee Zabinski, NRCS gave the Environscape presentation to 50 fifth graders at St. Wendelin's Elementary School. Brad and Lee also learned something that day; the evacuation procedure for a surprise fire drill.
- **May 21**, the Middle Sauk River Water Festival was held in Melrose hosting over 450 fourth graders from several schools in the area. Brad Wenz, SWCD; Melanie Dickman, NRCS; and Candi Lee, NRCS hosted the environmental station, "Stream Bank Restoration Puzzle."

Interest in the EQIP Program continues to be strong in Stearns County. Staff have processed nearly one hundred fifty 2004 applications requesting over 1.5 million dollars in contracts.

*Jim Onstad* reports the Carver SWCD held their annual dinner on March 26. About 50 people attended. Old and new SWCD supervisors, county staff, office staff along with district cooperators were in attendance. Greg Thompson, Metro Lakescaping Technician, gave an excellent power point showing us erosion control in urban and lake shore settings.

*John Crellin* reports that Area 4 hosted a Crop Residue Management Methods Field Day Training for NRCS employees and SWCD partners in Waverly, on May 18. George Morris, DC, Buffalo, assisted the area office in making arrangements for the field day. The field day included three breakout sessions covering: GPS training exercise; rainfall simulator demonstration; and a review of the 329A, 329B, 329C, 344 tillage practices. Participants visited Mr. Neske's no-till/strip-till fields and measured residue, slopes, and listened to Mr. Neske explain his system. After the field visit a potluck picnic was enjoyed by all participants. Our leader, Tim Wilson, was behind the grill. Fifty-two were in attendance at the field day.



**On May 20**, Roderick Dukes, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee; Tiffany Jones, Engineer Student Trainee; and Candi Lee, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee; visited the Plant Materials Evaluation Site in Becker, Minnesota, and spent some time with Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist, reviewing and identifying the various plantings and their characteristics.

*George Morris* reports Wright SWCD hosted the second part of its annual environmental education field days on May 12 and 13. More than 500 students and teachers from 21 fifth grade classes in Wright County were involved. The first part of the field days took place September 16-18, 2003, and involved 34 classes and 1,026 students. Fifty different speakers from various government agencies, private firms, and interested citizens provided information on topics ranging from soils and plants to water quality and fisheries.

Wright County in coordination with the Mid-Minnesota Mississippi River RC&D is planning an Organic Short Course for August of 2004. Please look for coming announcements about this interesting course for ag-professionals.

Wright SWCD sold over 54,000 trees to more than 400 participants through this year's tree sales program.

Wright County NRCS and FSA hosted a conservation programs meeting in Buffalo during early April. Programs covered included primarily Continuous CRP and EQIP practices that preserve and protect natural resources.

Wright SWCD and the Wright County Water Management Task Force both played a major role in gaining a no phosphorus ordinance for Wright County. We congratulate them on their water quality accomplishment.

*Stan Wendland reports* that EQIP 2004 application period has come to an end. District and NRCS staff completed and approved applications for 17 landowners with structural practices, 1,200 acres of pest management, 1,300 acres of nutrient management, and 2,100 acres of residue management. They also have three landowners with prescribed grazing plans and one wetland restoration.

The Scott SWCD tree program has been completed for another year with nearly 80,000 trees sold this year. The SWCD is currently attending a series of meetings with the County to establish construction site inspection criteria and procedures.

*Ed Musielewicz reports* the Sherburne SWCD created plans for a low maintenance landscape at the USDA Service Center Building in Elk River. The building's owner purchased 900 native plants and grass seed to xeriscape the building grounds. Service center staff completed the planting. The building's owner says he will save around \$700 a year by converting to this low maintenance landscape.

### Personnel

**Tiffany Jones**, Engineering Student Trainee, is assigned to the Brooklyn Center Area Office this summer. Tiffany is from Atlanta, Georgia, and is majoring in Biological and Agricultural Systems Engineering at Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Florida.

**Roderick Dukes**, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee, is assigned to the Foley Field Office this summer. Roderick is from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and is majoring in Natural Resources Management at Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma.

**Candi Lee**, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee, is assigned to the Waite Park Field Office this summer. Candi hails from Palisade, Minnesota, and is majoring in Agricultural Education at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, Minnesota.

**Jeffrey Wilson**, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee, is assigned to the Jordan Field Office this summer. Jeffrey is from Mound City, Kansas, and is majoring in Natural Resources Management at Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma.

**George Morris**, District Conservationist, Buffalo, resigned effective June 4. George has been accepted into the Master of Divinity Program at Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri. where he starts classes on June 21.

**Michelle Wohlers** is the new District Conservationist for Farmington, Dakota County. Michelle comes to the area from North Branch, Chisago County in Area 3.

**Tim Gieseke**, Carver SWCD District Manager, resigned in April to take a job with The Minnesota Project. Tim was employed with the district for eight years.

**Brad Wozney**, Wright SWCD, and his wife Becky, became first time parents to daughter Annika. Congratulations Brad and Becky on the addition to your family.

**Brad Wozney**, Wright SWCD Water Resources Specialist, accepted a position with BWSR. We wish him the best of luck in his new position.

**Andrew Dahlgren** accepted the vacant Wright SWCD Water Resources Specialist position. Andy comes to us from Pope County where he was the County Feedlot officer. We welcome Andy to our conservation efforts.

**Andrew Dahlgren**, Wright SWCD, and his wife Kimberly, welcomed their first daughter, Allyson, into the world on May 20. Congratulations Andy and Kimberly on the addition to your family.

**Diane Sander**, Crow River Organization of Water, welcomed her husband, John, home after he completed his army reserve tour in Eastern Europe for the last nine months. Welcome home, John.

**Jason Stevenson** is our new earth team volunteer in the Brooklyn Center Area Office. He has contributed 11 hours. Great Job!

## AREA 5

*Michael D. Appel, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*



What started out to be a very dry winter and early spring has developed into a wet rainy May with 8-10+ inches of rain reported in the area. With the dry conditions, several offices reported numerous grassed waterways and sediment basins constructed. All of our counties are participating in the CTIC Conservation Tillage transect. I attended the ground breaking ceremony of the Lazarus Creek Dam in Yellow Medicine County. This project has been in the works for 25+ years. This will be funded by Area II MN River Basin Project Inc. and the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

#### Watershed Project

- Bids were let and work is almost complete on the Handicapped Accessible walk way and dock at the Del Clarke Lake. Gary Blough is the government representative on the project.

#### Arbor Day

- Several districts participate annually in an Arbor Day activities such as tree give-aways to the students and field trips. The Nobles Field Office conducted an Arbor Day at the outdoor classroom site in Worthington. Julie MacSwain, PAS, covered the event.

#### Harmony Workshop

- We are in the planning stages to have a Harmony Workshop hosted by the Upper Sioux Indian Community in August. If you have not attended one, you may want to request it. We will even have you assist in the set-up of a Pow-Wow.

#### Envirothon

- The annual Envirothon was held at Camden State Park again this year. The District put this on with several of our NRCS employees helping.

#### Civil Servant of the Year

- We are very proud of one of our employees, Robert Mathaler, Civil Engineer Technician in Pipestone as being selected by the Federal Executive Board as a Civil Servant of the Year. Bob shared the NRCS honors with John Brach and Lawrence Svien. In addition, Bob was one of five Civil Servants recognized with a special trophy for "Technical Excellence."

#### Field Days/Trips

- Spring is a time for field trips, career days and outdoor classrooms with students.
- Career Exploration Day at SMSU on May 10<sup>th</sup> had over 350 student attended.
- River Rendezvous at Dawson by LQP SWCD and LQP-Yellow Bank Clean Water Partnership.
- Reede Bray Field Day – Redwood SWCD – 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- Upper Sioux Park Education Day – Yellow Medicine SWCD- 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- Del Clarke Lake Nature Day – Yellow Medicine – 6<sup>th</sup> grade

- Outdoor Classroom- Swift SWCD
- Lake Benton Field Day – Lincoln SWCD – 4<sup>th</sup> grade



◀ April 27- District Conservationist, Steve Woltjer, is posing with a group of Worthington elementary children participating at Prairie Wetland Learning Center in Worthington.



▶ April 27- District Conservationist Steve Woltjer is surrounded by two fish and wildlife service employees. All three were key presenters at the Worthington Prairie Wetland Learning Center.

### Civil Rights Reviews

- Three field offices were blessed with a Civil Rights/EEO review in April: Benson, Marshall and Slayton field office.

### Conservation Security Program

- The Blue Earth River was one of 18 watershed selected nationwide for the much anticipated Conservation Security Program (CSP). Jackson County has about 3.5 townships in the watershed.

### TSP Funding

- Contribution agreements are being written by the SWCD's. We have \$90,000 available in the area. Private sector TSP's have been evaluated and we will need about \$270,000 to handle their needs.

### Personnel

The last two weeks in May were busy as students were either returning or new hires. New faces that were not mentioned in our last developments are:

#### New Employees

**Jay Murphy**, new SCT in Luverne. Jay is currently working for the Nobles SWCD.

**April Schultz**, SC in Benson. April is a recent graduate from Brookings and is finishing up her Masters degree. April has worked in several offices in South Dakota.

**Cheryl Isder**, SC in Slayton. Cheryl graduated from the University of Crookston.

**Janine Milbradt** is a returning SMSU-Marshall student who will work with the area soil staff.

**Shantel Spielmann** is a returning SDSU-Brookings student working out of the Ivanhoe Field Office

**Holly Kesteloot** has a summer class to fulfill her degree and is working in the Marshall Field Office

**Travis Kesteloot** is a WAE at the Marshall Field Office.

#### New Students:

**Lynette Davila-Murphy** attends Mayaquaz University from Puerto Rico is stationed in Ortonville

**William Anderson**, Fond du Lac college student, working with the area soils staff  
**Patrick Sievert**, Oklahoma, is working out of the Worthington field office as an engineer trainee

**Tom Kost**, Washington State University student, working in the area office

**Nathan Blankers**, a SMSU-Marshall student, is stationed in the Pipestone Field Office.

**Casey Thomazin**, a SDSU-Brookings student, working in the Montevideo Field Office

Leaving the area:

**Leah Black** – took a position as GIS specialist for the FSA state office in South Dakota

**Kamara Holmes** – a soil scientist - reassigned to the St. Peter area office

## AREA 6

*Kasey Reed, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*

### Personnel:

**Kasey Reed**, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, began on June 13, 2004

**Ryan Kruse** starts on June 13, 2004, as District Conservationist in Fairmont.

### Student Trainees:

**Marcus Shorter**, Willmar

**Rilondricks Beeman**, Olivia

**Earl Crystains**, LeCenter

**Niya Wardlaw**, Student Engineering Trainee, St. Peter

### Conservation Activities

#### State Envirothon



On May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Minnesota State Envirothon was held at the Prairie Wood Environmental Center, north of Willmar. Doug Miller, Area Resource Soil Scientist was presenter at the soils station. Assisting at the station was Darren Newville of the Martin Soil and Water Conservation District. Top finishing teams (28), from every area in the state competed at Prairie Wood. Using soil profiles to discuss soil formation and horizonation to high school students at the Minnesota State Envirothon at Prairie Wood Environmental Center, Willmar.

#### Three Rivers RC&D

Three Rivers RC&D was very busy this spring with the presentation by Lauren Klement, titled "Get Down and Dirty with Soil and Water" to approximately 500 children. NRCS staff, Amy Stratton, Sybil Gruetzmacher and Waseca SWCD staff member, Darlene Kukuczka, assisted with presentations to help keep things running smoothly! This hands-on presentation teaches the participants about understanding that soil is more than just dirt under our feet; it also covers soil as a pollutant to surface water. The presentation begins with a brief discussion on soil. Then the children learn how to texture soil. Ten different textures of soil are available (with the loam and silt loam being the top favorites!) to texture. Particle size analysis has been done so percentages are briefly covered with this exercise. During the texturing portion, soil trivia is offered to the students. After clean up from texturing, the kids then move on to the exercise where they become soil particles and rain. This exercise visually shows them the "water" movement through the different textures of "soil".

The title "Get Down and Dirty with Soil and Water" is a good description of what to expect! A word of warning to adults: It is a must for kids to get their hands dirty with this presentation!



### **Alternative Energy Project**

Prairie Country RC&D continues to provide assistance to two alternative energy projects. The first involves the installation of a methane digester on a 500+ cow dairy operation in Meeker County. A financial analysis of the proposed project was recently completed and funded opportunities are being explored. The second project involves a partnership effort by the communities of Clara City, Maynard (Chippewa County) and Sacred Heart (Renville County) to pursue installing wind towers to provide power to all three communities. This project is still in the planning stages.

### **Benson Outdoor Classroom Project**

Two successful projects involving students and retired D.C. Lyle Popma (now Earth Team Volunteer) were implemented this spring at the Benson Outdoor Classroom (Swift County). The first project involved constructing and installing 16 wood duck houses and the second involved developing a self-guided trail brochure, which highlights several features along a 3,000 foot trail. This project involves developing a 140 acre tract of city-owned land for use as an outdoor classroom.

## **AREA 7**

*John T. Nicholson, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations*

**Lawrence Svien** was one of two NRCS employees honored his outstanding performance as Civil Servant of the Year at the Federal Service Recognition Awards Program on April 30 in Bloomington. Svien is the Area Resource Conservationist, located in Rochester. Congratulations!

**Jim Smith** has taken on a new position after working with the Rice County SWCD for 4 years. He will now be working at the NRCS Owatonna Field Office as Soil Conservation Technician. We wish him the best!

**Jaime Schaunaman** is the new Soil Conservationist working for NRCS in Fillmore County, Preston Field Office. Jaime is originally from Sisseton South Dakota where she grew up on a grain farm. She attended the University of Minnesota, Crookston where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resources, with an emphasis in Water Resources Management. Jaime joined with NRCS in May of 2002 when she completed her internship in the West Polk County, Crookston field office. After graduation in 2003 she was then transferred to Stevens County, Morris Field Office as a soil conservationist where she has spent the last year. Jaime is very excited to work in this unique and diverse part of the state and we are equally as excited to have her here!

**Jed Kaurich** is the new CRP Buffer Technician for the Rice County SWCD. Jed grew up on a small farm near Osseo, WI and graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management, Urban Forestry and Soil Science. His hobbies include snowmobiling, downhill skiing, fishing, hunting, football, baseball, golf, cooking and just being outdoors. We welcome Jed!

**Sara Smith** is an Agricultural Engineering Student Trainee for the summer located out of the Preston Field Office. She was raised on a dairy and beef operation in Tamarack, MN, which is in the northeastern part of the state. She will be a senior in Agricultural Engineering at South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD this year. Sara is excited to learn more about agriculture in southeastern MN and to help the NRCS with its conservation workload.

**Clayton Schmitz** entered on duty at Lewiston Field Office on 5/17/2004 as a Student Trainee. He has previously been assigned to Crookston and Red Lake Falls field offices. Welcome Clayton!

**Stacy Brown** is a Student Trainee for the summer located in the Rochester Field Office. She is a native of Natchez, Mississippi and just completed her freshmen year at Alcorn State University in Mississippi. Stacy is considering a major course of study in biology or chemistry.

**Jason Rochester** began duty as a Student Trainee in the Caledonia Field Office. He is in his junior year at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, where his interests include hunting and fishing, as well as natural resource conservation. Jason will be working at the Field Office until July and will return to a summer natural resource program held in northern Wisconsin through UWSP.

**Jackie Byam** is the new NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, in the Austin Field Office.

**Hilary Skiba** is part time Office Assistant with Mower SWCD.

**Tom Roessler**, Mower SWCD Resource Specialist, has resigned to move back to his hometown of St. Peter. Tom will be replaced by Justin Hanson, who will be moving from Jackson SWCD.

On March 30<sup>th</sup> a Tillage workshop was hosted in Preston. Thirty producers participated in the workshop that included a panel of local farmers with a variety of experiences and backgrounds in No-Till, Zone Till, and Strip Till practices. Each of the local farmers shared their experiences and answered questions about their operations. Extension staff presented test plot data plus other basics. NRCS & SWCD staff shared information about available programs and financial assistance programs.