



# MINNESOTA NRCS

*“Conservation is ethically sound. It is rooted in our love of the land, our respect for the rights of others, our devotion to the rule of law.”*

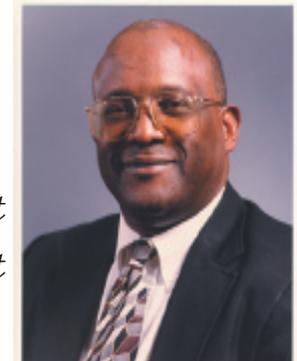
*~Lyndon Baines Johnson*

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*William Hunt  
State Conservationist*

**NRCS** celebrated its 70th anniversary on April 27, 2005 at both the Minnesota State Capitol and at the Farm Credit Building in downtown Saint Paul. Our first event took place at the State capitol with close to 150 people attending our historical celebration. Lieutenant Governor Carol Molnau read the Governor’s proclamation and participated in the tree handout for an elementary school from Shakopee. Bruce Knight, NRCS Chief, Vic Ruhland and I shared our thoughts on the 70th Anniversary of Soil and Water Conservation in Minnesota. Vic Ruhland and I presented Lieutenant Governor Carol Molnau with the book which Ruhland has been working on for several years, *“Through these eyes: The First 70 Years of Soil and Water Conservation in Minnesota.”*



*Lieutenant Governor Carol Molnau and Vic Ruhland*

**Photos from the April 27, 2005 Celebration!**



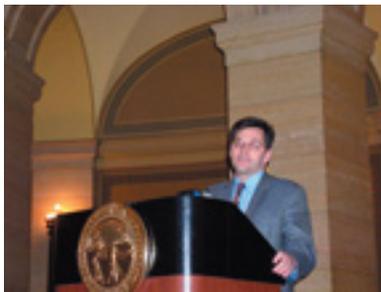
William Hunt holds the 70th Conservation Proclamation with Lt. Governor Carol Molnau



*Students at the State Capitol!*



William Hunt, Lt. Governor Carol Molnau and Bruce Knight, NRCS Chief



Chief Knight speaks at the State Capitol



LeAnn Buck with Chief Knight



William Hunt, State Conservationist



Susan Ploetz moderated the program



Greg Larson and John Nicholson



The book signing with Vic Ruhland



Cory Drummond draws conservation caricatures while Ginger Kopp tends to her display



It was good to see old friends and meet new acquaintances!

### 70th Anniversary Open House-April 27, 2005 by Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist

**“NRCS, a partner since 1935.”** The NRCS Open House on April 27, 2005 provided a wonderful way for NRCS employees, retirees and our conservation partners to gather together to reminisce the past and look to the future. The Open House was made possible by several NRCS employees working together before the event, during the event and after the OpenHouse.

Many activities occurred during the Open House. Participants were able to see numerous conservation partner’s exhibits, see photos of the past, a conservation time line and several interesting displays including cultural resources, soils and the desk of the past and today. All in all, the folks that attended went away with a better picture of the past and a way of looking forward to the future. For additional information about the NRCS Open House, please contact either Susan Ploetz at (651) 602-7888 or Julie MacSwain at (651) 602-7859.



*John Brach, State Engineer inspects the engineering equipment at the NRCS Open House!*



*Mao Thao, NRCS State Office student assisted with registering the 70th Anniversary guests. Volunteers such as Mao were instrumental in making the event a success.*

### Minnesota NRCS celebrates Earth Week

**Earth Week 2005** was celebrated April 4-8, 2005 in downtown St Paul at the NRCS State Office. Cutrina Moreland, Earth Team Coordinator felt that Earth Week was a way of turning a one day celebration into a week long observance! To this end, Cutrina Moreland orchestrated a partnership between Minnesota NRCS and the St. Paul Minnesota Charter School, Minnesota Business Academy. Twelve students and a teacher from the Academy spent a week learning about NRCS, Cultural Resources, Groundwater, Forestry and Soils.

The Minnesota Business Academy class took a field trip to Mounds Park located in St Paul to learn more about Cultural Resources, Soils and Forestry and removed trash from the city park. These students also removed trash at the Minnesota Wildlife Refuge near Bloomington.

Additionally, the Earth Week participants assisted the State Public Affairs Specialist in preparing for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Soil and water Conservation in Minnesota. The results of this volunteer partnership were positive and may have set the stage for another Earth Week in 2006.



*Earth Week participants from the Minnesota Business Academy class. Cutrina Moreland, Minnesota NRCS Earth Team Coordinator is located in the front row (kneeling).*

**CREP/Earth Day Tree Planting in Southeast Minnesota****Submitted by Karen Buckley Washington,  
Area 7 Public Affairs Specialist***Adapted from AgriNews, April 26, 2005*

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns joined Governor Pawlenty on Earth Day for the signing of the CREP II agreement at the Straight River Marsh in Ellendale, south of Owatonna. The CREP II agreement will benefit the Red River watershed in northwest Minnesota, the Lower Mississippi watershed in southeast Minnesota and the Missouri River and Des Moines River watersheds in southwest Minnesota.

“Minnesota is the land of lakes and the region of rivers – water is our way of life,” Governor Pawlenty said. “We have more fresh water than any other state in the continental United States. Protecting and restoring this crown jewel of our quality of life should be our number one environmental priority.” In total, the CREP II agreement seeks to secure approximately 4,500 conservation easements covering 120,000 acres by the end of 2007.

Students from the Ellendale Middle School planted trees during this ceremony that took place on the farm of Allen and Donna Grosland. “For me, in all honesty, it’s about the kids,” Al Grosland said. He and Donna enrolled the farm he and his nine siblings grew up on in the Wetland Reserve Program on Dec. 10, 2002, the same day they purchased it from his siblings. Enrolling it was a gift for their three children and five grandchildren.

They planted 2,000 trees and dug four ponds on the 189 acres. They seeded 115 acres of natural grasses and wildflowers.

“This is my field of dreams,” Grosland said. The couple’s goal is to get the work done and start enjoying the property.

Pawlenty helped them move a little closer to their goal. The governor and sixth graders Emily Light, Sara Lorence and Kirsty Callahan dug a hole and planted a tree as cameras flashed. As Pawlenty finished, Grosland complimented him, saying, “only 199 more to go.” Pawlenty left, but the sixth graders stayed to help plant 199 more trees on the 35th anniversary of Earth Day.

“I can’t think of a better place for us to celebrate Earth Day,” Johanns said.



*U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns is surrounded by students from Ellendale Middle School*



*Governor Tim Pawlenty plants a tree at the Earth Day celebration, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns and landowner Allan Grossland observe!*

**Glacial Ridge Holds Second Annual Earth Day Event**  
**April 22, 2005**  
**Submitted by Greg Bengtson**

On April 22, staff from NRCS and Ducks Unlimited Glacial Ridge Project hosted its second annual Earth Day event at The Nature Conservancy's Glacial Ridge headquarters. Approximately 140 sixth grade students from three area schools attended. This year's event got off to a blustery start with high winds and cooler temperatures. In spite of this everyone had a great time.

The theme for this year's event was Ducks and Wetlands. The sixth grade students participated in five different learning stations, each learning station was approximately 20 minutes in length. The topics were as follows: Prairie Habitat, Environmental Educator, Wetlands, Restoration, Survey, Waterfowl Identification, Wildlife Habitat Structures.

Presenters at the event included: Jason Ekstien, The Nature Conservancy; Lori Becker and Paige Guetter, West Polk SWCD, Bruce Wilken, Mike Becker and Eric Anderson, Ducks Unlimited; and Nicole Bernd, West Polk SWCD, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from Rydell Refuge and Greg Bengtson, NRCS



The big event for the day was constructing habitat structures. The students completed 35 bluebird houses and eight wood duck houses. After lunch a few of the houses were placed on the project area. Also, students took a bus tour of the Glacial Ridge Project Area. This was a wonderful opportunity for students to learn about the importance of our natural resources.



A big **thank you** from the NRCS and DU Glacial Ridge staff went out to all the people who helped make the event a success including the West Polk SWCD for providing lunch for the presenters, DU for providing materials for wood duck houses, Fish and Wildlife Service for providing materials for bluebird houses, and to the volunteers who provided help getting the habitat structures constructed.

The Glacial Ridge project is a 28,000 acre tall grass prairie restoration project near Crookston. Currently there are over 30 different partners working on the project. *NRCS, Wetlands Reserve Program is the catalyst for the restoration efforts on Glacial Ridge.*

## Regional Assistant Chief, Merlin Bartz visits Minnesota for an Outreach Tour

Submitted by Amy Stratton, Pooh Vongkhamdy, and Cutrina Moreland

*Merlin Bartz*, Regional Assistant Chief-Central, came to Minnesota on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> to visit Asian Pacific Islander farmers. *Pooh Vongkhamdy*, District Conservationist, *Cutrina Moreland*, Acting Outreach Coordinator and *Amy Stratton*, Three Rivers RC&D Coordinator and MN-NRCS Civil Rights Chair person, spoke with Mr. Bartz about outreach in Minnesota.

Mr. Bartz traveled to the *Nang Xiong* family farm in southern Dakota County. Mr. Xiong owns and operates 115 acres of farm land which he and his family farm vegetables and flowers. He sells most of his products at the St. Paul Farmer's Market. Mr. Bartz and Mr. Xiong talked extensively about his operation, conservation practices, equipments and watering system needs, marketing and NRCS services.



From there Mr. Bartz traveled to *Nick and Der Cha* family farm in Dakota County. The Cha families also grow flowers and vegetables on their 55 acre farm mostly for the St. Paul and Minneapolis Farmer's Market. Mr. Bartz talked to Nick about his operation, the greenhouses, different plants and equipment. They also talked about conservation practices and what NRCS assistance is available.



*The photos show Regional Associate Chief Merlin Bartz on the Xiong family farm with NRCS employees, John Crellin, Cutrina Moreland, Karin Nordling, Matt Schaar, Pooh Vongkhamdy, Michele Wohlers and landowner Nag Xiong.*

**FWP by Sandra Jerzak, MN FWPM**

May 24, 2005 was Federal Executive Board Diversity Day. FWP paid the registration fees for 11 employees to attend the Diversity Day training.

The following is taken from one of the many enjoyable breakout sessions and is about change.

**C** - Change sometimes causes **CONFLICT** or **CHAOS**.

**H** - Change can create **HURT** feelings.

**A** - **ATTITUDES** may need to be **ADJUSTED**.

**N** - **NETWORK** together to deal with change.

**G** - **GROWTH**. Willing to be open and move forward with change.

**E** - **EXPECTATION** - Establish clear and define boundaries.

In the process of integrating change, it is important to treat everyone equitably.

**Outreach**

- *Julie MacSwain, Ann English and Janine Milbradt* attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Agricultural Leadership Conference on April 15, 2005. NRCS had a booth with our programs and career brochures.
- Ladies Ag Night had another successful April event sponsored by the Richland SWCD, ND and Wilkin SWCD, MN.

**APIO Event, "East Meets West"**

**Submitted by Bill Lorenzen**

Bill Hunt, State Conservationist, was pleased to have hosted Young-Nam Kim, Associate Professor of Violin at the University of Minnesota, for an Asian American Pacific Islander Recognition Program held on May 3, 2005. Young Nam's program was titled "East Meets West" and was presented during a brown bag luncheon near the State Office in St. Paul. Young Nam's program included string quartets, Japanese and Chinese folk songs sung by soprano Maria Jette, and Korean folk dances performed in traditional costumes by Korean American dancer and instructor Mrs. Grace Lee.

The Brown Bag Concerts are made possible by the generous support of the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, Weiming Lu, President.



**NRCS GIS**

**or “A Day in the Life of a GIS Specialist at NRCS” by Banette Kritzky**

As part of a Federal multi-agency agreement, geospatial datasets are shared between several USDA agencies. The sharing of data always brings interesting issues to the table, and the State Geodata and GIS/IT Teams continue to work together to resolve agency-related geodata conflicts. Standards have always been an important component to any organization using GIS. To that end, USDA has created two primary standards - [geodata management](#) and [geodata naming standards](#) - to aid employees (right-click the name to open the .pdf document). This helps remove the potential for servers storing duplicated datasets.

We’re still shaking out the roles and responsibilities of all the newly created GIS Specialist positions here in Minnesota. The State Geodata Team has just granted the GIS Specialists LGA permissions for all counties within their Areas. This is an exciting change and will greatly aid their assistance to the field offices. As you’ll see from the Area reports (below), we’re currently in a massive training stage. The roll-out of one of our customized tools, ToolKit 2004, just occurred; this required our migration from ArcView 3.3 to ArcGIS 8.3. Consequently, field staff are going through lots of training to learn the new software as well as the new customized tool.

The NRCS GIS staff continue to look at ways to improve how GIS is used around our state. To this end, the GIS Team is looking into various standards for our mapping projects. To begin with, we’ve compiled a standard for map layouts when sharing outside our agency. We’re also looking into how we can standardize .lyr files and other methodologies to assist the field staff in their use of GIS. This is an ongoing

process, so if you have ideas, please feel free to contact either your Area GIS Specialist or the State GIS Coordinator.

We’ve also just designed and gone live with a new webpage for GIS related information. It is still in its infancy stage, but its primary purpose will be for staff to have one place to go for a myriad of GIS related information, such as tips and tricks, templates, downloads, FAQs, etc. Of particular interest are two documents containing step-by-step instructions on how to use ArcGIS. The first one is called [ArcGIS 8.3 Tips and Tricks](#), and the second is called [Guidesheets for Using ArcGIS](#). Please try out these documents and get back to the State GIS Coordinator with comments about how useful they are. Any suggestions for improvements are greatly appreciated as our goal is to offer as much assistance to all NRCS staff using the GIS software as possible. Feel free to visit the GIS website at <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/GIS/gis.html>

Finally, we’ve just received approval of candidates for the NRCS GIS Committee. These folks will serve a 2-year term on the Committee. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled, but I’m hopeful we can get together in June to discuss GIS-related issues at NRCS. The committee is currently comprised of all nine GIS Specialists from the State and Area offices, as well as Mike Pageler, State Toolkit Coordinator. There is also one person from the major disciplines. These members include:

<u>ARC</u>	<u>DC</u>	<u>Soil Scientist</u>
<u>Technician</u>	<u>Engineer</u>	<u>Soils</u>
A2 - Bob Honeman		A4 - Ed Musielwicz
A5 - Joe Kristoff		A6 - Steve Becker
A3 - Marv Kunkle		State - Pam Howard

*“Soil erosion is as old as agriculture. It began when the first heavy rain struck the first furrow turned by a crude implement of tillage in the hands of prehistoric man. It has been going on ever since, wherever man’s culture of the earth has bared the soil to rain and wind”*

— Hugh H. Bennett and W.C. Lowdermilk, circa 1930’s

**AREA 1**

Glen A. Kajewski, ASTC(FO), Thief River Falls, MN

**John Anderson, DC from Roseau celebrates April 27, 2005**

What does April 27, 2005 have in common with John Anderson, DC from Roseau, Minnesota? April 27, 2005 not only marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary/birthday for NRCS, formerly known as SCS but also April 27, 2005 marked a birthday celebration for John. John turned #55 on April 27, 2005. Though John did not make it to the NRCS State Office for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, John celebrated April 27, 2005 with his co-workers in Roseau. The Roseau FO has a birthday buddy list consisting of FSA, NRCS and the local SWCD office. John was the proud recipient of a sponge cake which was made by one of the FSA co-workers.



ASTC-FO, Glen Kajewski in Thief River Falls has noted “John Anderson in his 15 years of being an SCS/NRCS employee in Minnesota, has never been to the NRCS State Office.”

**AREA 2**

James R. Ayres, ASTC(FO), Fergus Falls, MN

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ladies Night**

**“CONSERVATION KNOWS NO BORDERS”**

by Wilken County Field Office

Over 400 ladies grabbed their maracas and sombreros

to attend the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ladies Night conducted by the Richland Soil Conservation District, Wahpeton, North Dakota, and Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District.



Ladies Night was started in 1996 in an effort to educate women in Richland and Wilkin Counties about conservation programs and services available through the Districts with hopes that they would become more comfortable as partners on their family farms and become involved in the decisions made on them. Over the past few years, Ladies Night has evolved to include all women, urban and rural in its program.

Judy Torkelson in her poncho and sombrero was the mistress of ceremonies. Taylor Wall of Breckenridge sang the National Anthem.

Jolene Brown had everyone laughing as they learned! She brought humor, hope, and helpful ideas to those who wanted to celebrate and learn skills for the human and sometimes humorous side of agriculture. A theme basket raffle and cookbooks were sold to help defray the cost of the program. Several sponsors donated funds and door prizes to make this event so successful.

**AREA 2 -continued****Personnel:**

Each Area II permanent full time or permanent part employee received a commemorative 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary NRCS work shirt in the form of a spot award for their great efforts in assisting Area II approve and obligate our entire \$3.8 million FY 2005 EQIP Program Dollars.

Bill Marken, Area II GIS Specialist and ARC Bob Honeman each received spot awards for their efforts in training 48 Area II staff members in the use of Toolkit 2004 and for training 70 Area staff in the use of ArcGIS Version 8.3.

SCT Michael Steinhauer of Breckenridge was promoted to the GS-6 grade level just in time for the birth of Levi Owen Steinhauer, the first child of Sarah and Michael. A “double congratulations” to Michael!

Darren Newville, former Martin County SWCD employee, was selected as the new EOT SWCD Manager. Darren began his new duties at the Perham FO on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Cheryl Isder, newly selected CSP SC, also joined the Perham FO staff on May 29<sup>th</sup>, just in time to help put out many CSP fires. Welcome both Cheryl and Darren!

**Conservation Activities::**

Area II is expecting over 115 eligible CSP applications for submittal to Washington. We currently have 76 eligible applications identified in the Redeye Watershed area and 41 in the Sauk with just a few left to screen and enter into the database.

*Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence!*

**AREA 3**

*B. Kevin Daw, ASTC(FO), Duluth, MN*

**NRCS Working with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**

Over the last seven months the District Conservationist, *Shannon Bengtson* in Mille Lacs County has been building upon the relationship that *Mary Monte*, prior DC, had started with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Mary introduced Shannon to *Curt Kalk*, Commissioner of Natural Resources, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and *Scott Hansen*, Dept. of Natural Resource/Environmental Programs, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Ongoing contacts regarding the EQIP contract have been made with *Dean Staples*, Forestry and Wild Fire Management Program, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Dept. of Natural Resources and/Environmental Programs, and *Scott Hansen* regarding the EQIP project. Additionally, *Shannon* invited *Larry Nelson*, *Onanegozie* RC&D coordinator to explain opportunities that exist with alternative composting.

*Shannon* has also been the connection between the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the Mille Lacs SWCD. This year the tribe bought trees which marks the beginning of working relationship. The tribe is looking forward to working with the Mille Lacs SWCD and NRCS on future projects.

*Shannon Bengtson* set up a meeting at the end of April for *Pat McLoughlin*, NRCS state cultural resource specialist to come and discuss the development of an MOU between NRCS and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe for Cultural Resource Reviews. *Pat and Shannon* visited with *Elisse Aune*, Section 106 Review & Compliance, and *Scott Hansen* about the MOU.

This will be the second MOU agreement signed between a tribal government and the MN NRCS.

The outreach efforts have been beneficial to open the doors of communication between the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and NRCS along with partnering entities.

Together we can accomplish the goals of conservation that we are striving for in Mille Lacs County.



Pictured above is Shannon Bengtson, DC, Milaca; Dwight Tober, Plant Materials, Bismarck, ND; Dean Staples, Dept. of Natural Resources/Environmental Programs, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe; Scott Hansen Dept. of Natural Resources/Environmental Programs, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

**Awards**

All Area 3 Permanent NRCS Employees, Non-monetary award for specific extra efforts during the period October 1, 2004 and April 11, 2005.

*Donna Walters-Nelson*, Susan B. Anthony Award, 2005.  
*Mary Monte*, Certificate of Appreciation for FWP newsletter articles.

**Personnel News**

Julie Lindner, Acting DC, Aitkin April 4 - July 1st.

Jeffrey Kroll, SS, Virginia SSO, Promotion, effective 04/17/05.

Larissa Schmidt, SS, Duluth SSO, Promotion, effective 05/01/2005.

Russell Kleinschmidt selected as Soil Conservationist, Duluth Field Office, effective 05/29/05.

Jennifer Kaser, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation), Virginia Field Office, effective 05/16/05.

Gail Bong, Student Trainee, Grand Rapids Field Office, effective 05/31/05.

Kriste Ericsson, WAE, Cambridge Field Office, effective 05/31/05.

Bart Roepke, WAE, Hinckley Field Office, effective 06/14/05.

Mark Perry, SS, Milaca Field Office, resigned April 1, 2005.

**AREA 4**

*Timothy A. Wilson, ASTC(FO), Brooklyn Center, MN*

A ceremony was held at the farm of Ray and Mary Taylor in Sciota Township to mark the first six easements closed utilizing the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). On April 27, 2005, NRCS Chief Bruce Knight presented a \$1.2 million check representing the first payment to Dakota County for the six easements.



*Michelle Wohlers, DC Farmington FO, Bruce Knight, NRCS Chief*



*Dwain Otte, Dakota county farmer and Timothy Wilson, ASTC-FO Brooklyn Center, MN*

Dakota County, the only county in the State of Minnesota that has a comprehensive farmland protection plan, received 100 percent of the FRPP funding from NRCS over the past three years for a total of \$3,370,853. In March and April of 2005, the six easements closed using funds from both FRPP and Dakota County through the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Protection (FNAP) program. Total cost of the easements that will protect 637 acres of farmland is more than \$2.4 million.

Ray and Mary Taylor enrolled 90 acres of their land along the Cannon River. The Taylors decision to put diversions and try no-till was prompted by Ray's desire to be conservation-minded over the last 25 years.

The funding that the Taylors received from the FRPP tied right into what they were already doing on their land. Similarly, Carl and Kathie Hunter, a fifth generation farmer, also enrolled his land into FRPP with a goal of preserving his farm for future generations. The Hunters enrolled 136 acres in order to save the family's land.

At the close of the event, Chief Knight talked with the landowners about their experience in FRPP and their dedication to good conservation.

**Personnel:**

*Mark Lefebvre*, Nutrient Management Specialist, joined the Stearns SWCD on March 1, 2005. Mark's main responsibility will be writing and reviewing Nutrient Management Plans for producers enrolled in EQIP. He will also be working with dairy farmers in the county to help them achieve "Five Star Dairy" status under Minnesota Milk Producers Association's Environmental Quality Assistance Program.

*April Hill*, District Conservationist, transferred from Mason, Michigan to Waconia effective April 17, 2005. April is originally from Alabama where she attended Alabama A&M University where she received a BS degree in Animal Science. She started her career with NRCS as a Soil Conservationist Trainee in Owosso, Michigan. After graduation, April came on as a Soil Conservationist in Caro, Michigan. She later moved to Mason, Michigan as a Soil Conservationist.

*Meghan Lene* transferred from Mankato to Waite Park as the CSP Sauk Watershed Soil Conservationist effective May 1, 2005.

*Konrad Koosmann*, Washington SWCD District Manager retired February 25, 2005.

*Winnie Chen*, Wetland Biologist transferred from Tucson, Arizona to the Brooklyn Center Area Office effective May 1, 2005. Winnie graduated from the University of Arizona with a Wildlife Management Degree. She began her career as a field technician for graduate students. She then interned with the Arizona Game and Fish and Fish and Wildlife Service before becoming an intern with NRCS as a Soil Conservationist Trainee at the Tucson Field Office. Winnie later moved to the Tucson Area Office as Wildlife Biologist.

*Ed Beck*, Field Technician joined the Carver SWCD on May 9, 2005, on a 2-year temporary appointment. Ed had worked for the Mille Lacs SWCD.

*Chee Lor*, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee is assigned to the Stillwater Field Office. Chee is from St. Paul and is a native of Thailand. She is a sophomore majoring in Natural Resource Conservation Management at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls. She was previously assigned to the St. Paul State Office.

*Ureal Lucky*, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee is assigned to the Jordan Field Office this summer. Ureal is from Marianna, Arkansas and is a sophomore majoring in Agronomy at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

*Karin Nordling*, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee is assigned to the Farmington Field Office. Karin is from Hastings and she is a senior majoring in Ag Communication at North Dakota State University in Fargo. She was previously assigned to Goodhue FO, Moorhead FO, and St. Paul SO.

*Ryan Holzer* started with the Scott SWCD on May 9. He is assisting with a streambank study this summer.

*Jay Riggs*, District Manager joined the Washington SWCD staff. Jay previously worked with the Dakota SWCD.

*Andrea Wedul*, Water Resource/GIS Specialist joined the Washington SWCD on May 24.

*Andy Dahlgren*, Water Management Specialist, Wright County has resigned as of June 17. He has accepted a job with Todd County to become the Feedlot Officer.

*Marcus Shorter*, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee is assigned to the Elk River Field Office this summer. Marcus is from Port Gibson, Mississippi, and is a senior majoring in Agricultural Business Management at Alcorn State University at Alcorn State in Mississippi. He was previously assigned to the Willmar Field Office last summer.

*Hebe Bernardo*, Engineer Student Trainee is assigned to the Brooklyn Center Area Office this summer. Hebe is from Quebradillas, Puerto Rico. She is a senior majoring in Civil Engineering at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

*Melanie Dickman*, Soil Conservationist, Waite Park, transferred to Milbank, SD in January 2005.

## **AREA 5**

*Michael D. Appel, ASTC(FO), Marshall, MN*

### **Conservation Security Program**

The Redwood River CSP sign-up has just been completed and finishing touches are being given to the eligible applicants. All counties involved were very busy right up to the deadline taking sign-ups, doing interviews, completing nutrient and pest management evaluations, running soil loss and other data entry duties. As always our staff did an excellent job with a very stressful situation. In addition a supporting staff from other field offices and the area office pitched in with help. Many thanks to those of you that helped. Lest I forget, the Blue Earth River was again eligible for CSP so that involved Jackson County as well. It is during these types of pressure sign-ups that our NRCS colors shine through. We should be proud of the elite crew that we field in each office. The farmers and general public often don't appreciate the dedication and skilled employees that we employ in our counties. Bring on the next CSP watershed.

### **Awards**

Several area employees were recently recognized with non-monetary spot awards for various outstanding efforts in the past couple of months. The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary shirt was awarded to several EQIP and CSP counties for the outstanding results for those programs. Brent Pavelko, SCT in Lakefield received a promotion.

### **Employees**

We welcome to the area several returning students and new employees:

- **Nathan Blankers**, returns to the area in the Ivanhoe field office
- **Rilondricks Beeman**, reported to the Benson field office
- **Casey Thomazin**, reported to the Pipestone field office
- **Josh Bork**, reported to the Marshall field office.
- **Nathan Stewart**, reported to the Montevideo field office

We also had a new hire in April Sullivan as the Redwood River CSP soil conservationist. April was the Soil Conservationist in Benson.

We also had Cheryl Isder, Soil Conservationist in Slayton accept the CSP watershed soil conservationist position in Detroit Lakes.

Jeremy Larson is the new CET in Pipestone. Jeremy was the SCT in Marshall.

**AREA 6**

*Kasey L. Reed, ASTC(FO), St. Peter, MN*

**The Living Soil Tunnel Submitted by Doug Miller**

The Living Soil Tunnel and Soil Kiosk was a hit with the students of New Prague Intermediate School. About 250 children went through the two displays. The kids enjoyed the quiz on the kiosk and the tunnel. The Soil Tunnel developed out of an idea that was envisioned by Donald Ney of rural Henderson, Minnesota.



Donald Ney spoke often of creating a soil tunnel that people would walk through and see soil in a different light than just the ground we walk on. Donald Ney died before his dream could be created.



If you are interested in learning more about the Soil Tunnel please contact Three Rivers RC&D at (507) 345-7418 #5.

**Personnel:**

Clayton Schmitz is coming from the Crookston Field Office. He graduated in December and is currently working in the LeCenter Field Office as a Soil Conservationist.

Jeffrey Wilson, Junior Langston University, Kansas City, MO is working in the Mankato Field Office and is hoping to further his knowledge of NRCS. He expects to gain more experience on how to work with farmers directly and efficiently. He thinks that by returning for his second consecutive summer will not only help him further develop his professional career but help him plan out his future with this agency.

Erica Franklin, Junior Alcorn State University, Port Gibson, MS is working in the Litchfield Field Office. She is hoping to gain more knowledge of what NRCS is all about she wants to learn more about the agencies techniques, programs and practices that aids them in providing assistance to local landowners, producers and the related entities to help them conserve, improve and sustain natural resources through careful conservation planning. She also would like to gain lots of experience that will help her qualify for a permanent position within this agency.

James Pendroy, recent graduate from the University of Minnesota. James attended Vermilion Community College, Ely, MN and the University of Minnesota, Crookston. His degree is in Natural Resources/ Water Quality Management. This experience has allowed him the ability to become a Soil Conservationist at the Mankato Field Office in Blue Earth County. During the next year he hopes to increase his knowledge and experience as a Soil Conservationist.

Lynetta Cleveland, will be graduating from Iowa State University. Lynetta received a Bachelor of Science Degree in May 2003. She will receive her Master of Science Degree in August 2005 her major is in Forestry (Administration and Management Options). She is currently working in the Willmar Field Office as a Soil Conservationist.

**AREA 7**

*John T. Nicholson, ASTC(FO), Rochester, MN*

**John Beck Receives Civil Servant of the Year Award**

Area Resource Soil Scientist for Area 7, John Beck, recently received the Civil Servant of the Year Award at a luncheon held by the Federal Executive Board in St. Paul.

John provides outstanding soil science leadership. He is the leader in the state relative to the number of technical services provided by a single individual to field offices with nearly 100 soil borings taken and logged for assistance that included the following project types: ag wastes/filter systems, sinkhole sealings, grade stabilization structures repair, wetland, etc. He has done an outstanding job of working with the partnership and area youth to learn about soils.



John organized FFA Soil Judging and Environthon presentations in conjunction with private sector soil scientists and provided such training that will enable our newer employees to advance to higher levels within the organization. Congratulations John!

**Rochester Area Office**

**NAME:** Niya Wardlaw

**HOMETOWN:** Spartanburg, SC by way of Long Island, NY

**NAME OF SCHOOL:** Florida A & M – Junior

**WHAT THEY ARE HOPING TO GAIN FROM THERE EXPERIENCE THIS SUMMER:** I hope to obtain a strong grasp on all the conservation engineering practices and concepts utilized at the NRCS.

**Wabasha Field Office**

**NAME:** Angyela N. Scott

**HOMETOWN:** Port Gibson, MS

**NAME OF SCHOOL (include year and major):** Alcorn State University, beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Agribusiness Management (major)

**WHAT THEY ARE HOPING TO GAIN FROM THERE EXPERIENCE THIS SUMMER:** Hoping to gain additional knowledge about soil conservation and the NRCS.

**Houston Field Office**

**NAME:** Derrick Harmon

**HOMETOWN:** Lexington, MS and is attending college at Alcorn State University. He is a senior and is majoring in Agriculture Economics.

**WHAT THEY ARE HOPING TO GAIN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE THIS SUMMER:** Derrick wishes to become more knowledgeable about NRCS programs and services this summer. Derrick loves basketball and deer hunting.

**Rochester Field Office****NAME:** Roderick Dukes**HOMETOWN:** Oklahoma City, OK**SCHOOL:** Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma**MAJOR:** Soph. Natural Resources Mgt.

Through working with the USDA/NRCS I am hoping to gain valuable work experience that would include a better knowledge of the programs that the government implements to ad with farmers, better social skills through interaction with the various land owners, and more work experience that will not only ad me in this particular course of work but also in future life experiences.

**Lewiston Field Office****Name:** Earl Crystain**Hometown:** Hermanville, Mississippi**Name of School:** Alcorn State University**Year:** Junior**Major:** Ag.Business

I'm trying to gain the Knowledge to better me in the future and the path I choose to take. I'm hoping to learn more about CSP,watershed program, GIS, and much more.

**Albert Lea Field Office****Name:** Demetria Morrison**Hometown:** Tulsa, Oklahoma**School:** Langston University; Junior**Major:** Natural Resources; Minor: Agribusiness

I hope to gain more knowledge and a better understanding of the NRCS and what they do.

**Send questions, comments, and contributions to:**

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