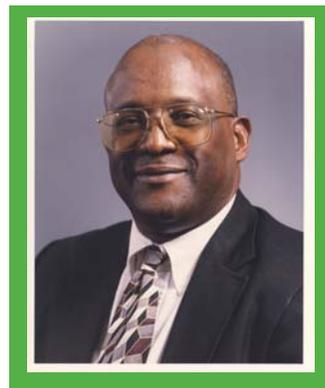


# Minnesota NRCS

*"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*



*WILLIAM HUNT,  
STATE CONSERVATIONIST*

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**M**innesota NRCS continues to make positive strides in cooperative conservation in the state of Minnesota. The partnership NRCS has with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other local agencies in this state is key to important foundation for getting conservation on our landscape.

Just around the corner on the calendar is the 37th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22, 2007. Earth Day is an opportunity for each and every one of us to take note of the extensive amount of natural resources that Minnesota has to offer.

Keep up the good work that you are doing for NRCS. Your continued work efforts are greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing about the results that you will be achieving on the ground with conservation application!

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

## Working for a cleaner Whitewater River

ST. CHARLES, MINN.-Rudie Spitzer has a dream. Spitzer, a retired dairy farmer wants the Whitewater River to return to the condition it was in when he was a youngster: He remembers riding his bicycle down to the river after making hay and taking a cool dip. He and his brother would ride their bicycles the roughly two miles to the river and fish after chores. The first trout he ever caught was an 18 and ½ inch trout he pulled from the Whitewater when he was 12 or 13. On the same fishing trip his brother hooked a 17-inch trout.

Now, trout are no longer found in that stretch of the Whitewater. The sides have sloughed into the river and it's probably only a couple feet deep, Spitzer said, as he stared into the river from a bridge along Winona County Road 37.

He's doing what he can to make his dream a reality. Spitzer, who chairs the Whitewater River Watershed Joint Powers Board, was instrumental in securing \$150,000 in Environmental Quality Incentives Program money to put conservation on the ground in the watershed. "Rudie was persistent," said watershed planner Claron Krogness. "He kept letting Bill (Hunt, state conservationist) know we need money."

The watershed formerly used PL-566 federal funding to make conservation improvements, but with that funding coming to an end another source of dollars was needed.

The EQIP allocation will allow the Whitewater Joint Powers Board to work with more landowners to voluntarily put conservation on the ground in an effort to clean up the Whitewater. Landowners can sign up for EQIP throughout the year, but projects will be ranked through January 31, meaning now's the time to apply if a landowner wants to do a project. Landowners who formerly applied for PL-566 funding should now fill out an EQIP application, Krogness said.

The EQIP allocation will provide up to 50 percent cost-share for conservation projects. The landowner needs to contribute the balance. The

Whitewater Watershed has been successfully in several conservation ventures. Since 1999, 87 contracts covering more than 11,000 acres have been written with watershed landowners, said USDA Undersecretary Mark Rey in a press release marking the allocation.

The watershed has been a leader in planting cover crops after canning crops. "It's sure been a good success," Spitzer said, because everyone worked together. The EQIP dollars will allow the board to extend the cover crop program and any other conservation practice that reduces erosion, reduces sedimentation, maintains or improves the productivity of soils and improves the quality of life and habitat in the Whitewater watershed.

Spitzer, who also serves on the Winona County Soil and Water Conservation District board, said he's seen improvements in some parts of the Whitewater. He mentions a couple restoration projects where the watershed board partnered with Trout Unlimited.

I'd sure like to work with them again," Spitzer said.

"We'll work with any conservation group," Krogness said.

Spitzer encourages farmers who may be thinking about installing terraces, writing a grazing plan, planting cover crops or working on any other conservation project to visit their county SWCD or NRCS office soon. There's time to line things up this time of year, he said, and the money is there now.

This article appeared in the Thursday, December 28, 2006 Edition of Agri News. Permission was granted from Agri News to reprint this article.

## Help Report Locations of Invasive Species

One of the keys for a rapid response to invasive species is the early identification of new occurrences. Please help report occurrences of invasive species in Minnesota at the following:

Obtain a standard reporting form at the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) Web site: [www.mda.state.mn.us/misac/reporting.htm](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/misac/reporting.htm)

“Arrest the Pest” Hotline at: (651) 201-MOTH (metro) or 1-888-545-MOTH (toll free). Please call the hotline to report suspicious pest species arriving on plants or articles from foreign countries or other states and for the latest updates on invasive species such as the gypsy moth, soybean rust, sudden oak death, Asian long horned beetle, emerald ash borer, bark beetles, and other destructive insect plant, and disease pest species.

DNR Invasive Species Program at: (651)-259-5100 (metro) or 1-888MINNDNR (toll free) to report invasive aquatic plants or wild animals such as Eurasian water milfoil, zebra mussels, Asian carp, round goby, non-native deer, swans, and mute swans.

## Stearns County SWCD;s Brad Wenz is Honored with State Award

Brad Wenz, Soil Conservationist with the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), was awarded the distinguished Soil Scientist of the Year Award from the Minnesota Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS) in December, 2006.

Brad has worked for the Stearns County SWCD since 1980. He graduated with a BS degree in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota in 1977. Brad started his soils career working for the University of Minnesota mapping soils in Stearns County from 1977 to 1980. Brad has been a Licensed Soil Scientist in the State of Minnesota since 1999.

Dennis Fuchs, Administrator of the Stearns County SWCD, said “Brad has been an incredible resource to the Stearns County SWCD, and other

natural resource groups in central Minnesota”. Brad provides invaluable assistance to Stearns County agricultural producers on nutrient management, pasture and grazing management, organic farming, irrigation water management, highly erodible land management, and crop residue management for soil erosion control.

Brad also plays a major role in providing environmental education to students. He gives approximately 15 to 20 classroom soil-related presentations annually to students and has been the lead soil scientist in developing the “soils station” for the Minnesota Area IV Envirothon.

Brad developed the SWCD’s procedures for investigating unpermitted manure storage basins in Stearns County. Each year he investigates and prepares approximately 30 manure basin reports. These reports are used to help Stearns County farmers bring their basins into compliance with State rules.

Brad has been a member of MAPSS since 1979, and served as MAPSS’s secretary in 2005 and 2006. Brad has received numerous awards and certificates of appreciation from the Stearns County SWCD and NRCS for his commitment to promoting the wise use of Minnesota’s soil resources.



MAPSS President Roger Risley presents Brad Wenz with the Soil Scientist of the Year Award.

## **U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar visits NRCS state office in St. Paul**

On Friday, February 16, 2007 Minnesota's newest U.S. Senator stopped by to meet and greet the NRCS state office employees. The purpose of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar's visit was to learn more about the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and what NRCS has been accomplishing in the state of Minnesota. This is the first time a U.S. Senator has ever visited the NRCS state office in Minnesota!

William Hunt, State Conservationist for MN NRCS gave a presentation on the background of NRCS and shared a brief synopsis of the various NRCS programs that NRCS has to offer in Minnesota. Following Mr. Hunt's presentation, the Senator Klobuchar participated in a dialogue of questioning and an answer period.



L-R Ginger Kopp State Forester, Robin Martinek, State Agronomist, Susan Ploetz, State Natural Resources Inventory Coordinator, Amy Klobuchar, US Senator, William Hunt, State Conservationist and Ann English, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations

## **Increased Cooperative Conservation for American Indian and Alaska Natives and Indian Tribes**

In recent weeks, several important policy documents have been updated to reflect an increased cooperative conservation effort among certain U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Interior agencies to help American Indians and Alaska Natives and Indian tribes address their natural resource concerns and enable more efficient and effective conservation program delivery on tribal lands. Information regarding these recent updates can be found at:

- General Manual 410, Part 405 published in October 2006 – which provides guidance for interactions between the NRCS employees and Indian tribes and their members. A copy of this amendment can be found on the NRCS Electronic Directives at: <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov>

## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual

### Value Added Conference - \$Ringing in the Profits!

During the last weekend of January 2007, approximately 200 local growers and service providers - primarily from the 4-state area - converged in Southeast Minnesota for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Value Added Conference, \$Ringing in the Profits! The Treasure Island Resort & Casino in Red Wing, Minnesota was the location for the recently-held event.

The Hiawatha Valley RC&D Council took the lead on the conference planning for this event. The Council also worked closely with River country RC&D out of Altoona, WI. Several other planning team partners included: Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), WI Farmer's Union, Land Stewardship Project, Pastureland Cooperative, University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of energy. Conferences such as this one would not have been possible if it had not been for people working together with a positive and common purpose.

Sponsors for the event included the USDA Risk Management Agency, Lead Sponsor; NRCS (Platinum) sponsor. Additionally, the Southeastern MN Initiative Foundation, the Driftless Area Initiative, Country Today, MN Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, and MOSES also played a key role in sponsorship.

The conference was a success because it was created by and for ag producers, educators and service providers. The planners knew the needs of the participants – what has been a “draw” in the past (e.g., workshops to address the Processing part of making a value-added product), the changing needs (e.g. marketing through the internet, branching out into the “renewable energy field”). Through their own networks, the planners also knew who to pull in as presenters for the conference. Despite some last minute changes to the agenda, the planning committee received very positive feedback on the cohesive and comprehensive schedule of speakers and workshops.



The other critical piece in the success and positive impact of the value added conference is that it is a smaller conference than the MOSES conference, for example. Being smaller, it provides an intimate space where participants, vendors, and speakers can network. These connections, as simple and basic as it sounds, are the cornerstones for a vibrant information sharing network. Local growers gaining more knowledge on how to diversify and market, partnerships being formed, identifying resources – it all contributes to thriving economic and environmental communities!

The agenda was designed around 4 themes:

- 1) Alternatives to Add Value,
- 2) Business Planning & Legal Issues,
- 3) Marketing,
- 4) Programs that might help (e.g. what other states are doing).

Breakout sessions provided the ‘meat’ to the skeleton, and the planning committee pulled in the right types of presenters.

Several speakers provided very timely and appropriate information to the conference participants. Andy Hager shared his passion for Holistic Management. Hager believes in the power and importance of holistic management. For those not familiar with the concept of Holistic Management, this session provided good background information along with details on the processes involved.

Ed Mahoney, an associate professor and Extension specialist at Michigan State University served as the Friday keynoter. Mahoney reminded the audience that as farmers diversify, they need to add marketing to their management skills. Marketing is all about relationships, Mahoney said.

Mahoney also pointed out that farmers have let others do the talking for them. The public has been convinced that it’s not necessarily a bad thing that “inefficient” farmers go out of business or that food be produced wherever it can be produced with the greatest yield at the lowest cost.

The location for next year’s MW Value-added conference is yet to be determined. Originally, River Country RC&D held this conference near Eau Claire, WI. It was thought that by moving the conference around, it’s impact and participation might be broadened.

Hiawatha RC&D learned a great deal by serving as a host of the MW VAC. Lessons learned included:

1. Start planning early.
2. Expect the unexpected (right up until the moment something scheduled actually happens!) Keeping information on an up-to-date shared computer drive between River Country RC&D and Hiawatha was critical.
3. Everyone has specific strengths (some in planning, some in paperwork, and some in manual-labor) –keep the tasks organized and identify the people who have those strengths to carry them out. This comes with time, and fortunately we did have some of those people and tasks already hashed out and lined up.
4. The Council was wonderful! These are the volunteers who “made things happen” by helping out in the day-to-day activities: from directing the tradeshow set up, to handling the silent auction, to securing sponsors (prior to the VAC), and running back and forth to making copies for the breakout sessions.
5. Stay flexible and BREATHE!

The Minnesota Association of Resource Conservation and Development (MARC&D) had a display at the MW Value Added Conference. This provided an excellent opportunity for RC&D council members to share the good story of RC&D with others.

L-R Wally Hildebrandt, President of Hiawatha RC&D, Richard Samuelson, Commissioner, Goodhue county, Don Banks, SWCD, Goodhue county and Muriel French, SWCD, Dodge county.



## Black History Month Observation

The theme for this year's Black history observation was "From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas." This special observance provided a time in which a focused awareness of current and historical contributions made by Black Americans was acknowledged.

On Tuesday, February 27th a Black History Month observance took place at the state office in St. Paul, MN. Employees from USDA-RD, USDA-FSA and USDA-NRCS were invited to participate in the program festivities. Several NRCS employees played a role in planning the program! A special thank you to the following NRCS employees for assisting in the program development. *George Montgomery II, Ann English, Cutrina Moreland, Myron Taylor, Winnie Chen, Cory Drummond, Lisa Buckner, Tim Wilson, Gloria Larson and Leah Duzy.*

William Hunt, State Conservationist reminded the participants of the important leadership role MN NRCS has been playing in special program observances such as for Black History Month. Events like this bring people together to learn and share cultures with one another. During 2007, MN NRCS will be holding other programs to observe all special emphasis programs.

"It seems that every five years employees are reminded of the importance of treating people with dignity and respect," said Hunt. This is an important concept for us to understand as employees if we are going to make a difference in the places we live and work.

*Winnie Chen, Biologist from the Area 4 office in Brooklyn Center provided opening remarks at the Black History program event.*



Dr. Linda Varner Mount, NRCS Associate Chief for NRCS in Washington, DC gave the Keynote Address. Dr. Mount shared her viewpoint on the February Black history Month Theme, "From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas." Dr. Mount reminded the participants to remember it is critical for us to reflect upon slavery as slavery was real and affected many people. It is important for us as an agency to talk about our history and share the stories of the past. It is through this continual sharing that we gain a better appreciation of each other and for our history.



*Cory Drummond, District Conservationist, Benson field office and current Acting Civil Rights Chair served as one of the program speakers.*



*L-R Dr. Linda Varner Mount, NRCS Associate Deputy Chief of Management and William Hunt, State Conservationist for MN NRCS*

## USDA ANNOUNCES CHRISTINA MUEDEKING AS NRCS REGIONAL ASSISTANT CHIEF

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on February 26, 2007 announced the selection of Christina Muedeking as Regional Assistant Chief for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Prior to her appointment, Muedeking served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Representative Tom Osborne for six years managing staff and agriculture policy for the Congressman including work on the 2002 Farm Bill. Her experience with Capitol Hill also includes work as Legislative Counsel for Representative David Minge where among other duties she drafted legislation for the 1996 Farm Bill including a marketing loan program and a wetlands policy reform proposal.

NRCS is organized into three regions—East, Central and West with each region headed by a Regional Assistant Chief. Regional Assistant Chiefs are management representatives of the Chief and are responsible for providing overall direction of NRCS programs and activities consistent with the Chief's guidance and overseeing NRCS State Conservationists.

Muedeking will serve as Regional Assistant Chief for the NRCS Central Region which is currently comprised of: Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin. She succeeds Merlin Bartz who returned to his native Iowa after serving in the Bush Administration at USDA since 2001.

Muedeking, a native of Minnesota, grew up on the family farm outside Tracy, Minnesota. She graduated from the University of Minnesota, Morris, with a degree in political science and earned her law degree from George Washington University in 1995. In addition to her legislative experience Muedeking worked for Koch Industries as a Program Officer and for National Pork Producers as International Trade Specialist.



Regional Assistant Chief Christina Muedeking

## 4th Annual Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference

The 4th Annual Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference was held on February 9-11th, 2007 at Maplelag Resort, located on White Earth Reservation. This year the conference was hosted by White Earth Reservation Land Recovery Project (WELRP), which is a tribal non-profit organization.

The theme of the conference in Ojibwe was Maawanji'idiwag Ji Gizhaadamowaad Miinikaanan or 'they gather to protect the seeds'. The 'seeds' refer to indigenous seed sources, which are a valuable source of cultural integrity and nutrition for native people, and to the traditional knowledge passed down by tribal elders about the spiritual connection to Mother Earth (physical world including soil, plants, animals & water).

NRCS was invited to participate in this conference by WELRP and approval to attend was granted through Area 1 management. Booth space was provided for the NRCS and a time slot was set-aside for the NRCS to talk about the importance of soils. Some of the other agenda items included information on gardening by the square foot via gardening boxes, heating rural homes with solar heat panels, seed sovereignty, organic certification questions/answers, community gardening strategies and the role of traditional diets in the prevention of chronic diet linked disease.

The overall take home message was native people are making contributions to sustainable agricultural systems and there is concern throughout Indian Country on the contributions of agriculture to the health and wellbeing of native people. Additionally, there is priority by native people to ensure the preservation of their traditional spiritual connection to Mother Earth; this connection is a major component of the subsistence lifestyles and/or medicinal practices that native people use to maintain their cultural integrity.



*Seed Sovereignty Session - Louie Hena, Tesuque Pueblo, NM*

For more information on the Indigenous Farming Conference please contact Dusty Jasken, NRCS – White Earth Tribal Liaison at 218-573-3842.

## **Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Making Things Happen in Minnesota!**

Throughout the state of Minnesota, RC&D Councils are “making things happen.” The seeds of their success are evident in the numerous projects that were planned and successfully implemented in 2006. These efforts are worthwhile and have made a difference in people’s lives.

In 2006, RC&Ds had 226 active projects and 115 projects completed.

A few State Wide Projects that are currently underway in Minnesota include:

**Productive Conservation on Working Land (PCWL)** – this is a demonstration program that provides incentives to reduce the economic, environmental and social risks to the farmers growing new alternative conservation crops for energy and emerging industry. Assistance may be in the form of establishment of cost-sharing, marketing, or research of new crops. Innovation is farmer or participant driven through a request for proposal process.

**Dry Hydrant Initiative** –RC&D’s throughout MN are working with local fire departments to install dry-hydrants. Dry hydrants provide access to water in remote areas for fire fighting. This project is carried out through grant funds from the MN Department of Natural Resources.

Two RC&Ds have applied for USDA project approval to the Secretary of Agriculture, namely, Coteau des Prairies RC&D and Mid Minnesota Mississippi RC&D.

RC&D projects continue to be varied and far reaching in nature. The projects reach out to rural America and communities in the state of Minnesota. Local-grass roots planning makes these projects special as local needs are identified and projects are developed to meet their needs.

Additional Project examples include:

**Steinberg Nature Park Project** – The MN DNR has announced a \$140,000 outdoor recreation grant to the City of Blue Earth for the Steinberg Nature Park project. Over 33 acres of land was donated to the city for a park. Three Rivers RC&D assisted the City in writing the grant application and project development. The funds will be used to establish native prairie, signage and trail development.

**Grazing Workshop Series** – Hiawatha Valley RC&D held a series of grazing management workshops throughout the area. These workshops were designed to give producers a better understanding of their pasture resources. The Council felt strongly that by doing a series of workshops on different topics they could spend more time on each topic, and offer different experiences by rotating through varying landscape and pasture management systems.

**Organic Education Day & All that JAS!** – Pembina Trail RC&D received a request from Prairie Ag Communications and the MN Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) Chapter #1 to help put together an organic education event and Japan Agriculture Standard (JAS) training. The event was held at the Best Western Hotel in Thief River Falls on July 11<sup>th</sup>. There were breakout sessions on organic crops, livestock and a field tour. Many contributing sponsors made the event a success!

**Biomass Gasification Fuel** –Testing has been completed on donated biomass samples to determine their potential to produce power through gasification. This project was partially funded with a \$25,000 grant from the Northwest MN Foundation. Pembina Trail partnered with the University of North Dakota’s Energy & Environmental Research Center to conduct the testing and analysis. Giziibii RC&D worked with Pembina Trail RC&D to secure samples from area wood & agriculture products growers.

## Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Making Things Happen in Minnesota (continued)

**Glacial Ridge WRP Monitoring Agreement** – Pembina Trail RC&D, in partnership with the University of Minnesota at Crookston, has hired a restoration ecologist to assist NRCS with WRP monitoring. This is a two-year project with most of the privately owned easements to be monitored this season.

**Oshki-Bawaajigan (Young Dreams) Dance Troupe**-Giziibii RC&D received a grant from the North Country Health Services Foundation for \$8,820. Oshki-Bawaajigan Dance Troupe is a program for Indians and non-Indians and is designed to help keep youth off drugs and alcohol and in school via the use of traditional Indian song, dance, and lessons taken from the rich North American culture. A sound system has been purchased for use by the troupe and the group has competed at Pow Wows. The dance troupe also performed for the Minnesota Association's annual meeting that was hosted by GRC&D last year. The troupe continues to train and make costumes for young dancers.

**RECAP**—Imagine the creation of a sustainable master-planned industrial park using energy produced from regionally harvested renewable resources of biomass and municipal solid wastes; business tenants producing “green” products that benefit the local rural economy; and employment increasing in the rural economy. This is the long-term vision for RECAP.

RECAP is to be located in International Falls, Koochiching County in northern Minnesota. Several other counties in the region will participate by providing municipal solid waste feedstock to the facility. The waste-to-energy solution will have a yearly operational volume of 36,000 tons (or 100 tons per day) of municipal solid waste.

The facility generates on the conservative side 40 MMBTu of synthetic gas that can be sold or used to produce approximately 3-4 MW of electricity.

Marketable solid by-products are produced so nothing goes to the landfill. The energy efficiency and modular nature of the waste-to-energy solution transitions nicely into combined heat and power applications for industrial parks.

Plasma gasification systems are environmentally clean. They work at extremely high temperatures (hotter than the surface of the sun) in an oxygen deprived environment. This biomass renewable energy solution can significantly increasing domestic energy production thereby decreasing our dependence on imported oil, and increasing the nation's recycling rate eliminating the need to landfill municipal solid waste. The process can be integrated within the existing waste management infrastructure.



Steve Kluess, Laurentian RC&D Coordinator explains the RECAP project to visitor at his display.

## Straight River Marsh's Current Status

Presently there are 27 WRP/RIM easements totaling 1677 acres enrolled in the project area. Additionally, another 660 acres are enrolled in USFWS-WPA, RIM, DNR-WMA and MN DOT wetland bank.

When the project effort began, many of the partners hoped to build a structure on the main ditch, which would flood the entire basin. Several Key landowners, however, have not yet enrolled in the program therefore a full basin restoration is not possible. For the time being, we have concentrated on the restoration of individual cells within the basin.

WRP has invested around 2.6 million dollars in the project and other partners such as the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (through the RIM program) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have also contributed a significant amount of funding.

The Straight River Marsh has historically been a major stopover point for waterfowl during spring migration. The restoration work that's been completed has resulted in a large increase in the number of waterfowl and other wildlife utilizing the area, including a number of species that haven't been seen in decades.

The documented return of the following species demonstrates the success of restoration:

*Tundra Swan, Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Sandhill Crane, Canvasback, Redhead, Pintail, Scaup, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Blue winged teal, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Mergansers, Herons, Egrets, Cormorant, snipe, Plovers, Bald Eagle and Burrowing Owl.*

**Future Efforts:** Future efforts of the Straight River marsh Project will be directed at communicating with landowners that own key parcels within the basin in an effort to secure permanent conservation easements on those parcels. The SWCD will investigate options available to assist easement owners with maintaining easement areas, particularly with controlling unwanted trees and brush.

A sign identifying the project area will be erected in 2007. For additional information about the Straight River Marsh Project please contact Noel Frank, District Conservationist, Owatonna field office at (507)-451-1054 or via e-mail at: [noel.frank@mn.usda.gov](mailto:noel.frank@mn.usda.gov)





## ***March 2007 National Women's History Month Generations of Women Moving History Forward***

Each year, March is designated as National Women's History Month to ensure that the history of American women will be recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country. The stories of women's historic achievements present an expanded view of the complexity and contradiction of living a full and purposeful life.

The knowledge of women's history provides a more expansive vision of what a woman can do. This perspective can encourage girls and women to think larger and bolder and can give boys and men a fuller understanding of the female experience.

The theme for Women's History Month 2007 is "Generations of Women Moving History Forward." This theme celebrates the wisdom and tenacity of prior and future generations of women and recognizes the power and impact of generations working together. Moving History Forward is a process of individuals coming together for the greater good of the society and confirming the idea that individuals working together can be effective in building a better, more compassionate world.

The 2007 Honorees represent generations of women who have moved history forward and who have created new possibilities for the future. This year, the National Women's History Project are honoring 14 women whose lives and work span over 150 years and eight generations, as well as a wide-range of occupations and accomplishments. Although from different regional, educational, cultural, racial, religious, and economic backgrounds, each of the 2007 Honorees have, with skillful and courageous actions, helped move history forward. (For full bios see: [http://www.nwhp.org/whm/gage\\_bio.php](http://www.nwhp.org/whm/gage_bio.php))

### ***The 2007 Honorees are:***

***Lupe Anguiano (b. 1929)***

*Protector of the Earth and Activist for the Poor*

***Virginia Foster Durr (1903-1999)***

*Civil Rights Activist and Author*

***Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826—1898)***

*Women's Rights Activist, Theorist, and Historian*

***Martha Wright Griffiths (1912—2003)***

*Congresswoman*

***Rebecca S. Halstead (b.1959)***

*Commanding General, 3rd Corps Support Command*

***Barbara Haney Irvine (b.1944)***

*Founding President, Alice Paul Centennial Foundation, Inc.*

***Brownie Ledbetter (b. 1932)***

*Civil Rights Advocate and Activist*

***Suzanne Lewis (b.1956)***

*First Woman Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park*

***Constance Baker Motley (1921 -2005)***

*First African American Woman Appointed to the Federal Judiciary*

***Monique Mehta (b. 1973)***

*Executive Director of the Third Wave Foundation*

***Toshi Reagon (b. 1964)***

*Musician and Songwriter,*

***Joanelle Romero (b. 1957)***

*Launched Red Nation Media Internet and Television Channel*

***Mary Ruthsdotter (b. 1944)***

*Co-Founder of the National Women's History Project.*

***Minniejean Brown Trickey (b.1941)***

*Civil Rights Activist*

**National Women's History Project [www.Nwhp.org](http://www.Nwhp.org)**

**AREA 1  
GLEN KAJEWSKI, ASTC(FO)  
THIEF RIVER FALLS, MN**

**Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians Host Plant Materials Tour by Leanne Langeberg**



The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indian's Department of Natural Resources (RLDNR) and NRCS have worked together on many conservation projects. Since 2001, the RLDNR forestry program has successfully utilized the funding and technical assistance opportunities through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for their reforestation efforts. To provide Area I staff and conservation partners more insight into the conservation efforts occurring on the Red Lake Indian Reservation, the RLDNR hosted the NRCS Plant Materials Tour, September 21, 2006. On the Reservation the tour focused on the various levels of forest restoration and development and the Band's greenhouse and nursery operations. The tour also included a visit to an oak savannah restoration project, unique to northern Minnesota. RLDNR's Forestry Development Forester, Gerry Engel, led the tour discussions and activities. Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Center Director from Bismarck ND was in attendance, along with RLDNR Director, Al Pemberton and RLDNR foresters Jeff Fossen, Joe Harris and Wanda LaDuke.

A tour stop at the oak savannah restoration project, part of an active EQIP contract, allowed the group to see an innovative approach to restoring an oak habitat that has been strongly affected by the presence of frequent fire. Engel explained that with proper management, designed to encourage oak regeneration that will support a healthy range of oak age classes and improve the surrounding landscape, this oak savannah will thrive. RLDNR foresters have been

working with NRCS, seeking technical assistance to improve the current conditions of the oak savannah and establishing a sound native prairie under story. After a traditional Anishinabe meal (walleye, wild rice, and fry bread) the group ventured into the great pine forest. The tour destinations allowed the group opportunities to see a wide perspective of forest redevelopment activities including: seed collection and propagation methods, alternative site preparation methods (such as anchor-chaining and prescribed burns), pine plantation methods, and timber stand improvement (TSI) methods. The group visited a mature red pine timber stand that had been thinned as a TSI and fuels reduction project. RLDNR forester Wanda LaDuke, shared her knowledge and taught the group identification and uses of under story forest plants.

Nearing the end of the tour, the group visited a white spruce seed orchard. Engel explained that this orchard is part of RLDNR's involvement with the Minnesota Tree Improvement Cooperative (MTCI). Working with MTCI, Red Lake is able to research and select stronger and more viable spruce and pine families, as well as share research information with other agencies and Tribes involved with MTCI. Engel expressed RLDNR's willingness to work more directly with the NRCS Plant Materials Centers to expand each agencies plant material and research opportunities.

The tour ended with a visit to the Red Lake Band's greenhouse facility. Engel led a final discussion about the operations of the greenhouse facility and the staff's ability to germinate and propagate over 1.2 million seedlings of pine, spruce, tamarack, cedar and oak per year.



**AREA 1**  
**GLEN KAJEWSKI, ASTC(FO)**  
**THIEF RIVER FALLS, MN**

**Personnel:**

Babies, Babies, Babies..... We've had some new arrivals in Area 1.

*Matt Baltes*, GIS Specialist – Thief River Falls AO, and wife Stacey have a new baby Girl. Kelsey Grace was born on Saturday, February 17, 2007 and weighed in at 9 lbs 6 oz.

*Amanda Peterson*, Soil Conservation Technician – Ada FO, and husband Kari have a new baby boy. Nathan Lawrence was born on Wednesday, February 21, 2007 and weighed in at 9 lbs. Congratulations Matt and Amanda!

Congratulations to *Thane Espe*, Soil Conservation Technician - Warren FO, on a recent promotion.

Congratulations to Christine Spaeth, Soil Conservation Technician – Mahnomen FO, on a recent promotion.

*Dan Haig* assumed his new duties as the CSP Soil Conservationist in the Thief River Falls FO.

**Awards:**

*Larry Voltz*, District Conservationist – Bemidji FO, received a CD clock radio for performing Acting District Conservationist duties in the Bagley FO.

*Kathy Fillmore*, District Conservationist – Thief River Falls FO, received a winter jacket for performing Acting District Conservationist duties in the Warren FO.

**AREA 2**  
**JAMES R. AYRES, ASTC(FO)**  
**FERGUS FALLS, MN**

**Sugar Bush Forest Stand Improvement**

The NRCS in Becker County is partnering with White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP) and the MN DNR in an effort to increase Maple Syrup production on tribal land. Maple Syrup is an important subsistence and economic resource for the people at White Earth Reservation, furthermore, collecting and processing of maple syrup is a source of cultural integrity for tribal members.

White Earth Land Recovery Project is a tribal non-profit organization whose mission is to “facilitate recovery of the original land base of the White Earth Indian Reservation, while preserving and restoring traditional practices of sound land stewardship, language fluency, community development, and strengthening our spiritual and cultural heritage”.



**AREA 2**  
**JAMES R. AYRES, ASTC(FO)**  
**FERGUS FALLS, MN**

Meetings between the NRCS, MNDNR and WELRP have paved the way for WELRP to start implementing a Woodland Stewardship Plan, these meetings also showed potential to improve WELRP's Sugar Bush stands through EQIP under the Forest Stand Improvement practice.

WELRP currently manages about 300 acres of forestland for Maple Sugar production, 60 acres of which have recently been rolled into an EQIP contract under the Forest Stand Improvement practice. A majority of the Forest Stand Improvement practice activities will include removal of mature aspen trees that are shading out the seedling maples; other activities will include the removal of trees that are directly touching or shading out the canopy of mature Sugar Maple trees. One interesting aspect of this project is WELRP will be conducting their Forest Stand Improvement activities with horses in an attempt to keep their 'footprint' to a minimum.



The ultimate goal of the project is to increase the production of tap trees and change the overall composition of the forest to a mature Sugar Maple stand. WELRP will not likely see the full benefits of their work, but their grandchildren will.

The following people contributed to this project::

*Ron Chilton*, Sustainable Communities Director – WELRP; *Leah Prussia*, Deputy Director – WELRP; *Ed Musielewicz*, Becker Co. DC – NRCS; *Dave Johnson*, Forester – MN DNR; *Dusty Jasken*, White Earth Reservation Tribal Liaison - NRCS

**Awards:**

*Nancy Alexander* received a nonmonetary award for helping with the completion of 182 CRP contracts, developing new maps, and sending out signature sheets when required.

*Robert Nelson* received a non-monetary award for helping with the completion of 182 CRP contracts for the 32<sup>nd</sup> ReEnrollment.

*Robert Honeman* received an Outstanding Performance Award.

*Darlene Drayna* received an Outstanding Performance Award.

*Bruce Becker* received an Outstanding Performance Award.

*James Fritz* received an Outstanding Performance Award.

*Robert Koltes* received a non-monetary award for being acting district conservationist in Elbow Lake.

*Michael Lieser* received a non-monetary award for completing 28 CP-18 salinity evaluations and 13 special soil borings (WRP, AgWaste, EQIP) prior to freeze up.

*Darlene Drayna* received a non-monetary award for performing safety and health committee duties.

**Personnel:**

*Michael Lieser* retired from the Area Resource Soil Scientist position in the Fergus Falls Area Office

*Dave Aldeen* retired from the District Conservationist position in the Wadena Field Office.

*Cheryl Isder* left her Soil Conservationist position in Perham to go to a District Conservationist position in Clarkfield, Minnesota.

*Jeremy Ziegler* has been selected for the Soil



On behalf of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District, Onanogozie Resource Conservation & Development Council, Natural Resources Conservation Service in Pine County, and local zoning offices, we would like to announce an update of the Guide to Rural Living. This Guide provides a wealth of information on rural living, natural resource management, and small acreage farming in the PICKM area, which includes the counties of Pine, Isanti, Chisago, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs. This educational resource makes it easy to read, print, and access local information about everything from zoning issues to pasture management to rain gardens. The original Guide was developed under a NRCS EQIP Educational Assistance grant.

By the end of January, the University of Minnesota will activate a website that contains all of the information in the publication. The following website will provide your customers with information on rural living. The web address is: [www.extension.umn.edu/ruralliving](http://www.extension.umn.edu/ruralliving). Copies of the CD may be ordered by contacting the Kanabec County Service Center at (320)679-3781 or 3892.

The Guide for Rural Living Committee assigned to update the Guide for Rural Living is:

Lori Weddle-Schott and Valerie Prax, University of Minnesota Extension  
Mary Kay Anderson, Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Larry Nelson & Joann Nelson, Onanogozie Resource Conservation & Development  
Julie Lindner & Shannon Rasinski, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pine County  
Rachel Fautsch, Summer Intern, Student at the University of Minnesota

**AREA 3**  
**KEVIN DAW, ASTC(FO)**  
**DULUTH, MN**

**Personnel:**

Welcome aboard to *Mark Surface* our new Civil Engineering Technician at the Grand Rapids Field Office.

Welcome aboard to *Andrew Hyke* our new Soil Conservation Technician at the North Branch Field office.

*Lawrence Nelson*, RC&D Coordinator, Onanegozie RC&D, Mora, MN, retired on January 3, 2007. Best of luck to you, Larry!

*Jerome Gorton*, Project Leader, Soil Survey Office, Sandstone, MN, retired on January 31, 2007. Best wishes, Jerry!

**Awards:**

At our recent Area 3 All Employees meeting, the following employees were recognized for the following achievements:

Plaque and gold watch presented to *Gerald McCormick*, Soil Scientist, Virginia SSO, for "30" years of federal service!

Certificate of Merit and Plaque presented to *Thomas Gervais*, Soil Conservation Technician, Duluth FO, for outstanding performance in FY '06.

Non-monetary awards presented to our Hinckley Field Office staff, *Robert Korth*, *Shannon Rasinski*, *Julie Lindner*, and *Marvin Kunkel*, for accomplishment of conservation application.

Non-monetary awards presented to our Mora Field Office staff, *Steven Haar* and *Donna Walters-Nelson*, for accomplishment of conservation planning.

Non-monetary awards presented to the Duluth SSO staff, *Roger Risley*, *Clayton Johnson*, and *Larissa Schmitt*, for soil survey accomplishments.

Non-monetary awards presented to the Virginia SSO staff, *Clinton Tuve*, *Gerald McCormick*, and *Jeffrey Kroll*, for soil survey accomplishments.

Non-monetary award presented to *David Wise*, Soil Conservationist, Center of Excellence, who was instrumental in getting the Grand Portage Cultural Resources Tribal Protocol signed.

Area Safety & Health Award presented to *Donna Walters-Nelson* for her leadership in biosecurity safety.

Your extra effort is appreciated!

**NRCS Mission Statement**  
**Helping People**  
**Help The Land**

### **Stearns Outreach Mailing**

By: Jaime Schaunaman, SC, Waite Park

Stearns County completed an outreach mailing to all known women and minority producers in the county concerning the 2007 EQIP Sign-up period. The mailing was sent out on January 18, 2007, and it notified the producers of the ranking period dates as well as some general information on the EQIP, and what practices are available for both cost share and incentive payments.

The mailing generated 12 applications during the first ranking period, and three will result in new 2007 contracts. Practices applied for range from Irrigation Water Management (449), to Prescribed Burn (338) to Invasive Plant Species Pest Management (797). All in all the mailing was a success!

### **Stearns NRCS/SWCD Meet with County Commissioners**

By: Jaime Schaunaman, SC, Waite Park

District Conservationist Steven Sellnow, and SWCD Administrator, Dennis Fuchs, recently met with the Stearns County Commissioners during their regular board meeting on February 6, 2007, at the Stearns County Administration Center in St. Cloud.

Steve Sellnow gave each of the Commissioners a copy of the NRCS 5-year Strategic Plan and motto of *"Helping People Help the Land."* He gave an overview of the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and discussed the importance of agriculture, especially dairy, throughout Stearns County. Steve also emphasized the agricultural energy components of both CSP and the proposed Farm Bill.

Dennis Fuchs informed the County Commissioners

of two recent awards given to a Stearns County SWCD employee and supervisor. Brad Wenz, Soil Conservationist, Stearns SWCD was awarded the distinguished Soil Scientist of the Year Award from the Minnesota Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPPS) in December 2006. Chuck Uphoff, Stearns SWCD Supervisor was given the honor of being named the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) 2006 Outstanding SWCD Supervisor of the Year at their 70<sup>th</sup> annual convention in December 2006.

The County Commissioners commended both Brad and Chuck along with the entire SWCD and NRCS staff for their work getting conservation on the ground.

### **Personnel:**

Martin Goettl, GIS Specialist, Brooklyn Center resigned effective January 7, 2007, to accept a position with Trempealeau County, Wisconsin as GIS Coordinator.

Joni' Franklin, Soil Conservationist transferred to the Waite Park Field Office effective January 7, 2007, from Jackson, MI.

Nathan Hylla, Engineering Technician joined the Central Minnesota SWCD's Joint Powers at Waite Park effective January 16, 2007. Nathan will provide technical assistance to the SWCD's located in the eight county area which covers Benton, McLeod, Meeker, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, and Wright. Previously, Nathan worked for Bogart, Pederson & Associates as a Survey Technician/Crew Chief in Waite Park.

Katundra Shears, District Conservationist, transferred to the Jordan Field Office effective February 18, 2007, from Osage IA.

Mike McMillian, District Technician, transferred to the Benton SWCD effective March 5, 2007, from Wabasha SWCD.

### **Area responds to EQIP requests**

The results of the recent EQIP sign-up were better than expected. With high corn prices and a potential volatile market it was thought that many area producers would forego conservation for corn. We had 299 applications for \$5.3 million dollars in requests. Each field office is to be commended for their work in soliciting signups. We had significant activity in feedlots with 19 applications, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans with 16 applications, Ground and Surface Water Control \$52,000 in requests and a special allocation for the Kanaranzie-Little Rock Watershed Land Treatment Program with \$149,000 in requests. We have allocated \$3,650,000 to area projects, which means we still have a need for nearly \$1.8 million. Looks like we will be busy again this year.

### **Bio Fuels:**

Zuse of bio-fuels has stirred a lot of interest in this area of the state. We currently have 2 ethanol and 1 bio-diesel plant in production with 2 more in stages of construction. Several meetings in the area have been held dealing with the use of corn, corn stover, prairie grasses, soybeans, trees and other fiber crops. Local farmers see this as a means to increase income, and potentially diversify



their acreage. In the short term, there are many concerns on the environmental side:

1. Increased corn production may move into areas currently in CRP and several HEL fields may go into corn production.
2. Removal of corn stover can create a depletion of organic material and potentially subject fields to greater wind and water erosion.
3. Ethanol plants require an enormous amount of water. If pumped from ground water, the effect on neighboring wells in the area could be significant.
4. Continuous corn can create challenges for weed, insect and other disease control problems.

If we advocate use of alternative energy production, we need to be cautious before we run headlong into a potential disaster.

### **Personnel:**

New- *Cheryl Isder*, DC in Clarkfield  
*David Voigt* SCT in Madison selected as soil conservationist for CSP headquartered in Marshall field office.

### **Awards:**

*Dawn Madison* and *Brad Harberts* for Outstanding fall practice application workload.  
*Russ Kleinschmidt* – For development of CSP tracking documents.  
*Steven Schemel* – Outstanding assistance on recent EQIP signups.

**AREA 5  
MIKE APPEL, ASTC(FO)  
MARSHALL, MN**

**ZACHARY SANTJER**

Civilian Profession: H&H Construction  
Date Arrived in Iraq: November 2006  
Job Duty: Security in Barwana, Iraq  
Unit: 1-194th CAB, (National Guard)  
Redwood Falls

Family: Wife – Karli  
Parents – Scott & Val Santjer (Scott  
is Technician with the Board of Soil and Water  
Resources in Marshall, MN.  
Brother – Tyler Santjer

Suggested Items: Microwavable food products.  
Enjoys hunting, fishing, ice fishing, cooking, and  
poker.

Zachary's Address:

SPC Santjer, Zachary  
3-194th CAB (PTT)  
Unit 73432  
Haditha Dam  
APO-AE 09333-3432



**JEREMY ZYLLA**

Civilian Profession:  
Date Arrived in Iraq: November 2006  
Job Duty: Humvee Driver, Tanker, Security  
Unit: Co. "C" 1-194th AR, (National Guard)  
Sauk Center

Family: Wife – Kayla  
Brother-in-Law – Russell Kleinschmidt,  
soil conservationist in Marshall, MN.  
Dog - Jazber

Suggested Items: Golf Magazines & Photos,  
Charleston Chews, Mystery and Novels &  
Investment & Stock Market Magazines

Jeremy's Address:

SPC Jeremy Zylla  
Co. "C" 1-194th AR  
Unit 60000  
APO-AE 09331



### **Wind Energy and Cellulosic Ethanol Workshops**

Over 100 individuals attended the Wind Energy and Cellulosic Ethanol Workshops held on February 8 and 9 in Olivia. The February 9<sup>th</sup> session focused on cellulosic ethanol, options and trade-offs and state and federal policies, incentives and technologies for ethanol, biomass, and other renewable fuels.

Approximately 120 individuals attended the Hawk Creek Watershed Information and Appreciation Meeting held January 24<sup>th</sup> in Willmar. An update on the watershed project was followed by presentations on the carbon credit market, riverbank erosion, farm policy and the changing weather patterns in Minnesota.

### **Nitrogen Rate Demonstrations**

On February 15, 2007, a nitrogen rate informational meeting was held in Mankato. This informational meeting presented results from on-farm nitrogen rate demonstrations and provided insight for changing fertilizer supply and demand for area farmers. Meeting sponsors include the MDA, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota Precision Agriculture Center, Southern Minnesota Watersheds, Rural Advantage, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Blue Earth Consulting, and Agriliance.

Numerous watersheds in south-central Minnesota have funded more than 70 on-farm nitrogen management sites since 2000. The purpose of these on-farm trials is to enable growers to improve nitrogen management by evaluating different nitrogen rates on their own farm.

### **Personnel:**

Betsy Norland, Soil Conservation Technician, began duty on March 5, 2007, in Fairmont. She previously worked for NRCS in Iowa

Keith Trudell, Soil Conservation Technician, located in the Glencoe Field Office and shared with the Waconia Field Office began duty on March 19, 2007.

Ron Otto has been hired as the new High Island Creek and the Rush River Project Coordinator. Ron started this position on January 8, 2007, and is located in the Gaylord Service Center.

### **Lakeside Canning Company**

Andy Hart, Olmsted SWCD board member and Claron Krogness, soil conservationist from the Rochester field office recently spent a day at the Lakeside Canning company's annual grower appreciation day discussing conservation. Over the last several years, Hart and Krogness have worked closely on sharing their conservation passion with others in southeastern Minnesota! Lakeside has canning crop contracts throughout Olmsted, Winona, and Wabasha county.

Jim Klavetter, an employee with Lakeside Canning has been promoting the use of cover crops after canning crops to protect the soil from erosion over winter. Hart and Krogness shared a video of the aerial seeding program of which Andy has been an active participant. Claron Krogness also shared several pictures (tillage posters) that he and Julie MacSwain, public affairs specialist worked. These public information tools have been received positively by farmers in southeast Minnesota.

Over 100 landowners viewed the conservation display at the Lakeside Canning company's annual grower appreciation day.

Andy and Claron are taking their conservation show to the Agrinews Farm Show in Rochester March 21-22, where they will increase conservation awareness and do what they can to make conservation happen in southeast Minnesota!

### **Personnel:**

Matthew Waterworth, Soil Conservationist, Preston field office was promoted to GS-07.

The following NRCS employees in Area 7 received an outstanding appraisal in 2006.

Donna Klapperich, SCT in Dodge Center

Mark Kunz, DC in Lewiston

Judy Lambert, AAC, Rochester AO

Rob Romocki, AE. Rochester AO

**The next issue of Current Developments  
is due: June 15, 2007**

**Send your articles to:**

Julie MacSwain, State Public Affairs Specialist  
julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov

*Your contribution and continued readership of  
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