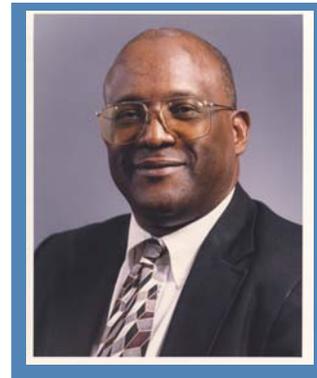


# Minnesota



WILLIAM HUNT,  
STATE CONSERVATIONIST

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As I write this column for this issue of Current Developments I am reminded of how quickly time flies by! Since 1995 I have worked with several people throughout Minnesota that have had a passion for Helping People Help The Land. It is because of people such as these and yourself that we have been able to apply conservation to our Minnesota Landscape. Thank you for your continued efforts!

As you know, the summer of 2007 brought forth a wide mixture of Minnesota weather. We had a drought in much of our state and had the misfortune of experiencing heavy rains and flooding in southern Minnesota. In the recent flood, we lost one of our NRCS retirees, John Micheel. John worked passionately for over 37 years on the planning and construction of conservation practices in south-eastern Minnesota.

In the last few weeks several of our NRCS employees have been working on Emergency Watershed Program efforts in south-east MN. A special thank you to Nate Anderson, John Beckwith, John Brach, John Nicholson and several other NRCS employees who have provided technical assistance in this effort.

**WILLIAM HUNT**  
STATE CONSERVATIONIST

## Sonia Maassel Jacobsen



Sonia Maassel Jacobsen, a hydraulic engineer at the NRCS State Office in St. Paul, Minnesota has been named the recipient of the 2007 PEI Professional Engineer of the Year Award for her outstanding leadership in water resources engineering and service to the engineering profession. Jacobsen is only the third recipient of this award given by the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE, formerly ASAE), which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the June 2007 annual international meeting held in Minneapolis.

Jacobsen has been widely recognized for her expertise in the emerging field of wetland hydrology. Sonia has played a lead role for NRCS in recovery efforts from the 1997 and 2002 floods in Minnesota. As a result of those experiences, she was recruited for a team to assess damages and suggest solutions to problems caused by flooding in remote areas of Nicaragua after Hurricane Mitch.

Jacobsen has authored technical releases on the use of loose rock riprap and erosion protection for dams and lakeshores. She is an emeritus member of the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying, the organization that prepares and administers the professional engineering exam, and serves as an ABET volunteer in the evaluation of collegiate engineering programs for compliance with ABET standards.

Awards and honors for Jacobsen include an Outstanding Service award from the AELSLAGID Board for Professional Engineering licensure, two NRCS Susan B. Anthony awards, Minnesota Erosion Control Association Leadership award, and the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Region award for a multi-agency lakeshore stabilization project. Jacobsen was one of 238 women engineers across the nation recently recognized in the American Society of Civil Engineers' book entitled Changing Our World: True Stories of Women Engineers.

## Colleen Oestreich



Colleen Oestreich was named recipient of the Outstanding Staff Member award on September 11, 2007 at the Minnesota Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc. Summer meeting in International Falls.

Colleen was recognized for her direct contribution to the fulfillment of the purpose of the RC&D program at the local, state, regional and national levels. Colleen Oestreich has been the Giziibii RC&D Coordinator for the past 14 years. During this time, Giziibii RC&D has experienced a steady growth in net assets. Giziibii has been recognized as an Outstanding Council by receiving the National Association of RC&D Council's Circle of Diamonds designation and in 2003 was selected as the Outstanding Council in the North Central RC&D region.

At the local level, Giziibii has completed over 117 resource related projects which tallies many hours of volunteer work, boosts the economic well-being of the Giziibii RC&D area, and greatly impacts the standard of living for many people.

In 1996, Colleen Oestreich became an "RC&D Partner" by becoming a member of the National Association of RC&D councils. She is very supportive and encourages members of the Giziibii RC&D Council to become actively involved with RC&D at the state and national level.

## Sherburne County Pollinator Day

The Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation



District held a special ceremony in recognition of National Pollinator Week declared by USDA for June 24 – 30, 2007. The event, located at the Sherburne History Center in

Becker, Minnesota, acknowledged groups and individuals who assisted in creating the Living Pollinator Exhibit at the center.

Pollination is a vital stage in the life cycle of all flowering plants. The transfer of pollen is necessary for healthy and productive native and agricultural ecosystems. In fact, about 75% of all flowering plant species need the help of pollinators such as insects, birds, bats and other animals to move their heavy pollen grains from plant to plant for fertilization. The work of pollinators ensures full harvests of many agricultural crops and contributes to healthy plants everywhere. Over 60% of our food supply is dependent on pollinators. Pollinators are often keystone species, meaning they are critical to ecosystem health and vitality.

NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, Ann English, explained the role of NRCS, working in partnership with other agencies, in preserving habitats to combat the decline of beneficial pollinators.



Realizing the importance of pollinators in today's society, NRCS has stepped forward with programs that address the issue of pollination. For example, NRCS has a pollinator incentive payment in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS provides a financial incentive of \$20/acre/year to eligible landowners up to maximum of 120 acres per year over a 3-year period. NRCS is continuing to work on ways in which technical assistance can be provided to improve the habitat for pollinator species. In FY 2007, NRCS had a total of 28 EQIP contracts on a total of 245 acres in Minnesota.

Several NRCS employees assisted in establishing the Living Pollinator Exhibit by planting trees and shrubs. These employees include Ginger Kopp, State Staff Forester, Robin Martinek, State Agronomist, George Montgomery, DC Elk River, and Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist, Bismarck, ND. Sherburne County SWCD employees Gina Hugo and Bill Bronder led the effort in creating the Living Pollinator Exhibit.



L-R Ginger Kopp, State Staff Forester for MN NRCS and Robin Martinek, MN NRCS State Agronomist attended the Pollinator Day event.

## Archeological Site at Fort Ridgely in Nicollet County by Doug Miller

Doug George, Archeologist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources uncovered a major find in southern Minnesota – a fire ring. The ring is very old, intact, and according to Doug: “The kind of site that an archeologist will uncover once or twice in a career.” Doug has called me out to a number of sites at Fort Ridgely to determine the degree of human influence on archeological sites.

This particular fire ring was not damaged by shallow plowing operations after European settlement. It was covered by 8 to 9 inches of sandy loam (most likely blown in by wind). The soil in the area (as it is mapped) is sandy and contains no large fragments. Initial site work is done randomly with a shovel. When the shovel went “clunk” Doug knew he was onto something. The trowels came out and the slow process of taking down the soil eventually revealed the fire ring. The fire ring has spiritual significance as it is open to the east. Doug added that knowing that Dickman soil found on this terrace typically lacks large fragments (from the Nicollet Co. Soil Survey) really helped him when the shovel hit the rock.

For more information about this site in Nicollet County, please contact Doug Miller at the St. Peter Area Office. Doug can be reached via e-mail at: [douglas.miller@mn.usda.gov](mailto:douglas.miller@mn.usda.gov).



This picture depicts a fire ring that was discovered in southern Minnesota.

## **National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees' (NOPHNRCSE) 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference**

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference of NOPHNRCSE was held August 6-10, 2007 at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott in Bloomington, MN. The decision to hold the conference in MN occurred at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference in Orlando, FL a year ago. The NOPHNRCSE membership voted for having the conference in Bloomington!

Over 224 people registered at the Minnesota conference. This attendance included employees, exhibitors and speakers from all over the continental U.S, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The planning of this event included a total of 13 NOPHNRCSE committees. These committees planned the conference utilizing teleconferences and e-mail as their major means of communications. Julie MacSwain, MN NRCS Public Affairs Specialist served as the Planning Chair for this event.

William Hunt, MN NRCS State Conservationist, provided a welcome to conference participants during the opening session of the conference. Hunt challenged the conference participants to participate to the fullest extent and his suggestion echoed throughout the rest of the conference.

Arlen Lancaster, NRCS Chief, spoke at the First Annual Ray T. Margo Jr. Awards Luncheon held on Tuesday, August 7. The Chief felt the theme, "Creating Leaders to Conserve America for Future Generations" was encouraging. Mr. Lancaster reminded the audience to do what they could to sharpen their technical skills and leadership abilities and noted that NRCS employees need to take advantage of opportunities of working together with others. Additionally, Chief Lancaster pointed out we need to make NRCS showcase what our population looks like.

A major highlight for the conference occurred on Wednesday, August 8. A total of three different conservation tours were held:

1. National Wildlife Refuge/Jonathan Paddleford boat ride on the Mississippi River
2. Minnesota Landscape Arboretum/Jonathan Paddleford boat ride on the Mississippi River.
3. Urban conservation project tour of metro raingardens, farm and ranchland protection program and the new immigrant farm program.

Tessa Garcia, MN NRCS employee served as the co-chair of the local arrangements committee and took on the responsibility of planning all aspects of the conservation tours. Tessa was assisted by committee members from the states of Missouri and Illinois. Additional planning assistance was provided by NRCS employees including Winnie Chen, Cutrina Moreland, Michele Wohlers and Timothy Wilson.

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Training Conference was successful due in part to the dedication of a committed group of people working together toward a common purpose. The strong level of support from the MN NRCS State Conservationist, William Hunt was greatly appreciated! For further information about the NOPHNRCSE conference, please contact Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist in St. Paul at (651) 602-7859.

## Pictorial memories from the NOPHNRCS Conference in Bloomington



L-R JR Flores, ND NRCS State Conservationist, William Hunt, MN NRCS State Conservationist and Carlos Suarez, NOPHNRCS President



The Minnesota Arboretum was one of the conservation tour stops.

Flowers were in plentiful supply at the Minnesota Arboretum.



Several MN NRCS employees attended the NOPHNRCS conference in Bloomington, MN. Front row, William Hunt, MN NRCS State Conservationist and Arlen Lancaster, NRCS Chief



L-R, Rafael Guerrero, TX and James Ayres, ASTC-FO, Fergus Falls. Rafael and James used to work together in the state of Nevada.



L-R Xavier Montoya, Wyoming State Conservationist, Ann English, ASTC-Operations and Astrid Martinez, MLRA Project Leader, Nebraska.



Gregg Thompson, Urban Conservation Specialist with the Association of Metropolitan Soil and Water Conservation Districts discussed Rain Gardens with the tour participants.



L-R Astrid Martinez, NE NRCS, Carlos Suarez, NOPHNRCS President and Cutrina Moreland, MN NRCS made their final preparations for the NOPHNRCS banquet event.

## Minnesota NRCS Signs Sixth Cultural Resources Agreement

Minnesota NRCS signed a cultural resources tribal agreement with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians on Wednesday, August 15, 2007 at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs located in Onamia, Minnesota. The signing kicked off the second day of the Minnesota Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Outreach and Training Conference.

Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist William Hunt, along with Bois Forte Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Rose Berens, signed the protocol which outlines a process for consulting with the tribe prior to implementing any practices (i.e. undertakings) that will affect tribal lands and resources, especially within reservation boundaries. Berens appreciated the opportunity to work with MN NRCS in developing a consultation protocol that ensures that the tribe's interests, especially relating to natural resources and traditional cultural and spiritual places, are represented and considered in all phases of conservation planning.

This agreement continues to strengthen our government-to-government relationship with the tribe and builds on an already established conservation partnership. For additional information pertaining to cultural resources and tribal consultation protocols, please contact Patrick McLoughlin at (651) 602-7907 or via e-mail at [Patrick.mcloughlin@mn.usda.gov](mailto:Patrick.mcloughlin@mn.usda.gov)



William Hunt, MN NRCS State Conservationist, Rose Berens, Bois Forte Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Patrick McLoughlin, MN NRCS Cultural Resources Specialist participate in the signing of a cultural resources agreement between Minnesota NRCS and the Bois Forte Band.

**Rick Berscheid and Rich Geving Lend a Helping Hand  
by Mark Dybal, District Conservationist, Alexandria, Minnesota**

During one of our hottest days (upper 90's) in later July. Rick Berscheid and Rich Geving were out doing some field checking and while en route from one site to the next, noticed a hay field that was in the process of being raked. However, as they went by the field, they noticed that the tractor had stopped and an elderly man was sitting on the tractor seat but had his arms and head draped over one of the back tires.

Rich and Rick were both concerned about this gentleman but were not sure they should drive across the hay field to him so they drove up to the farm yard to check if someone else was around. Not finding anyone at the building site, they felt obligated to check on him so they drove out to his tractor. They asked him, as he lay over the tire, if he was OK and he said "no." They offered him some water and he said, "no, I just had a mint."

Rich and Rick knew he was in trouble at this point as he appeared fatigued and disoriented. They asked if they could help him off the tractor and he told them to help him get his foot on the clutch so that he could drive home! He was not capable of driving and obviously his muscles and motor functions were affected. Rich and Rick did not help him with the clutch but instead helped him off the tractor. Rich and Rick took him to his son's house where he was tended to by his family.

The farmer's son stopped by the office a couple days later and thanked Rich and Rick for rescuing his father. His son said he was not in very good shape at the time and still was recovering, he was very thankful that Rich and Rick came by as his father very likely would not have survived if they hadn't stopped at that time! He shared with Rich and Rick a note that was written from the gentleman's grandchildren thanking them for helping their grandfather.

The gentleman rescued is the father of Warren Meissner who was raking Warren's hay at the time. The NRCS office has worked with Warren on different issues over the past couple of years. Warren has expressed an interest in a prescribed grazing system for his operation.

*Thank you Rich Geving and Rick Berscheid for making a difference in Area 2!*



Rich Geving and Rick Berscheid

## Conservation Agencies Contribute to On-farm Composting By Jamie Thomazin, District Conservationist

Livestock composting offers farmers an alternative to traditional rendering systems. With effective planning, a compost operation can be affordable, efficient, and environmentally friendly.

These advantages have made livestock composting a management practice that conservation offices want to support. A growing number of compost facilities have been started with help from conservation cost share programs. One example of a successful partnership involves hog farmer, John Wambeke of rural Minnesota, the Lyon County Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS. Local, State cost-share and Federal EQIP monies were utilized to install the composting facility.

Wambeke converted a former gestation barn into a compost building. It houses a composting area as well as the farm equipment used in the process of creating crop-based compost material. The east side of the building is open, allowing appropriate ventilation and temperature control. Wambeke stirs the compost pile as needed to create a continually effective decomposition process that doesn't require constant replacement of the entire pile. Through firsthand knowledge, he places hog carcasses in the best possible places and surrounds them with the right amounts of compost. The system is effective throughout the year. Only a few minor adjustments are needed as the seasons change. For example, the winter months require a bigger outer layer of compost to create an ideal compost pile temperature.

Wambeke said "convenience is an important advantage of on-farm composting." Livestock operations inevitably lose a small percentage of herd members because of unexpected deaths. When that happens, carcasses can be placed into the compost pile immediately without any need for temporary storage while waiting for rendering service. This can mean less farm labor, more odor control, and better utilization of space within the livestock facility. In addition, it gives the farmer an extra measure of control over animal health. Although rendering companies take appropriate steps to prevent the spread of livestock diseases, there is some unavoidable disease potential from temporary carcass storage and from vehicles that travel among different livestock farms. When on-farm composting is part of the equation, a small or mid-sized operation can gain greater animal health control for an affordable price.

The Wambeke Composting Facility was recently toured by the Lyon County Commissioners and the Lyon Co. SWCD Board of Supervisors. The Lyon Co. NRCS Staff and John Wambeke (Landowner) moderated the tour of the Composting site.

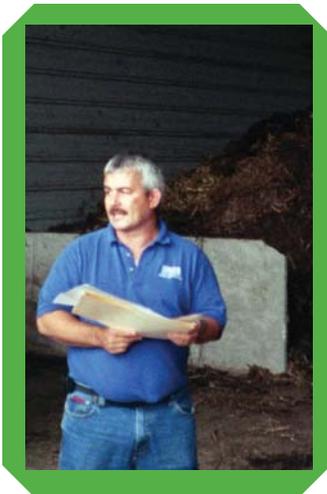


Photo on the left:  
Jamie Thomazin,  
District Conservationist  
Marshall, MN explained  
the role NRCS  
played in the design of the on-farm  
composting project.



Photo on the right:  
Jamie Thomazin, District  
Conservationist  
provides additional details about the role MN NRCS  
has done with the designing of on-farm composting facilities.

## **Speakers Highlight New Potential of Native Grass** **by Jim Muchlinski, Yellow Medicine SWCD Education Coordinator**

The potential of native prairie grass has never been higher and has never been as multi-faceted as in 2007. The regional Soil and Water Conservation District women's conference, held Sept. 6 in Wood Lake and Cottonwood, offered a firsthand look at the future potential.

The conference began with a morning session at the Wood Lake Community Center. Duane Carrow, a processing plant technology program coordinator at the Minnesota West Granite Falls campus, provided an introduction to biomass processing systems. He said "ethanol in general is an industry that is experiencing rapid growth with new plants being constructed as fast as they can be financed and built." Most of the growth has thus far involved established agricultural products, particularly corn crops. As new advancements occur in biochemistry, this could facilitate development of cellulosic forms of ethanol from sources such as native prairie grass and trees. Although this technology is not in place yet, it may eventually help to drive the future of renewable energy.

Steve Taff from the University of Minnesota led a discussion in the review of economic issues in renewable energy. Taff tied energy consumption to the economic principles of supply and demand, particularly the idea of how much people are willing to pay for services. He said "new products, such as native prairie grass energy crops, typically cost more than established resources when they are first introduced." It takes strong demand along with a growth period in order to build toward a mature market.

The afternoon segment of the conference included a tour of the Prairie Wild native grass seed production facility in Cottonwood. Participants divided into three groups and rotated between two presentation sites and a third segment that provided a seed and equipment tour. Prairie Wild owner, Jon Mohn informed participants about the basics of native grass planting, harvesting, care of newly planted grass, seed cleaning, seed mixing, and selection of appropriate grass mixes for various sites that can range from a farm field to a small garden-sized yard space.

At one of the presentation areas, Board of Water and Soil Resources conservationist, Tabor Hoek explained government programs that relate to native grass. For the short term, Hoek said "many parts of the United States may see reductions in native grass acres as temporary conservation easements expire." Eventually, he said there are good possibilities for native grass to serve a variety of purposes from strategic conservation plantings to renewable energy. The third part of the presentation rotation involved a review of native prairie ecology by Murray County NRCS conservationist, Brian Christiansen. He covered the characteristics of prairie environments, the wide variety of regional prairie grasses and wildflowers, and the ecological effects of natural history. His presentations included a demonstration area with a miniature version of a prairie fire and a glacier.

*The women's conference is an annual event organized by Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Cottonwood, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood and Yellow Medicine counties. A different theme is chosen each year.*



The women's conference provides an education forum for women to learn more about conservation!

## 9th Annual Asian Pacific Islander Organization Conference By Winnie Chen, Wetland Biologist, Brooklyn Center

The Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) held its 9th Annual Conference in Miami, Florida. The conference began on Monday, August 20 and concluded on Friday, August 24. The theme for the conference was “Pursuing Excellence through Leadership, Diversity, and Unity.”

Winnie Chen, Wetland Specialist, Brooklyn Center and Manila Khouchaleun, Student Trainee/API scholar, Brooklyn Center attended the APIO Conference. The Conference began with Special Emphasis Program Management (SEPM) Training by Sharyn Alvarez, the Acting NRCS AA/PI SEPM and Joseph Hairston, the Civil Rights Division Director.

On Tuesday, Pooh Vongkhamdy, President of APIO and Niles Glasgow, Florida State Conservationist gave opening remarks. Chief Lancaster shared many inspirational words and encouragement for the future of NRCS and its employees. The Chief spoke proudly about his heritage; how being part Caucasian and Taiwanese has helped shape who he is today. Chief Lancaster is our first Asian-American Chief of NRCS. He spoke about the preparation to meet future challenges, how to make conservation easier for our customers and for our employees, and how to share the benefits of accounting for conservation.

During the general session we learned about each of the API countries. The attendees participated in questions and answer sessions about, “Who Are We?” The audience was asked to select where the country was geographically located on a map and in return for the right answer they were awarded with a farmer’s hat and “Got Rice?” T-shirt.

Afternoon sessions focused on technical workshops. Some of these workshops included technology exchange, retirement financial planning, Emergency Watershed Protection program, personal/professional skills, along with communication and conflict management.

The tour day focused on getting in touch with the API cultures. This included touring API farms where they grew tropical fruits such as: bitter melon, guava, longan, and dragon fruit. We also toured an API farm that grew ornamental foliage and sold them to the garden centers owned by Wal-Mart and Home Depot. We also got a taste of Asian culture by visiting a Thai Buddhist temple.

The final day concluded with a speech by Dana York, NRCS Associate Chief. She spoke about the future of NRCS from 2007 to 2010, “Performing Today, Preparing for Tomorrow” and the two levels of Human Capital Efficiency Plans for National and State. During her speech she presented a challenge to the audience, to read “The Worst Hard Time” by Timothy Egan. It is the untold story of those who survived the Great American Dust Bowl.



Each year, APIO Committee Members plan this training conference. APIO plans on making next year’s conference bigger and better. Please join us for our 2008 training conference which will be held in Washington State!

Tropical fruits are commonly grown in Florida. As pictured, Pooh Vongkhamdy, Oklahoma NRCS employee wishes he could take the Jack Fruit home!

## Outreach: Are We Communicating? by Debe Walchuk, State Outreach Coordinator

The communication process is what Outreach is all about. Are you ready to participate in a compliance review that evaluates your outreach efforts? Let's check:

The establishment of outreach programs at the local level are required by departmental regulations and the NRCS General Manual to ensure all persons are encouraged to participate...especially those who previously may not have participated fully and may not know about the availability of, or may not know how to effectively use NRCS program services.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Does my partnership with grassroots organizations in my county or RC&D area assist NRCS in reaching nontraditional and underserved customers, also known as, socially disadvantaged customers?
- Can I give examples of outreach activities I've done for minorities, women, and persons with disabilities?
- Has the need for bilingual staffing assistance been determined for my office?
- Do I use the materials available to me that meet the needs of producers with disabilities or who are bilingual in my county or RC&D area?
- Have I identified the nontraditional and underserved in my geographic service area?

*If you can answer "yes" to these questions you've made the commitment to provide equal access to NRCS programs and services.*

Remember, if it isn't written down it didn't happen! Document the avenues of notification you use to communicate NRCS services and programs:

- Newsletters
- Publications
- New releases
- Meetings
- Posters
- Personal contacts
- Electronic media
- Fact sheets
- Videos/DVDs
- Grassroots Organizations representing minorities, women and persons with disabilities



Larry Voltz, District Conservationist, Bemidji Field Office, presented Conservation Practice Information to Native Americans at a Tribal Conference, August 2007.

**2007 All Cultural Day Event Summary**  
**Jeffers Petroglyphs: Comfrey, MN**  
**By Cory Drummond**

This event began with a presentation from the Jeffers Petroglyphs staff on the formation of the Petroglyphs, islands of uncovered rock, where American Indians left carvings of humans, deer, elk, buffalo, turtles, thunderbirds, atlatls and arrows. They tell a story that spans 5,000 years. The petroglyphs served many functions, including recording important events, depicting sacred ceremonies, and emphasizing the importance of animals and hunting.

David Larson, Dakota Representative, Historian and Liason, spoke about the Dakota. Mr. Larson gave information to the attendees to dispel myths about the Dakota and Native Americans that have been taught in many parts of the U.S. Mr. Larson also gave a sincere account of the trials and triumphs that he has personally experienced as a Native American.

Attendees were given a tour of the petroglyphs in which they were challenged to try to locate and identify the numerous rock carvings. Depending on the time of the day and location of the sun, not all of the carvings can be easily identified at all times. Attendees were also given the opportunity to tour the native pasture which is also a portion of the Jeffers Petroglyph grounds.

The event concluded with Cory Drummond giving a brief discussion about the Civil Rights Compliance Guides with helpful hints. A total of 65 employees attended this event.

**Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center: Spicer, MN**  
**By Cory Drummond**

Mrs. Marie Koenigs, Ojibway representative, gave a presentation recalling her life experiences growing up as an Ojibway. In her presentation she reflected on the life lessons that she received from her parents and grandparents and enlightened the group on how those teachings have shaped her life and resonate in her interaction with her own children. She also displayed and talked about baskets that she and her mom weaved, and intricate beadwork that her family has done throughout the years.

The group then “traveled through time” as they met with Mr. Doug Mossburg, Historian, and toured the Native American History Village. This village has replica land dwellings that would have been observed during the following periods:

Paleo (First People, 12,000-10,000 Before the Present)  
Archaic (Stone Boilers, 10,000 BP to 2,500 BP)  
Woodland (First Farmers, 2,500 BP to 300 BP)  
Historic Era (c. 1750)

Mr. Mossburg gave the attendees insight of what it would have been like to live in each of the above mentioned time periods and gave the group knowledge on how the Native Americans lived during each period.

The event ended with Cory Drummond giving a brief discussion about the Civil Rights Compliance Guides with helpful hints. There were 23 employees in attendance.

## **Spring Prairie Hutterian Brethren Colony: Hawley, MN** **By Shannon Bengtson**

The Spring Prairie Hutterian Brethren Colony that we visited was a self-sufficient operation. This Colony has fully implemented modern technology for their operation. A total of 144 people live in the colony and speak the German language.

The children at the colony attend school until they are 18 years old. The women's role in the colony was that of being both the homemaker and child bearer. The women's primary role centered around dealing with laundry, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children and the garden.

Modern technology was evident when we visited the meat processing plant (USDA approved), 300 dairy cows and the parlor floor that was built with hydraulics. All the feed for the livestock is blended through the colony's feed mill. Additionally, all the grain used is produced from the land at the colony.

The local NRCS staff has worked with the colony. According to Sharon Lean, DC in Moorhead, MN Spring Prairie Hutterian Brethren colony moved into Clay County around 1976. The colony is located on the Agassiz Beach Ridge high water table; because of the large numbers of livestock the colony looked into NRCS programs for assistance. The field office has been involved in providing technical assistance on Ag. Waste Systems and trees; and EQIP and CRP for cost-share assistance. Additionally, NRCS has developed HEL plans and has worked on wetland issues. The NRCS has offered service to the colony in a timely manner. We always inform the colony on programs, signups, and conservation practices through personal letters and the newsletters. I have seen that you should always have a good attitude, a friendly smile and continual communication with these very special people.

At the end of the tour, John Anderson and Steve Lutes briefly described the highlights of the Civil Rights Compliance Guides with helpful hints. Overall the tour was very well received and those in attendance learned a great deal about the colony.

## **American Swedish Institute: Minneapolis, MN** **By Cutrina Moreland**

This cultural activity included a tour of a mansion that was owned by the late Swan and Christina Turnblad. Swan Turnblad was one of the most successful Swedes in the United States during the early 20th century. He owned one of the largest Swedish language newspapers.

Attendees were led on a guided tour of the institute and viewed a presentation on some of the possessions Swedish immigrants brought to America in their immigrant trunk. The Victorian-era mansion which houses the institute features hand-carved woodwork, stained-glass art, painted plaster-mold ceilings, and exhibits of glass art. The trunk activity centered on the valued possessions a nineteenth century Swedish immigrant might pack for a trans-Atlantic voyage to America. While at the museum our group viewed a mural in the auditorium that puts the immigrant experience into narrative art, and we heard a rather scratchy recording of vintage popular music that gave an interpretation of some of the more boisterous immigrant's lifestyle. The event ended with Cutrina Moreland giving a brief discussion about the Civil Rights Compliance Guides with helpful hints. A total of 26 employees attended this event.



## **Ironworld Discovery Center: Chisholm, MN**

### **By Shannon Bengtson**

The Ironworld Discovery Center was established to educate the public on the heritage, working conditions, and lifestyle of the mining communities. A total of 43 nationalities of immigrants came to the iron mines of Northeastern MN looking for prosperity and freedom. The mining companies would assign the workers into groups of people that did not know each other and did not speak the same language. The companies felt that without a common language they could ensure that the workers kept working and would prevent unions from forming. This arrangement, however, also contributed to many unnecessary deaths of mining workers because they could not warn one another of dangers.

One positive outcome of this was that all 43 nationalities learned quickly to work together and survival skills from one another. Ironworld has the original Glen Wilpen Depot building which had been removed from Glen Location and was brought back as part of Ironworld's effort to recreate the mining location for its visitors. It was common for the mining companies to move towns to new locations when the iron ore had been mined out of one location or the next place to mine was underneath where the town is currently located. We could see foundations to indicate where homes had been before being moved. Glen location has a former Finnish boarding house, a family home and a rail road bunkhouse. The group toured these homes and learned about the living conditions in each, most of the wages of the boarding house and rail house tenants went to meals and lodging. Socializing was allowed under very strict guidelines or house rules.

After the tour, the group took a self-guided tour through the Ironworld museum, the CCC museum, and experienced some ethnic foods.

The event ended with Shannon Bengtson giving a brief discussion about the Civil Rights Compliance Guides with helpful hints. There were 18 employees in attendance.



Boarding House at Iron World



The trolley provided a mode of transportation at IronWorld.

## **Amish Community and Culture: Harmony, MN**

### **By Christiane Roy**

A total of 25 employees participated in the tours of the Amish Community in Harmony. This tour consisted of visiting 6 different Amish farms. This enabled the employees to personally experience some of their culture and way of life. The guides spent most of the time talking about the Amish culture from farm to farm and participants then had the opportunity, once at a farmstead, to visit their shop, purchase locally made goods, and at one occasion, exchange with a local Amish individual.

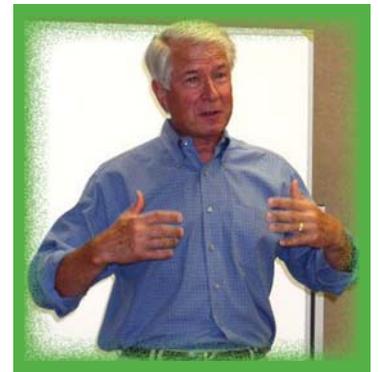
At the end of the tour, Christiane Roy briefly described the highlights of the Civil Rights Compliance Guides with helpful hints. Overall the tour was very well received and all learned a great deal about the Amish community.

## **Conservation Selling Skills in the Minnesota River Basin by Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Staff**

Most employees in the conservation field do not have professional selling skills; they have conservation technical skills. To improve the skills in selling conservation, Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) decided to offer two Conservation Selling Skills Seminars within the Minnesota River Basin. Three Rivers RC&D staff contacted conservation organizations and agency personnel in the basin to provide key employees an awareness and opportunity of the Conservation Selling Skills Seminars. Contacts to potential participants were made through phone calls, letters, emails, and personal contacts. The Minnesota River Basin covers many square miles and by offering two (2) seminars on opposite sides of the watershed, it was determined that participant expenses would be reduced, allowing for greater agency participation.

The purpose and/or objective of the Three Rivers RC&D was to provide two Conservation Selling Skills Seminars within the Minnesota River Basin, with approximately 30 people attending each seminar in order to improve the attendees' skills in selling conservation.

Three Rivers RC&D held two day seminars within the Minnesota River Basin in the communities of Mankato and Montevideo. The presenter for these seminars was Chuck Hitzemann, founder of a Virginia based marketing and management consulting firm Positive Growth International. Mr. Hitzemann is a personal coach and conducts workshops in selling skills, marketing, and coaching. He has over 20 years of agricultural experience, and is the author of "What Makes Winners Win – The Five Attributes for Success in Selling."



Key points of the seminars included several professional selling skills to conservation stewardship solutions and situations. Participants learned skills through presentation, discussions, and small group exercises: the steps in the buying process, client motivation factors, pre-call preparation, recognizing and dealing with behavior styles, questioning and listening skills, presentation skills, dealing with client concerns, obtaining commitment and closing skills, follow-up practices, dealing with unsatisfied clients, organizational and time management skills, telephone skills, and individual action plans.

In the two seminars, participants found the following particularly interesting; building client records, open-ended questions, call preparations, dealing with behavioral types and the skills of listening, organization, and client assessment.

Over the next year, evaluations will be sent out to the 51 participants on a quarterly basis. This will track the progress of participants and provide valuable information on the Best Management Practices (BMP) being implemented within the Minnesota River Basin.

Three Rivers RC&D would like to thank their partners, Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance and Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Clean Water Partnership for providing assistance and making the Conservation Selling Skills project a success. Three Rivers RC&D would also like to thank the McKnight Foundation for providing the funding making the seminars possible.

## Marsh Hawk – Glacial Ridge by Greg Bengtson

Bruce Wilken, Ducks Unlimited Wetland Restoration Specialist, came across this female Northern Harrier or Marsh Hawk while doing construction inspection for wetland restorations on the Glacial Ridge Project. The Northern Harrier was walking down the top of a beach ridge, recently restored to native prairie under the Wetlands Reserve Program. Bruce was able to get within 20 feet of the Harrier and took 18 photos.

The open grassland of the Glacial Ridge Project is prime Northern Harrier Habitat. Northern Harriers are often seen flying low over grasslands. The Harriers diet consists mostly of small mammals and sometimes birds. In spring and winter, especially in the northern part of their range, they prey predominantly on voles.



*Bruce Wilken, Ducks Unlimited, took this photo of a Marsh Hawk (Northern Harrier) at Glacial Ridge.*

### Personnel:

**Nico Bennett**, Soil Conservation Technician – Thief River Falls, and his wife Brenda welcomed a new baby girl to their family. Mia was born on Friday, September 7, and weighed in at 6.59 lbs. Congratulations Nico.

**Krystal Story**, Soil Conservation Technician – Bemidji FO, and her husband Jessie started off their new family with the birth of twin girls on Tuesday, Sept 11. Congratulations Krystal.

Congratulations to **Donna Christianson**, Accounting Technician – Thief River Falls AO, on a recent promotion.

Congratulations to **Dusty Jasken**, Tribal Liaison – White Earth Indian Reservation, on a recent promotion.

Congratulations to **Krystal Story**, Soil Conservation Technician – Bemidji FO, on a recent promotion.

Congratulations to **Wes Drake** on being selected for the Agricultural Engineer position in the Area Office. Wes began his new duties on 7/8/2007.

Please welcome the newest members to the Area 1 NRCS Team:  
Happy Micheau, Misc. Assistant – Giziibii RC&D, EOD 8/5/07  
Ryan Haspel, SCT – Baudette FO, EOD 9/16/07

## Drought Conditions in Morrison County, Minnesota by Stan Musielewicz

Governor Tim Pawlenty and MN Commissioner of Ag, Gene Hugoson visited Ron, Alvina, and Cory Hourscht Dairy Farm in Morrison County on July 31 to get a firsthand look at the drought conditions experienced by a substantial part of Minnesota. The visit preceeded an August 2 meeting of the State Emergency Board which determined if conditions were bad enough to recommend to the governor that disaster conditions be declared.

Rainfall in July near Little Falls was only 0.69 inches, less than 20% of normal precipitation; June rainfall was 41% of normal and May was 74% of normal. Conditions are much worse than last year and the record number of days of 90+ degree heat is adding to the crop and livestock stress.

Forage harvest is at 75% of last years' low yield due to the second successive drought year in the area. Even if normal rainfall was to return for the rest of the growing season, 75% of the corn acres in the county will not make a harvestable crop and will only provide low quality, very low yielding silage. Soybeans may still produce a lower than average yield, but only with average to above average August rainfall.

L-R Stanley Musielewicz, DC, Terry Zapzalka, NRCS Technician, Governor Tim Pawlenty, Randy Dufner, FSA Farm Loan Manager, Perry Aasness, FSA State Executive Director, Darrell Larsen, FSA CED and MN Extension Dan Martens.



## Personnel:

**Bethany Fischer** was hired as a WAE Soil Conservation Aid in Little Falls.

**Jon Frie**, became certified in both Conservation and Nutrient Management Planning, was promoted to a GS-8 Soil Conservation Technician in the Fergus Falls Field Office.

**Andrea Horsman** was promoted to a GS-6 Soil Conservation Technician in the Wheaton Field Office.

**Holly Kovarik** was hired as a WAE Soil Conservation Aid in Glenwood.

**Drew Mosburg** was promoted to the GS-11 District Conservationist Position in the Elbow Lake Field Office.

**Charles Rose** was selected as the GS-5 Miscellaneous Assistant in the WesMin RC&D Office in Alexandria.

**Amanda Smith** has been reassigned to the Moorhead Field Office to work part-time while returning to college.

## Awards:

**Ivan Reinke** received a non-monetary award for providing outstanding technical assistance to landowners in Wadena County while they were without a full-time District Conservationist from March 5, 2007 through June 9, 2007.

**Robert Honeman** received a non-monetary award for helping with the ECD presentation at the Conservation Application Course.

**Steve Lutes** received a non-monetary award for being Acting District Conservationist in Wadena County from March 5, 2007 through June 9, 2007.

### **Renewable Energy Clean Air Project (RECAP) by Steve Kluess, Laurentian RC&D Coordinator**

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty enthusiastically supported Laurentian Resource Conservation and Development's (LRC&D) Renewable Energy Clean Air Project (RECAP) as an outstanding example of what local community leaders need to do the reinvigorate and energize their communities. Governor Pawlenty stated, "We need to have leaders who are not happy with the status quo," His visit occurred during the Summer Meeting of the Minnesota Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils' (MARC&D) luncheon.

Several key points raised by Governor Pawlenty were to "Control your own destiny," since people will not stay in a community where they cannot be employed. Governor Pawlenty also emphasized the link between economic development and the enthusiasm local leaders put into a project.

RECAP centers on a plasma gasification system which works at extremely hot temperatures (hotter than the surface of the sun) in an oxygen deprived setting. This biomass renewable energy solution can significantly increase domestic energy production thereby decreasing our dependence on imported oil and increase the nation's recycling rate eliminating the need to landfill municipal solid waste. The process can be integrated within the existing waste management infrastructure.

Laurentian RC&D hosted the MARC&D event. Laurentian Council President, Ted Lovdahl was instrumental in securing the Governor's attendance at this event. Four other speaking engagements were cancelled that day due to a special session of the Minnesota legislature coming together to help the south-eastern corner of the state recover from the recent flooding events.

Total attendance was eighty-nine representing attendees from all over Minnesota and was the best attended association meeting in their history. This was the first time the Governor has ever attended an association event.

For more information about RC&D or the RECAP project, please contact Laurentian RC&D by calling the office at (218) 720-5225 or by visiting the website at: <http://www.lrcd.org>



Governor Tim Pawlenty answered questions from the RC&D meeting participants.

L-R Jim Hall, MARC&D President, Governor Tim Pawlenty, Ted Lovdahl, Laurentian RC&D Council President and William Hunt, MN NRCS State Conservationist.

### Personnel:

**Matthew Waterworth**, Soil Conservation Technician, Preston, MN, was reassigned to the Hinckley FO effective June 25, 2007. Welcome aboard, Matt!

**Jennifer (Mold) Hahn** was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician position at the North Branch Field Office. Congratulations, Jennifer!

**Clayton Johnson**, Soil Scientist, Duluth, MN, was selected as the Project Leader for the Sandstone Soil Survey Office effective August 19, 2007. Our hearty congratulations, Clayton!

**John Zinn** was selected for the State Grazing Specialist position. Our congratulations, John, as you pursue future endeavors!

### Non-monetary Awards:

**Area Office staff, Grand Rapids FO staff, Duluth FO and SSO staff, Laurentian RC&D, and Virginia FO staff** for extra efforts to prepare and conduct a successful NRCS Leadership meeting and tour, June 11-15, 2007.

**Roger Risley** and **Clinton Tuve** for organizing and leading MLRA Geomorphic Tour.

**Perry Sullivan** for his valuable contribution to the Koochiching Soil Survey while on detail for the period of May 29, 2007, through August 28, 2007.

**Steven Kluess** for his service as Acting Coordinator for the Onanegozie RC&D for the period of January 4, 2007, through July 6, 2007.

We appreciate your extra efforts!

### Congratulations:

**Jessica Olson**, Agricultural Engineer, was named "Extreme Engineer of the Month" by the Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS). We are proud of you, Jessica!

### Length of Service Awards:

**Roger Risley** - 20 years of service  
**Paul Sandstrom** - 25 years of service  
**Fred Kollmann** - 30 years of service  
**Robert Korth** - 30 years of service

Your dedicated service is appreciated!

**Manure Management & Equipment Field Day**  
**By: Grant Pearson, Nutrient Management Specialist, Stearns SWCD**

On Thursday, August 16, 2007, the Stearns SWCD conducted a Manure Management & Equipment Field Day near Greenwald. This event was certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) as an eligible Commercial Animal Waste Technician (CAWT) workshop. Ruth Marston from the MDA explained the CAWT program to commercial manure applicators in attendance.

Grant Pearson and Mark Lefebvre, Nutrient Management Specialists with the Stearns SWCD, discussed manure application rates based on the crop's nitrogen and phosphorus needs. They wrapped up their talk by discussing methods available for adjusting manure application rates to desired levels. Dan Martens from the U of M Extension Service moderated a poultry manure equipment spreading demonstration.

Tim Chmielewski, Stearns County Environmental Services Department, John Pokorney and Walt Haas from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, discussed manure spill response procedures. Farmers and commercial manure applicators who experience manure spills which pose a threat to waters of the state must first ensure the immediate safety of nearby individuals and protect waters of the state. Secondly, the Minnesota Duty Officer needs to be called to report the manure spill.

The afternoon session featured a controlled release of liquid dairy manure. Nathan Messer of K&N Custom Pumping in Sauk Centre released the manure and Lyle Lochen of Custom Waste Irrigation in Albany demonstrated how tillage perpendicular to the flowage slows and dissipates manure flow.

In a second controlled manure release simulation, an open tile intake standpipe was dug into the ground. One simple step to protect a tile intake from a manure spill is to place an impervious "sleeve" over the tile intake. This was demonstrated at the field day by removing the bottom of a 5 gallon pail and placing it over the tile intake to protect it from the manure release.



Kevin Blanchet, Regional Educator with the U of M Extension Service wrapped up the afternoon with a discussion on manure spill cleanup. On this day, poultry litter was top dressed over the manure release area to absorb the moisture from the released liquid manure thereby making it easier to load and clean up the manure contaminated area.



**AREA 4**  
**TIMOTHY A. WILSON, ASTC(FO)**  
**BROOKLYN CENTER, MN**

**Personnel:**

**Omar Vega**, GIS Specialist transferred to the Brooklyn Center Area Office effective September 2, 2007, from Madison, WI. Omar grew up in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. He went to college at the University of Puerto Rico to get his bachelors in Surveying and Topography and concentrated on GIS courses. Omar also completed undergraduate research on Land Use, and Survey Grade Control Points with GPS.

In 2003, he was hired by NRCS as a physical scientist working on NRI in Madison, WI. After that work was completed he worked on the Wisconsin SSURGO Digitizing Unit and on various short term projects. Omar and his wife, Amanda, have a Bassett Hound named Lucy Lu.

**Evan Ingebrigtson** has accepted the position as the Open Lot Feedlot Technician for the Central Minnesota SWCD Joint Powers Area 5 stationed in Waite Park Field Office. Evan previously worked at the Crow Wing SWCD as a WAE. He is a graduate of St. Cloud State University with a B.S. in Ecology and Field Biology.

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

**Farm Fest 2007 by Michelle Legatt, Program Specialist**

For the last 26 years, Farm Fest has been held in Redwood County, MN. Each year Farm Fest receives national attention for this annual farm event. Farm forums are a popular venue for those who attend Farm Fest.

In fact, this year, former Secretary of Ag Johanns made a major announcement about CSP. After Johanns spoke, he made it a point to visit all of the USDA displays that were located on the Farm Fest grounds. I happened to be working the display and had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary firsthand!

Mr. Johanns asked what my position was with the NRCS and if I attended the Forum. Unfortunately, I had missed the Forum, due to other conflicts, but Mr. Johanns proceeded to fill me in as to what he had made mention of in the CSP announcement.

To say the least, I was not expecting to see Mr. Johanns that Tuesday morning, let alone to have a one-on-one conversation with him. It will be a memory that will not be forgotten.



L-R Michelle Legatt, Program Specialist for Area 5 was visited by the former Secretary of Ag, Mike Johanns at the MN NRCS booth. All indications are that Michelle enjoyed this unique opportunity at Farm Fest!

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

Sharing the Story from Area 5  
Mike Appel, ASTC-FO, Marshall, MN

This summer was very dry in the area. Rain had missed most of the area for nearly 6 weeks before a major amount fell in mid-August. It was surprising to see that the corn and soybeans held up well. We were kept busy in July by hosting the wetland Reg. 4 training and the Farm Planning workshop which were both held in Redwood Falls. Big thanks to those that helped make this a success.

In August we staffed a booth at Farm Fest for three days. Several area employees spent time in the booth. Michelle Legatt had the opportunity to chat with former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns who was there for a farm forum.

Also, in August we were blessed to have the State Office out for a week to conduct a Program Appraisal. The appraisal turned out well and I actually did enjoy having the visit. In September several conservation districts sponsored a Women's Expo in Wood Lake where they learned about prairies and grass plantings with a tour of a local prairie grass nursery and plant. The upcoming area environmental fair will involve 1500 students and will be held in Marshall. Fall harvest is underway and conservation application of engineered practices won't be far behind.

Personnel:

**David Voigt** is serving as Acting DC in Redwood Falls.

**Jon Paul Pringle** was selected as SCT in Madison. Jon Paul had worked for the Lac qui Parle SWCD. Welcome to the NRCS team.

Non-monetary Awards:

The following employees were recognized for their efforts in staffing the booth at Farm Fest.

**Sandy Jerzak  
Vonnie Nilges  
Mark Rose  
Mike Nienaber  
Jamie Thomazin  
Mike Timmerman  
Michelle Legatt  
Brian Pfarr  
April Sullivan  
Lloyd Beebe  
Jim Ridler  
David Voigt  
Joel Poppe  
Brent Pavelko  
Jeremy Larson  
Beth Collins**

**AREA 6  
KASEY TAYLOR, ASTC(FO)  
ST. PETER, MN**

**Living Soil Tunnel/Soil Kiosk Activities  
by Douglas Miller**

This summer the soil tunnel and kiosk has been out to a number of events: Elks Nature Center for Earth Day; Piepenburg Park near Hutchinson for the McLeod County Nature Field Day; Blue Earth for the Faribault County Environmental Day. Over the winter, visitors at the Traverse Des Sioux Museum in St. Peter were able to go through the tunnel while it was on display there.

During the Area 6 appraisal this July, the NRCS principal staff was able to see first hand first hand, this visual soils display with an audio message about Lester Loam, the importance of topsoil and all the soil microorganisms. “Woody” the woodchuck (resident of the soil tunnel) encourages everyone to “Conserve Our Soil Resources!”).

Three Rivers RC&D has obtained a fully enclosed trailer to house the soil tunnel and kiosk. All that needs to be done is to back up to the trailer and take it to your venue. Lisa Buckner, Three Rivers RC&D Coordinator reports that the trailer is getting a sign with RC&D funds and they are looking into making improvements in maneuverability for the soil tunnel.

*Tom Neuenfeldt, Soil Specialist from the NRCS State Office enjoyed the features of the soil tunnel!*



*Lanette Dietrich, Area 6 Program Specialist tests her knowledge of soils at the soil kiosk.*

**Wetland Training held in Area 6**

A two-day wetland training update was held in Area 6 on September 12 & 13th. This training brought everyone up- to- date on current wetland policy. During the morning hours and field exercises each afternoon, Jennifer Cavanaugh, Biologist, was the lead trainer with assistance from Doug Miller, Area Soil Specialist, and Ken Luttner, Area Resource Conservationist.

The training was for “Young and Old Alike”. (dc’s, Ryan Braulick, Stephanie McLean, Mike Taylor, and John Dotolo)



Area 6 District Conservationists, L-R; Ryan Braulick, Stephanie McLean, Mike Taylor, and John Dotolo.

On July 10, Mark Oja, State Biologist, provided areawide training on National and State NEPA policy. He was joined by Pat McLoughlin, State Archeologist, who provided training on Cultural Resources and FOIA to the South Central MN NRCS employees of Area 6.



**AREA 6**  
**KASEY TAYLOR, ASTC(FO)**  
**ST. PETER, MN**

**Personnel:**

**Lisa Buckner** who was the District Conservationist at the Glencoe FO was selected as the RC&D Coordinator for the Three Rivers RC&D located in Mankato, MN.

**Steve Becker**, Area Engineer, left South Central Minnesota and headed to the “Big Sky” Country of Montana to be their State Engineer. Congratulations and best of luck to Steve and his family.

**Mark Pearson**, Engineer, has been handling the duties of Acting Area Engineer since Steve’s departure and until the new Area Engineer is selected.

**Shantel Lozinski**, Soil Conservationist, Willmar, has been doing an excellent job as acting DC in the Glencoe office.

**Kasey Taylor**, ASTC-FO, and Myron Taylor, Program Specialist, St. Paul became proud parents on September 7. James Taylor was welcomed into the world on September 7, 2007 at 11:57 am. James was 20¾ inches and weighed in at 8#9oz. Mother and baby are doing great [so is Myron!].

**AREA 7**  
**JOHN NICHOLSON, ASTC(FO)**  
**ROCHESTER, MN**

With the flooding events that took place on August 18-19, 2007, Area 7 has been addressing the associated damages as best as we can within program constraints. NRCS is in full swing with EWP emergency efforts in both Minnesota City and Hokah trying to stabilize banks adjacent to several homes and businesses totally over \$1,200,000 worth of work. In addition another \$3 million dollars of wait-listed EWP has also been requested for SE Minnesota.

Other federal and state agencies may also provide some financial support, without necessarily any technical support, to address on-farm damages resulting from the storm. It is estimated that it will take several years to recover from the damages of the storm.

The NRCS/COE flood control project protecting the City of Rochester worked very well as the east side of Rochester was hit hard with rain. It is estimated that the flood control project saved over \$150,000,000 worth from damages and most likely prevented the loss of life in Rochester from this single storm event. So all of you across the state that at one time or another assisted with the South Zumbro Flood Control Project, can take solace in the fact that your efforts made a huge positive difference to this city.

With the storm came personal tragedy and despair. At least (4) four NRCS employees have taken their own time to assist with the flood cleanup of homes and businesses in Rushford. Each person has both similar and different accounts of that experience, as well as the impact of trying to provide assistance to flood victims in the most trying of times. Each flooded home, each flooded business has a different story and yet each are tied together by a common thread...flood damage beyond belief.



Buildings close to falling, due to eroding stream banks.

**AREA 7  
JOHN NICHOLSON, ASTC(FO)  
ROCHESTER, MN**

NRCS was particularly saddened to learn that we lost one of our own. John Micheel, retired NRCS SCT at Lewiston, and his wife Shirley were killed while traveling in their vehicle during the storm. They were only a few miles from home when their car was swept off the road.

John worked for 37 years in the soil and water conservation office. He was a practicing conservationist both on and off the job. He won several conservation awards to include the 2006 Minnesota Conservation Federation Conservationist of the Year. Many trainees came through the Lewiston FO and were under the tutelage of John. He and his wife will be missed by all.

**Personnel:**

**Robert Romocki**, Area Engineer has left the agency and is working for the COE in Seattle, WA effective May 14, 2007. We certainly miss Rob and all of his experience!

**Jim Smith**, Soil Conservation Technician in Owatonna Field Office has returned to duty after serving in Iraq since October 2005. We are very excited to have Jim back in our office.

**Nathan Anderson** reported to duty June 10, 2007 as the Area Engineer. Nathan previously worked as a design engineer in Utah. Welcome to Area 7.

**Desmond Glenn**, Soil Conservationist in Lewiston Field Office reported to duty May 27, 2007. He is getting experience with the Emergency Watershed Program since the flooding in Winona County.

**Mark Kuntz**, District Conservationist in Lewiston has accepted a DC position in Wisconsin. Mark will transfer to Trempealeau County effective October 29, 2007. We will certainly miss all of Mark's knowledge as a senior District Conservationist.

**John Zinn** was selected as the State Grazing Specialist and will be located in the Rochester Area Office effective September 30, 2007. Welcome to Rochester!

**Douglas Christianson** will be transferring back to Rochester from Thief River Falls effective September 30. Welcome back Doug!

**The next issue of Current Developments  
Is due: December 7, 2007**

**Send your articles to:**

Julie MacSwain, State Public Affairs Specialist  
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*Your contribution and continued readership of  
Current Developments is appreciated!*