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## West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
May 2012

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Shavers Fork Fish Habitat Improvement, High Tunnel Increase Locally Grown Produce, Xerces Society Short Course Offered in Milton, Native Pollinator Conservation Education in the Capitol and Guyan Districts, National Jamboree Team, Switchgrass Windbreaks Planted on Hardy County Poultry Farm

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**[USDA 150th Anniversary](#)**

In 2012, USDA commemorates and celebrates the 150th anniversary of our founding.

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**[New Creek 14 Prescribed Burn](#)**



A prescribed, or controlled, burn at New Creek Site 14 was part of the dam rehabilitation project mitigation plan compensating for impacts to wetlands downstream of the dam.

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The East assists 23 states in our region with all activities related to revenue such as billings, accruals, and reconciliation.

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**[Photos](#)**

Shavers Fork Fish Habitat Improvement *before and after* photos, marsh marigold photo, spring and digital photo tips.

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National Wetlands Month, Small Farm Conference, Agriculture and Conservation Day



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**Conservation Education**



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**Useful Web Links**



Working Trees Info Sheets, USDA Connect

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**Civil Rights**

June is Gay Pride Month, College Career Fairs

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**Meet**

Jeff Barr, Bobby Burken, Dusty Jager, J. Lee Haggerty

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**Personnel News**

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To submit news items for the August *News and Views*, please send an e-mail message to [Carol Lagodich](#).

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

NRCS West Virginia State Office  
Suite 200  
1550 Earl Core Road, Morgantown, WV 26505  
304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839  
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Kevin Wickey, West Virginia State Conservationist

NRCS field offices are located throughout West Virginia  
Visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/> for addresses and phone numbers.

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## Message from Kevin Wickey

In the February *News and Views* I wrote about the great changes that our agency is experiencing and about the things that motivate employees in spite of increasing workloads.

This time I want to let you know about a new effort – the Field Office of the Future. In March the partnership at the national level initiated a discussion that is occurring through this summer across the country about how we should structure ourselves. Given the reductions in budgets, the increase in workload, and the advances in technology in use both in our field offices and while out and about on our jobs – what does the field office of the future look like? How many of them should exist in West Virginia? How can we best meet the needs and expectations of our customers? How can we be more efficient as well as effective at the local level getting conservation on the ground? And finally, how can we best prepare for any potential budget constraints?

These are not easy questions to answer and there is no one right response for West Virginia, let alone for the country. So I'm looking for help from you. I'd like to hear your thoughts about what is important to keep, what we should change, and what we can let go. Talk to me about things that are going good and ideas you have to improve things. I'm listening.

Kevin Wickey  
 State Conservationist  
 West Virginia

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## From the Field

### Shavers Fork Fish Habitat Improvement



Environmental mitigation work was required to compensate for the resources impacted by the Elkwater Fork water supply dam construction. The off-site component includes the use of natural-stream restoration methods to improve aquatic habitat on about four and a-half miles of trout stream including enhancement or creation of pools, adding riparian vegetation, narrowing over-widened sections, and creating woody fish habitat. Fish habitat improvements will improve the conditions in the Shavers Fork River to support a naturally sustainable brook trout population. Randolph County is a recreation destination. The mitigation projects supplement recreational opportunities.

For before and after photos, go to

<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watershed/waterResources/upShavers.html>

For more information, contact [TJ Burr](#), Civil Engineer, at 304-284-7596.

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### High Tunnel Increase Locally Grown Produce

Robert and Janice own and operate "J & T Produce" located in the small community of Goodhope, WV. Their farm lies on a terrace along the West Fork River, in southern Harrison County. The Tyler's have been in vegetable production for over 20 years. Typically, the Tyler's grow sweet and hot peppers, tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers and potatoes. They direct market their crops to area restaurants and individuals. Season extension of vegetable production was a goal of the Tyler's which will allow for earlier and later crop harvesting dates. In 2011, The Tyler's participated in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program to address their resource concerns and goals.

The Tyler's participated in the EQIP-High Tunnel Pilot Program in 2011. Thru EQIP, they installed a 30 ft by 72 ft high tunnel. Thru AMA, they installed a micro-irrigation system for the crops grown inside their high tunnel. Both projects were completed in July of 2011. The Tyler's wasted no time in utilizing their high tunnel. Several varieties of hot peppers and two heirloom varieties of tomatoes were planted in July, 2011 for a late season crop. Yields in the fall of 2011 were outstanding. Mr. Tyler stated, "The high tunnel has increased my yield considerably. Yields from both peppers and tomatoes have doubled from previous years in which crops were grown under normal field conditions". Mr. Tyler also noted that the plant quality and produce quality and quantity were much higher within the high tunnel as compared to previous years. In October, 2011, their farm was the site of the 2011 West Fork Conservation District Agricultural Field Day in which over 75 persons participated and learned from the Tyler's experiences. The first year of production inside the high tunnel resulted in harvesting tomatoes well into December, 2011.

Benefits to the Tyler's include increased quality and quantity of vegetable crops. The micro-irrigation system also allowed the Tyler's to apply the correct amount of moisture for optimum plant growth and health. The community benefits by a reduction in soil erosion. The high tunnel has provided an increased amount of locally grown produce that is available for local markets and consumers.

For more information, contact [Jeff Griffith](#), District Conservationist, at 304-624-9232 ext. 110.

Several varieties of hot peppers were planted in July, 2011 for a late season crop. Pepper yields grown within the high tunnel were doubled from peppers



in previous years under normal field conditions.



Two heirloom varieties of tomatoes were planted in July, 2011 for a late season crop. Yields of tomatoes within the high tunnel almost doubled from previous years where tomatoes were grown under normal field conditions.



### **Xerces Society Short Course Offered in Milton**

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, in Cooperation with Capitol & Guyan Conservation Districts & NRCS, offered a Pollinator Short Course at Pumpkin Park in Milton, WV on April 18th. Employees of Xerces & NRCS offered training to fellow WV and KY NRCS employees, WVU & WV State Extension Agents, foresters, farmers, beekeepers, and concerned citizens. The day long course focused on principles of pollinator biology, the economics of insect pollination, basic bee field identification, evaluating pollinator habitat, land management practices for pollinator protection, pollinator habitat restoration, incorporating pollinator conservation into federal conservation programs, selection of plants for pollinator enhancement sites, and financial and technical resources to support these efforts.

For more information contact [Dustin Adkins](#), Soil Conservationist at 304-697-6033 ext 102 or [Julie Stutler](#), District Conservationist at 304- 776-5256 ext 108.



### **Native Pollinator Conservation Education in the Capitol and Guyan Districts**

The Capitol and Guyan Conservation Districts, in cooperation with Cross Lanes and Huntington NRCS Field Offices, developed a Pollinator Program to establish pollinator habitat in urban and suburban areas and bring awareness of the importance of pollinators. District and NRCS employees along with the help of Earth Team Volunteers developed, assembled and distributed Pollinator Packets. The packet consists of an envelope of Xerces Society Mid Atlantic Pollinator Seed, a planting guide and a plant ID guide. Roughly 1500 packets were assembled and distributed between March 1, 2012 and April 20, 2012. An online survey has been developed to gather feedback from customers as the growing season progresses.

Four trainings were held in the districts to attract interest in the program and to educate the public about the importance of pollinator conservation. By working with local garden clubs, WVU Extension Service, WV Native Plant Society, Huntington Southern States, and the WV Master Naturalist Program the packets were able to reach hundreds of non-traditional NRCS and Conservation District customers.

For more information contact [Dustin Adkins](#), Soil Conservationist at 304-697-6033 ext 102 or [Julie Stutler](#), District Conservationist at 304- 776-5256 ext 108.

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### **National Jamboree**

Dorlene Butler, Regional Public Affairs Specialist from Fort Worth Texas joined the NRCS Summit Bechtel National Scout Reserve team. NRCS is planning a conservation activities exhibit for the July 15-23, 2013



Jamboree.

Dorlene and Pat Bowen view a site map at the Summit Bechtel National Scout Reserve.

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## Switchgrass Windbreaks Planted on Hardy County Poultry Farm

In an effort to improve air quality and to better cycle nutrients, conservation partners from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, and the West Virginia State Conservation Agency assisted Hardy County poultry producer Tom VanMeter in planting windbreaks in association with poultry house exhaust fans. Two windbreaks or 'Hedgerow Plantings' were established on April 11, 2012 out from exhaust fans on two poultry houses located near Old Fields, West Virginia.

"These windbreaks are planned to absorb a portion of the ammonia nitrogen that is transferred from inside the poultry houses by these large exhaust fans, as well as to trap dust and improve air quality", says NRCS District Conservationist Christi Hicks.

Mature switchgrass plants were transplanted from the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in Alderson, West Virginia, to the site in an effort to transfer this conservation technology as part of the West Virginia NRCS Plant Materials Program. These warm season grasses reach a height of 6 feet and will form a living screen that will help retain nutrients associated with the poultry operation.

For more information, contact [Steve Ritz](#), Plant Materials Specialist, at 304-284-6597



Wood bark mulch was spread around the hedgerow switchgrass planting.



Poultry producer Tom VanMeter and Hardy County NRCS employees plant the Switchgrass in front of the exhaust fans.

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## USDA 150th Anniversary

In 2012, USDA commemorates and celebrates the 150th anniversary of our founding. In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law an act of Congress establishing the United States Department of Agriculture. Because of President Lincoln's vision for the country and the potential he saw in America's farmers, he signed into law three pieces of legislation during a three month span that had a profound and lasting impact on U.S. agriculture and society:

- May 15, 1862 - President Lincoln signed the Department of Agriculture Act to establish USDA
- May 20, 1862 – President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which offered qualified individuals 160 acres of public land for settlement and cultivation of Western land
- July 1862 - President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which gave grants of Federal land to establish public land grant universities to teach agriculture and engineering

Two and one-half years after establishing the Department, in what would be his final annual message to the Congress, Lincoln called USDA "The People's Department." At that time, about half of all Americans lived on farms, compared with about 2 percent today.

Through our work on food, agriculture, economic development, science, natural resource conservation and a host of issues, USDA still fulfills Lincoln's vision - touching the lives of every American, every day. USDA has helped support the tremendous growth and success of American agriculture, drive economic growth, conserved natural resources and build stronger communities and a stronger nation.

As we commemorate 150 years of accomplishments, USDA is looking to the future. In the years to come, we will help address the changing needs of agriculture and rural America. We will continue to help provide a safe, ample food supply for our nation and the world. We promote innovation – both here at USDA and in the countryside – we will help create jobs and support economic growth, and promote healthy families and communities, and a stronger nation. To meet those goals, we are working to make USDA a more modern and effective service provider and to deliver the best possible results for all of the American people.

It is a great time to learn about our contributions to the strength and health of this nation, and to see how we can continue to partner with Americans working to provide a better life for their families. Visit [www.usda.gov/usda150](http://www.usda.gov/usda150) to learn more about USDA's history and plans for the future. The site provides information about events, facts and goings-on related to the anniversary.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a natural offshoot of this People's Department by assisting the people of America with conservation programs to protect the soil and water while giving farmers and other stakeholders the tools necessary to succeed. Before 1933, there were no conservation programs for private lands. While conservationists had made great strides protecting public lands as national forests, national parks and wildlife refuges, there was no comparable mechanism for extending conservation to private lands. This changed after 1935 when the Soil Conservation Service pioneered the nation's first conservation programs targeted at private lands.

Since 1935, NRCS and its predecessor conservation agencies have fulfilled this mandate by researching, developing, and sharing with farmers soil and water conservation practices adapted to the needs of all types of land across the United States.



NRCS helps farmers, ranchers and other private landowners balance their economic goals with conservation planning—ensuring sustainable, productive lands that feed our Nation, prevent soil erosion, clean our air and water, supply fiber and forest products, and develop energy resources.

Nearly 80 percent of all fresh water crosses private land before reaching homes and businesses. NRCS conservation planning with private landowners helps improve the quality of the water that enters our rivers, streams and lakes, and ultimately flows through our faucets.

It is because of successful conservation programs addressing highly erodible land and wetland conservation issues that wildlife habitat can be protected while still increasing our farming productivity. Conservation practices such as minimum tillage and terracing have assisted American farmers in becoming the most productive agricultural members of the world community. Today, one farmer can currently feed 129 people. In 1960, one farmer fed 25 people.

### **Key Conservation Accomplishments by USDA/NRCS of On-going Benefit to the Nation:**

**Private Lands Conservation is a Public Benefit.** Working with Congress, states and counties and directly with agriculture producers, NRCS leads the nation in establishing a nationwide conservation dialogue and national commitment that soil and water conservation has public benefits.

**Conservation plants.** The NRCS Plant Materials Program and their predecessors in nursery work virtually developed the system of selecting plants for conservation uses and created the field of conservation plants.

**National Standard for State Soil Conservation District Law.** NRCS provided the legal and technical framework for conservation partnerships at the local soil conservation district level.

**Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting.** Each year NRCS hydrologists forecast water availability in western states based on snow survey data gathered at dozens of locations throughout the west. State and local governments and agricultural producers rely on this data to manage water use.

**Field Offices.** NRCS developed a field office structure to support direct technical assistance to private landowners.

**Technology Development and Transfer.** NRCS utilizes the latest technology and science-based data to create and maintain cutting edge tools for conservation.

**Flood Control Act of 1936 and Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954.** Congress gave NRCS a major role in reducing upstream flooding and provided a framework for watershed-wide projects.

**Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).** NRCS established NRI which is the primary natural resources inventory of land conditions on private lands in the United States.

**Food Security Act of 1985.** The 1985 Farm Bill first linked eligibility for USDA programs to conservation.

**Farmland Preservation and Easement Programs.** These NRCS programs protect and enhance tens of millions of acres for wetlands, farm and ranch lands, and wildlife habitat.

**Conservation Tillage.** SCS and NRCS played critical roles developing and promoting conservation tillage, arguably the most important conservation technology to become available since SCS was created.

**Farm Bill Programs.** After USDA's reorganization in 1994, financial assistance program were transferred to NRCS and funding for financial assistance increased substantially by subsequent Farm Bills.



## The Legacy of Private Lands Conservation in the United States

**September 19, 1933:** The Soil Erosion Service (SES) is created in the Department of Interior. Hugh Hammond Bennett as Chief\*, SES. Bennett served as Chief of SES and, later, SCS until November 13, 1951.

\*The title of the head of SCS was changed from Chief to Administrator in 1951. The title was changed back to Chief in February 1980

April 27, 1935: President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Soil Conservation Act (P.L. 74-46) creating the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

February 1937: President Roosevelt sends letters to the governors of all states urging the passage of legislation authorizing the creation of Soil Conservation Districts.

August 4, 1937: The first Soil Conservation District is organized in the Brown Creek watershed of North Carolina.

July 1, 1940: Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace gives SCS responsibility for administering the USDA Snow Survey and Water Supply forecasting program.

September 1, 1943: The Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is founded as an interdisciplinary organization for soil and water conservation professionals.

January 1946: The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is organized to facilitate cooperation between the nation's Soil Conservation Districts.

Robert M. Salter, Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, November 1951 – November 1953

November 15, 1952: The Secretary of Agriculture makes SCS responsible for administering USDA soil survey activities.

Donald A. Williams, Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, November 27, 1953 to January 11, 1969

August 4, 1954: Passage of the Small Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L. 84-566) gives SCS authority to provide technical and financial assistance for small watershed projects.

August 7, 1956: President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs P.L. 84-1021 creating the Great Plains Conservation Program to provide financial and technical assistance to drought stricken counties in the Great Plains states.

September 27, 1962: Passage of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 gave SCS the authority to administer Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) projects to promote economic development in large multi-county areas.

June 15, 1967: The Soil, Water, and Suburbia Conference is held in Washington, D.C., signifying the increased role for SCS in urban land use issues.

Kenneth E. Grant, Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, January 12, 1969 to May 31, 1975

January 1, 1970: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) becomes law, requiring federal agencies to evaluate and report on the environmental impacts of their activities.

R. M. (Mel) Davis, Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, June 1, 1975 to September 11, 1979

November 18, 1977: Passage of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act (P.L. 95-192) requires SCS to conduct regular inventories of the nation's soil and water resources and report the results to Congress as part of a process for developing more effective conservation policies and

laws.

Norman A. Berg, Chief, Soil Conservation Service, September 12, 1979 to April 2, 1982

Peter C. Meyers, Chief, Soil Conservation Service, April 4, 1982 to March 20, 1985

Wilson Scaling, Chief, Soil Conservation Service, May 21, 1985 to July 11, 1990

December 23, 1985: The Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198) becomes law. It is the first Farm Bill to contain a Conservation Title. With its Sodbuster, Swampbuster and Highly Erodible Lands provisions, conservation compliance becomes a prerequisite for participation in USDA programs. It also establishes the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to provide rental payments to farmers for putting cropland into grass or trees.

1985: The Earth Team is established and begins to recruit volunteers to assist SCS, and now NRCS, with its conservation efforts.

William J. Richards, Chief, Soil Conservation Service, December 16, 1990 to January 22, 1993

Paul W. Johnson, Chief, Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), January 10, 1994 to November 8, 1997

October 13, 1994: Passage of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act initiates a major reorganization of the USDA. SCS is renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to better reflect the scope of the agency's mission. Several programs including the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) are transferred to NRCS to administer.

April 4, 1996: The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act creates the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and expanded NRCS's authority to administer financial assistance programs.

Pearlie S. Reed, Chief, NRCS, March 1, 1998 to May 4, 2002

Bruce I. Knight, Chief, NRCS, May 5, 2002 to August 23, 2006

Arlen Lancaster, Chief, NRCS, August 23, 2006 to 2009

June 18, 2008: Food, Conservation, and Energy Act authorizes the largest ever investment in natural resources conservation. \$24 billion over 5 years.

Dave White, Chief, NRCS, March 2009 - Present

USDA/NRCS establishes landscape-scale initiatives including:

- "Working Lands for Wildlife" targets seven at-risk species and encourages landowners to voluntarily undertake conservation efforts, such as modifying fences to promote wildlife movements, halting the advance of invasive species and changing grazing patterns. An 11-state sage grouse initiative spurred Working Lands for Wildlife.
- The Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative, began in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, focused on alleviating effects from oil pollution in migratory bird breeding grounds along the Gulf Coast;
- The initiatives also target the Chesapeake Bay, the Mississippi River Basin, the Great Lakes, longleaf pine habitat in the Southeast and forests in the Northeast.

## The History of Conservation through Quotes

"Since the achievement of our independence he is the greatest patriot who stops the most gullies."  
—Patrick Henry, Remarks before the Virginia Assembly, 1777

"To skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed."

— Theodore Roosevelt, Message to Congress, December 3, 1907

"When the land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land — when both end up better by reason of their partnership — then we have conservation. When one or the other grows poorer, either in substance, or in character, or in responsiveness to sun, wind, and rain, then we have something else, and it is something we do not like."

— Aldo Leopold, Report to the National Game Conference on an American Game Policy, 1931

"Most of what needs doing must be done by the farmer himself. . . . All the non farming public can do is to provide information and build incentive on which farmers may act."

— Aldo Leopold, "Game Cropping in Southern Wisconsin" (1933)

"The history of every Nation is eventually written in the way in which it cares for its soil."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt, Presidential Statement on Signing the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, 1936

"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt, Letter transmitting Standard State Soil Conservation Act to Governors of the States, February 1937

"National action may be led and aided by government, but the soil must be conserved ultimately by those who till the land and live by its products."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, Soil Conservation, (1939)

"In this democracy, national action to conserve soil must be generated by these millions of land users. If they are active and willing participants in such a movement, it will endure; otherwise it will fail."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, Soil Conservation, (1939)

"The use and treatment of a given area of land must be determined not only by its physical characteristics, but also, wherever possible, by such considerations as available facilities, implements, power, financial means, and even by the preference of the farmer, his ability to learn, and his willingness to try new methods. In other words, the treatment must fit not only the needs and adaptabilities of the land but the needs and adaptabilities of the farmer as well."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, "Adjust of Agriculture to Its Environment" Annals of the Association of American Geographers, December 1943

"... soil conservation is not just an incidental bit of the mechanics of farming; it becomes part and parcel of the whole business of making a living from the land, and is the only way by which we may have permanently productive land for a permanent agriculture to support a permanent nation."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, "Adjust of Agriculture to Its Environment" Annals of the Association of American Geographers, December 1943

"Take care of the land and the land will take care of you."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, "Soil Conservation in the World Ahead" Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, January 1947

"Since society as a whole depends on the produce of the land for its present and future existence, society as a whole must share in the responsibility and costs of maintaining land in a productive state. The individual landowner or operator has neither the resources nor the ability to carry the burden alone, and moreover he has control only for a lifetime."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, Lectures at North Carolina State University, Jan. – Feb. 1959

"Everything we do, all we share, even whatever we amount to as a great and enduring people, begins with and rests on the sustained productivity of our agricultural land."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, Lecture at North Carolina State University, 1959

"A prosperous and enduring agriculture depends on an adequate supply of productive land, properly used and so protected from erosion that it will remain permanently productive. Without such a lasting agriculture, there can be no assurance of full national strength and permanence."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, Lecture at North Carolina State University, 1959

"The natural resources on our rural lands are vital to the present and future welfare of the American people. The soil and water on these lands are basic to the production of food and fiber for domestic and world needs. Maintaining the productivity of these resources is essential to American agriculture and to the health of the Nation's economy."

— President Ronald Reagan, Message forwarding Soil and Water Resources program to Congress, 1982

"The American farmer is the most enterprising, capable, and efficient in the world. Nowhere else does such a small percentage of a nation's population feed so many and so well. Farmers not only provide us with food and fiber, but also play a leading role in protecting our environment. Through the use of innovative soil and water conservation techniques . . . they are helping to safeguard America's land, lakes, and rivers for future generations."

— President George H.W. Bush, Proclamation 6110-National Agricultural Day, March 20, 1990

"Today's farmers and ranchers also serve as guardians of our precious environment. Using modern technology and environmentally responsible methods, they have improved our Nation's water supply, worked to reduce soil erosion, and restored thousands of acres of wetlands."

— President Bill Clinton, Proclamation 7147-National Farm-City Week, November 17, 1998

"The Soil Survey and the NRCS local conservation district partnership are the deoxyribonucleic acid for land husbandry in America."

--Pearlie S. Reed, Chief, NRCS, Earth Day Madison, WI April 22, 2002

"For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of our economy calls for action, bold and swift. And we will act, not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We'll restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age."

— President Barack Obama, Inaugural Address, January 21, 2009

"Our conservation is different. We're blue-collar conservation. We're conservation for the men and women who work the land. Our conservation isn't born in a boardroom; it's born at the kitchen table. It isn't refined by lawyers parsing sentences or by a congressional committee refining a bill. It's refined on the seat of a pick-up. It isn't implemented when the deed is done. It's implemented by the sweat from our contractors, from the men and women who dig the fence posts, the ones who put the water tanks in and sow the seeds and plant the trees. And it lives in the eyes of our children. . . . I'm proud to be part of you and to be with you, and I'm letting you know we're going to be with you, not just today but in the years ahead. We can fix these problems."

— NRCS Chief Dave White, Remarks at the annual meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts, February 2, 2010

"Thanks to Bennett's commitment and the dedication of our predecessors in the SCS and NRCS, soil conservation is today a central tenet of our national agricultural policy. It's at the heart of our vision for a productive, sustainable agricultural sector in balance with a healthy environment. We believe the productive use of crop land, grazing land, and forest land is essential to the nation's security and citizens' health and well being. In addition to forming the basis of a vibrant agricultural economy that provides food, fiber, feed, forest products and energy, these lands also generate environmental benefits that people need—benefits such as high quality soils; clean and abundant water; clean air, and healthy plant and animal communities."

— NRCS Chief Dave White, Remarks on 75th Anniversary of SCS/NRCS, January 10, 2010

"A healthy and prosperous America relies on the health of our natural resources. In the 21st century, USDA will help the nation confront climate challenges, air and water pollution, and loss of open space with a renewed commitment to conservation on our private and public lands. We must continue to work with partners across the country to conserve and restore our natural resources while helping rural communities to thrive. The future health and prosperity of rural America and our nation as a whole demand nothing less."

— Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, March 2010

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## New Creek 14 Prescribed Burn

On March 23, 2012 a prescribed, or controlled, burn at New Creek Site 14 was conducted. The burn was part of the dam rehabilitation project mitigation plan compensating for impacts to wetlands downstream of the dam. Most of the 9.1 acres of wetland are infested with reed-canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). Reed-canary grass commonly infests wetland areas resulting in the displacement of native wetland plants and the decline of wetland habitats.

The burn is the first part of a monitored field trial for reed-canary grass. The area will be mowed in August, then treated with a herbicide in late fall. Seeding the wetland area with a native wetland meadow mix and planting native trees and shrubs will occur after the reed-canary grass is reduced.

New Creek Site 14 is located approximately 14 miles upstream of the City of Keyser on Linton Creek, a tributary to New Creek, in the northeastern portion of Grant County, WV. The stream flows in a northeasterly direction along State Route 93 and US Routes 50 and 220, through the City of Keyser in Mineral County, where it joins the North Branch of the Potomac River. The dam provides flood control for downstream areas and water supply to the City of Keyser. For more information on the dam rehabilitation project go to [http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/12feb\\_nv/newCrk.html](http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/12feb_nv/newCrk.html).



Before: Overlooking the burn area prior to burning.



After: The burn was completed on March 23, 2012.

The morning the reed-canary grass burn was scheduled, Natural Resources Conservation Service and West Virginia Division of Forestry employees joined the contractor at the site.



The contractor coordinated the burning activity and briefed the crew on the fire and safety plan.



Ron Wigal, Pam Yost, Heather Hinson, Bobby Burken, and Joe Hatton are made aware of their escape routes during the safety briefing.



The dry grass was ignited. In the photo foreground, the dozer line is visible. The line was put around the burn area prior to lighting the fire to confine the burn area.



Pam Yost and Ron Wigal watch for escaped embers on the outside of the burn area.



The fire advances through the reed-canary grass



Ron Wigal was the NRCS lead for the burn.

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## Audit Remediation Effort Arrives in West Virginia

As part of the audit remediation effort, NRCS National Headquarters decided in 2011 to establish three centralized locations to administer Reimbursable Agreements. The chosen sites were California (West), Louisiana (Central), and West Virginia (East). These offices were established to standardize and streamline activities related to Reimbursable Agreements.



The East assists 23 states in our region with all activities related to revenue such as billings, accruals, and reconciliation. NRCS hired two employees, an Accountant and an Accounting Technician, to assist with this function. The first position filled was the Accountant position in August 2011 with Chris Carrico (right) followed soon after by the Accounting Technician, Shannon Smith (left) in November 2011.

### Christopher Carrico

#### Accountant

#### East Regional Reimbursable Agreements

My name is Christopher Carrico and I hail from Parkersburg, WV in the Mid Ohio Valley. I graduated from WVU in 2001 and previously worked at the Department of Treasury with the Bureau of Public Debt for over 5 years as an accounting technician.

My wife, Heather and our two children, Jackson (9) and Keira (7) are very excited to make Morgantown our home. I have been coming to Morgantown for WVU football and basketball games ever since I can remember. Many of my family members are WVU alumni and the majority of my fathers' family is from North Central West Virginia. One of my earliest memories of Morgantown was attending the final WVU-Pitt game in Old Mountaineer Field with my father and grandfather back in 1979. Needless to say, I am very familiar with the area and jumped at the chance to once again make Morgantown my home. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking, camping and mountain biking. My wife and I are also devoted collectors of vinyl records.

Thank you all for welcoming me to NRCS!

### Shannon Smith

#### Accounting Technician

#### East Regional Reimbursable Agreements

Shannon Smith was born and raised in Wheeling, WV where she attended and graduated from West Liberty University with a B.S. in Business Administration. Shannon began her career with the NRCS in May 2009 when she was hired as the Secretary (OA) for the National Geospatial Development Center (NGDC), now the National Soil Survey Center – Geospatial Research Unit (NSSC-GRU). A large portion of her duties involved administrative management of approximately 70 Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit agreements. Shannon's duties also consisted of timekeeper and GovTrip reviewer for all Soil Business Systems staff. She served as Information System Security Point of Contact for the GRU location, assisted with 2010 ABC data collecting, and reporting activities and was Mentoring Coordinator for NSSC.

For more information, contact [Susan Edgar](#), Budget Officer, at 304-284-7555.

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## Featured Photos

Each quarter, outstanding photos will be featured in the News and Views. One photographer each quarter will receive a Keepsake award. TJ Burr is recognized for *before and after* Shavers Fork Fish Habitat Improvement photos.

### Shavers Fork Fish Habitat Improvement

*Before and After* Photographs submitted by **TJ Burr**

See story and photos

<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watershed/waterResources/upShavers.html>



Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) photographed in Randolph County by Jeremy Bennett.

### Tips for Spring Photos

[http://www.olympusamerica.com/crm/oneoffpages/crm\\_spring\\_esys.asp](http://www.olympusamerica.com/crm/oneoffpages/crm_spring_esys.asp)

### 10 Great Digital Camera Tips And Tricks

<http://shopping.yahoo.com/blogs/digital-crave/10-great-digital-camera-tips-tricks-174146195.html>

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## Bits and Pieces

May is **National Wetlands Month**. More than 11,000 of America's private landowners have voluntarily enrolled over 2.3 million acres into the Wetlands Reserve Program. The cumulative benefits of these wetlands reach well beyond their boundaries to improve watershed health, the vitality of agricultural lands, and the aesthetics and economies of local communities.



The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) became part of the 1995 farm bill. Since then the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has been working with farmers to protect those valuable wetlands by enrolling them into easements.

The WRP is a voluntary restoration program that provides technical and financial assistance to restore and improve wetland resources on private lands. Wetlands provide numerous benefits: they provide habitat for fish and wildlife; improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reduce flooding; recharge groundwater; and provide opportunities for educational, scientific, and limited recreational activities.

For more information, go to

[http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/easements/wetlands/?&cid=nrcs143\\_008419](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/easements/wetlands/?&cid=nrcs143_008419)

The 8th Annual **Small Farm Conference** was held on March 1, 2 and 3, 2012 at the Waterfront Place Conference Center, in Morgantown, WV.



Ray Carr (left) and Steve Ritz (right) staffed the NRCS information area on Thursday, March 1. The participants on Thursday on Thursday spent the entire day in a specific workshop. March 2 and March 3 were filled with shorter sessions on a variety of topics. Becky Bowers and Jason Teets represented NRCS on Friday. Jason and Herb Andrick were the Saturday staff.

For more information, go to <http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/conference>

**Agriculture and Conservation Day** at the Capitol was March 2, 2012, in the Capitol Rotunda. Agricultural agencies and organizations had informational displays and representatives available to answer questions from the public and state elected officials. NRCS was represented by Kevin Wickey, Dave Kingsbury (photo, left), Charlotte Elliott-Friend (photo, right) Greg Stone, Greg Kist, and Carol Lagodich.



For more information, go to [http://www.wvagriculture.org/news\\_releases/2012/3-1-12.html](http://www.wvagriculture.org/news_releases/2012/3-1-12.html)

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## Conservation Education



### National Agriculture Day in Lewisburg

*Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children.*

On Thursday, March 8, 2012, Eileen Klein and Katy McBride, Soil Conservationists with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Lewisburg Field Office, celebrated National Agriculture (Ag) Day with elementary school children at the Lewisburg Baptist Academy. National Ag Day is a time when producers and others recognize the abundance provided by American agriculture. Eileen and Katy spoke about how food and fiber is produced and what Natural Resources Conservation Service does to assist farmers.

"We spoke to approximately 50 elementary (K-5) school children about the different types of livestock that are typically seen on a farm," said Katy. "The kids answers included cows, pigs, horses, and chickens. We told them they could also see exotic animals such as llamas and alpacas. We asked them if they knew the importance of each animal. For example, they knew that meat came from beef cows and they also knew that milk came from dairy cows. They knew that eggs came from chickens. Not one of them said a grocery store! We also told them that alpacas were known for their wool—the next time they had a t-shirt or sweater on, to check the tag to see what it was made out of because it might just surprise them."

"We talked about the importance of clean water – not just for animals but for humans as well," Katy continued. "We discussed how NRCS helps local farmers and producers through our programs. For example, if the livestock have open access to water sources such as springs, streams, and creeks; NRCS will help fence the water source off so the livestock won't have access and then help develop an alternative water source. They all agreed that they like to have nice, clean water to drink!"

"Each student (and teacher) received a poster of the Water Cycle (that had examples of projects that they could do at home or in the classroom) Pollination Posters, and the Inch of Soil Poster," Katy added. "Included in their bags was information on the water cycle, pollination, fun farm facts, etc. We also discussed the Earth Team Volunteer program and told them that when they got older, they could volunteer with our office to see what it is that we do".

The school is relocating to a new building and would like to celebrate next year's National Ag Day by planting new trees and/or shrubs around the new school. NRCS is invited to participate.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#) at 304-645-6172.

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### Grassland Evaluation Contest

The 2012 Grassland Evaluation Contest was held on Friday, April 13 at Jackson's Mill in Lewis County. The Grassland Evaluation program consists of four sections: Grassland Condition, Soil Interpretation, Wildlife Habitat, and Plant Identification. Each of these factors was considered in evaluating the pasture to best utilize the resource and to help make useful management decisions.

A scenario with the landowner's goals for livestock and wildlife production was provided along with appropriate soil survey information, aerial photos, maps, scorecards and other relative information. The contestants first determined the condition of the field then made corrective decisions based on sound agricultural practices compatible with the landowner's goals. The judging site was typical pasture used for livestock grazing.

This year's contest consisted of 11 teams. The top three finishers were:

1. Ravenswood Future Farmers of America (FFA) #1
2. Ravenswood FFA #2
3. Cabell Midland FFA #1

The other teams were: Ripley FFA Team #1, Tyler FFA, Clay County FFA 1, Petersburg Grant FFA, Cabell Midland FFA Team 2, Grant County, Clay County FFA 2, and Ripley FFA Team #2.

Each member of the winning team receives a \$500 scholarship. Each member of the second winning team receives a \$250 scholarship. The first and second place teams are eligible to participate in the Mid-America Contest in Missouri. The top scoring individual receives a \$500 scholarship.

Technical support for the WV contest is provided by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Sponsors for this year's contest were the 14 Conservation Districts, WV Conservation Agency, WV Department of Agriculture, WV Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, and private donators. NRCS employees who assisted with this year's contest include Rob Pate, Jared Nestor, Andy Sentz, Tom Vance, Barbara Greenleaf, Gary Redden, Jamey Darlington, and Katy McBride.

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#) at 304-645-6172.

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## 2012 Envirothon

The 2012 West Virginia Envirothon was held on Friday, April 20th at the Days Inn in Flatwoods, WV.

The Envirothon is a conservation education program and competition for students in grades 9 -12 and consists of five sections: Forestry, Soils, Aquatics, Wildlife, and a current environmental topic. Each team consists of five students. The Envirothon mission is to help young people develop the skills, knowledge, and desires necessary to achieve and maintain a balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment. This years teams included Braxton FFA, Upshur FFA, Liberty FFA, Doddridge Co., Greenbrier East FFA, St. Mary's Mud Pies, Cameron FFA, East Hardy, Hampshire Homeschool, Jefferson Agriscience, Robert C. Byrd FFA, Liberty HS – Raleigh Co., Cabell Midland FFA, St. Mary's Dirt Devils, Petersburg FFA, Mineral County. FFA, Berkley Springs HS, Nicholas FFA, Calhoun FFA, Tygarts Valley High School, Ripley Environmental Science, John Marshall FFA, Ravenswood FFA, Blennerhassett FFA, Paw Paw Red Foxes, Elkins High Tigers, Shady Spring Enviromongers, Ripley FFA, Preston County, Moorefield HS FFA, Paw Paw Hellbenders, and Jefferson FFA.

The top five teams were:

- 1 – Ravenswood (scholarship of \$5,000)
- 2 – Doddridge Co. Gold (scholarship of \$3,750)
- 3 – Shady Spring Enviromongers (scholarship of \$2,500)
- 4 – Hampshire Home School (scholarship of \$1,750)
- 5 – Elkins High Tigers (scholarship of \$1,250)

The 2013 and 2014 Envirothon will be held in Wood County at the Wood County 4H Camp. For more information on the Envirothon, please check out [www.wvca.us/envirothon](http://www.wvca.us/envirothon)

For more information, go to <http://www.wvca.us/envirothon/> or contact [Katy McBride](#) at 304-645-6172.



Heather Hinson and Charlotte Elliot-Friend staffing the NRCS career exhibit during the Teaching Day at the Envirothon



Crystal Buchannon and Greg Kist preparing for registration



Rob Pate and Alan Moore at the soils station



Rob Pate and Katy McBride at the soils station



Barbara McWhorter grading tests at the forestry station



Debbie Cunningham scoring tests at the soils station

For more information, contact [Katy McBride](#) at 304-645-6172.

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**Useful Links**

**Working Trees Info Sheets**



The USDA National Agroforestry Center's (NAC) newest product, *Working Trees Info Sheets*, is a single page publication, front and back, that highlights a single issue or benefit that an agroforestry practice can address or provide. The first few Info sheets will be general information on each agroforestry practice. Future topics will cover income, energy and air quality. Current issues are Alley Cropping and Forest Farming.

<http://www.unl.edu/nac/workingtreesinfosheets.htm>

NAC had its origins in the 1990 Farm Bill. It began as a Forest Service Research and State & Private Forestry effort in 1992 and expanded into a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1995.



By the end of 2012, my.NRCS will be replaced with USDA Connect.

A little about USDA Connect...

USDA Connect is a social networking application that empowers USDA to be innovative and execute quickly by utilizing a network of coworkers, experts, and customers. Features like communities, blogs, and activities can be set up for collecting knowledge, exchanging ideas, and organizing efforts.

Learn more about USDA Connect in the Aglearn course *Get Connected with USDA Connect*.

**NRCS Executive Correspondence Management Team's (ECMT) FY 2012 2nd Quarter Newsletter**

Correspondence is the closest most citizens get to their Government, and we have a duty as public servants to make correspondence the highest priority. This means responding correctly, efficiently, and in a timely manner to all correspondence.

Page 5 Correspondence tips, reminders, and news.

Page 6 Plain writing using simpler words.

Page 8 Five step process to become your own expert proofreader.

Flipping Book: <http://publ.com/HTqtG5w?>

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## West Virginia's Civil Rights



### Creating a Welcoming Workplace Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride

#### What Can I Do?

- Be a student: Educate yourself.
- Be an activist: Challenge discrimination and prejudice.
- Be an ally: Support victims of discrimination or prejudice.
- Be honest: Recognize your own biases, prejudices, and values.
- Be a teacher: Teach tolerance, encourage openness and understanding.
- Be a role model: Be vocal in opposing prejudice and help educate others.
- Be a partner: Work on projects with members of groups different from your own.

### NRCS Employees headed out to many College Career Fairs around the State

Submitted by Jeremy Bennett, [American Indian/Alaska Native Program Manager](#).

The coming of spring brings on the West Virginia career fairs among other things. NRCS employees from around the state attended career fairs at WVU Natural Resources Center, Fairmont State, Glenville State, WVU campus wide, Shepherd University, Marshall University, Concord University, WV State University and the Veterans Career Fair. The career fairs were a great success, thanks to advertisements in the local media. NRCS handed out packets of information by the handfuls and spoke to many talented individuals interested in careers with the agency. We might have even recruited an earth team volunteer for your office! If you would enjoy participating in activities like this or have ideas for outreach, consider a future position on the Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC). This is one of the most rewarding collateral duty positions to hold within NRCS.

Do you know what the WV CRAC is?

The West Virginia Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) implements the requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and prohibited discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Executive Order 11478 stated that EEO is an integral part of every aspect of the Federal Government's personnel policy. The Committee also has certain responsibilities under Title VI - Program Delivery.

The CRAC is responsible to the Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer (State Conservationist). The committee serves the following functions:

- As an advisory body to the State Conservationist to promote and assist in meaningful and effective affirmative action consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by management.
- Provides feedback on the performance of the equal opportunity, workforce diversity, and civil rights program, identifies areas of weakness, and makes recommendations for improvements to other NRCS officials in the State of West Virginia.
- Identifies emerging areas needing special attention by the State Conservationist and other NRCS officials in the state of West Virginia.

This committee will support and promote the Plan of Operations for equal opportunity, workforce diversity, and civil rights.

- The committee will make recommendations to the State Conservationist regarding policies, practices, and procedures that adversely affect the achievement of equal opportunity, workforce diversity, and civil rights goals and objectives.
- Make recommendations to the State Conservationist to see that all minority groups are represented in the workforce. Outreach efforts will be made to assure that objectives are reached.



Jared Beard, [Veterans Special Emphasis Program Manager](#), handed out packets of information and spoke to many talented individuals interested in careers with NRCS.



Charlotte Elliot-Friend visited with Representative David McKinley at job fair focused on veterans.

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## Meet . . .

**Jeff Barr**

Soil Conservation Technician  
 Point Pleasant Service Center

I began my new position with NRCS in March of 2012 as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Point Pleasant field office. I started with NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer in the Virginia state office in July of 2011. In Virginia I worked with the easement program staff. After approximately six weeks as an Earth Team Volunteer I was hired as a WAE and continued working with the easement program staff until I came to Point Pleasant.

I graduated from WVU with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1999 and with an MBA in 2001. I have had numerous responsibilities including project management, construction inspection, and design since graduating from college. Prior to living in Virginia my wife and I lived in Boston, MA for about four years while she attended school to become a Physical Therapist. We are happy to be back to an area that does not have a population of several million people. My wife and I are both originally from West Virginia, me from Tucker County and my wife from Randolph County.

I am very happy to be with NRCS and look forward to a long career with the agency.

**Bobby Burken**

Soil Conservation Technician  
 White Hall Service Center

My path into the NRCS started with two summer internships with the agency in Wisconsin; which is where I majored in Reclamation, Environment, and Conservation (University of Wisconsin-Platteville). Prior to that I was a computer network technician for the Air Force and was located in Omaha for a few years. Having spent a bit of time in Wisconsin, Nebraska, and having grown up in Iowa, I had decided it was time to move either east or west. I ended up getting hired on in Whitehall as a technician; so I packed up my stuff and headed east.

Outside of work, I like to stay active. On my downtime I enjoy mountain biking and snowboarding as well as some fishing and running occasionally. I'm excited to get out and explore the area and meet new people.

**Dusty Jager**

Soil Conservation Technician  
 Gassaway Service Center

I was born and raised in South Dakota, graduating from South Dakota State University in 2004 with a major in Agronomy and minors in Animal and Range Sciences. In 2002 I attended farrier school in Oklahoma and became a Certified Farrier by the American Farriers Association in 2007. I worked for

South Dakota State University as both a Range Management Educator and Agronomist. Last summer I worked for Grand Teton National Park packing horses to spray weeds in the backcountry. I also received training as a type II Wild Land Firefighter. My interests include outdoor sports, blacksmithing, music, and hunting. I have joined an outstanding team here in Braxton and Nicholas counties and look forward to meeting other NRCS employees in the future. Hope you all have a dandy summer.

---



**J. Lee Haggerty**

Soil Conservation Technician  
Moorefield Service Center

I grew up in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia on a small beef and poultry farm. I attended Potomac State College where I graduated with an associate's degree in Forest Resource Management and West Virginia University where I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Resource Management in 2006.

My love for the outdoors drove me to pursue a job with the WV Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR). I started my career in wildlife management with the WVDNR in Tucker County, WV where I lived and worked for 4 years. I then accepted a partner position between WVDNR and NRCS as a Wildlife Biologist in December, 2010 located in Hardy County, WV; thus my beginning with NRCS. After just over a year in this position I was hired full time by NRCS as a Soil Technician in Hardy County.

I am excited and look forward to working as an NRCS employee and helping farmers and conservationists conserve and protect our natural resources for future generations.

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## Personnel Updates

(Submitted by Karen Fitchett as of April 17, 2012.)

Name	Action	Location	Date
Michelle Tennant	Promotion	State Office	01/15/2012
Dustin Jager	New Hire Soil Conservation Technician	Gassaway	01/15/2012
Adriana Jimenez Lopez	Reassignment to Soil Conservationist	Ranson	01/29/2012
Tim Hastings	Promotion	State Office	01/29/2012
Bruce Skidmore	Promotion	Spencer FO	02/12/2012
Randall Rumer	New Hire Soil Conservation Technician	Franklin FO	02/12/2012
Jeffrey Barr	New Hire/Transfer Soil Conservation Technician	Pt. Pleasant FO	02/26//2012
Lee Haggerty	New Hire Soil Conservation Technician	Spencer FO	02/26/2012
Andrew Bartlett	New Hire Soil Conservation Technician	Parkersburg	03/11/2012
Eugene Friend	Retirement	Sistersville FO	04/01/2012
Lori Redden	Termination	Beckley AO	03/30/2012
Carol Durham	Termination	Beckley AO	03/30/2012
Bruce Skidmore	Reassignment to Soil Conservationist	Spencer FO	04/08/2012
Chris Carrico	Reassignment	State Office	04/08/2012



### HR Minute

Submitted by Kevin A. Shuey  
 Human Resources Specialist (Intern)  
 Business Management Leaders Program

Do you ever think about retirement?

Tell the truth, now. I think we all dream of it occasionally, though such dreams may certainly increase as we get closer to it. And the reality is, we should be thinking about it – at least enough to ensure that plans are in place to reach our retirement goals. And that should start early in our careers, because if you take a look at any simple projection of investment earnings, it is clear that time is our best ally in a successful retirement strategy. There are many tools available to us as federal employees to help us make the needed decisions to put our retirement plans in place. Here are some questions you should be asking yourself.

- Have you maximized your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), and selected funds that reflect an appropriate risk tolerance for you and your stage of life? (Excellent planning tools and calculators are available on the TSP website at: <https://www.tsp.gov/index.shtml>)

Have you thought about how your life insurance will be affected by your transition into retirement?

- Do you plan to continue your health insurance in its current form into retirement?
- Have you considered the availability and affordability of long-term care insurance as part of your retirement planning? (Information about the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) can be found at: [www.ltcfeds.com](http://www.ltcfeds.com).)

These are just a few of the questions that go into effective retirement planning, and for many of them, a year or two before you retire is too late! Some benefits must be in place for 5 years before



retirement in order to maintain the option to continue coverage after retirement (i.e. health and life insurance.)

A good starting point for retirement planning information is the USDA Dashboard, also known as HRLINK\$. Though still a work in progress, it is a good central point for connections to HR, insurance, Social Security, and retirement information and tools. Here's the link: <https://connecthrusdaauth.gdcii.com/>.

If you have specific questions, or need help finding information, you can contact your Human Resources Specialist at 304-284-7552. Good Luck!

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