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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
May 2009

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The Romney USDA Service Center is helping those in need.

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Joe Hatton

Farm Bill Specialist

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

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
75 High Street Room 301, Morgantown, WV 26505
304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839
<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>

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

It's raining today and has been for several days now; schools were delayed this morning, roads are closed, and once again houses are flooded. Coming from a flat part of the mid-west, I'm still learning how the topography controls things here and how relatively small amounts of rainfall can create dramatic flood events.

We just recently submitted our EWP-Flood Plain Easement applications into National Headquarters for their consideration for funding. We received 246 applications on short notice and limited duration. Almost all of those applications came from people willing to leave their homes.

We received coverage on several TV news stations. We had lots of interest from State Legislators and from our Congressional delegation. I was amazed. This was a strong indicator to me that, as much as the partnership in West Virginia has done to reduce the effects of flooding, it is still a major concern.

Thank you for your efforts processing these applications. We will have to wait to see how many of our applications can be selected from the very limited funding the agency has for this activity. However, we can be proud that we gave this initiative our very best effort. Thanks again.

Kevin Wickey
 State Conservationist
 West Virginia

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From the Field

Helping Those in Need

Submitted by: Rebecca Bowers, Soil Conservationist

The Romney USDA Service Center over the months of January, February, and March have collected a total of 273 pounds of food items for needy families located in Hampshire County. The families were selected by a case manager working for the local Family Preservation Agency. The effort is a cooperative USDA effort by the Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Potomac Valley Conservation District. Items that have been collected by the USDA Service Center include pet food, paper products, all types of canned goods, and other non-perishable items. In time of need we should all pitch in to help others. Our challenge to you is see if you can match or even exceed our total. Good Luck.



Pictured left to right: Howard Page, Rural Development; Vera Page, Farm Service Agency; Patty White, Farm Service Agency; Renee Herbaugh, Farm Service Agency; Linda Smith, Rural Development; and Becky Bowers, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Chesapeake Bay Program Director Tours Hardy County

Christi Ross Hicks, Soil Conservationist

Director of the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program, Jeffrey Lape, toured Hardy County on February 13th to see the on-the-ground efforts being made to protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed by various partnering agencies, including WV NRCS. Mr. Lape met representatives from the WV Conservation Agency (who hosted the tour), the Moorefield NRCS & FSA Field Office, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), WV Division of Forestry, West Virginia University Extension Service, WV Department of Agriculture and the Potomac Valley and Eastern Panhandle Conservation Districts. In his opening remarks, Mr. Lape discussed the strides made in the cleanup effort in past years, but also some challenges of the future. Mr. Lape pointed out that from 1990 to 2000, the watershed population grew 8 percent, while impervious surfaces rose by 41 percent. He was sure to recognize that the Chesapeake Bay Program was attempting to address all sectors, including agricultural non-point source pollution, which may contribute to the problems associated with the Bay.

While in Hardy County, the group met with a beef and poultry producer at his farm to discuss the conservation practices he had installed with technical and financial assistance from governmental and non-profit agencies. Christi Hicks, Soil Conservationist, presented information to the group describing the planning process with the landowner and the programs that were utilized to implement his Conservation Plan. A littershed for storing his breeder poultry litter as well as a 5.7 acre Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) riparian forested buffer with associated stream crossing, water developments and tree planting were installed on the farm. The group then traveled to a WV Conservation Agency sponsored natural stream restoration project on the Lost River and concluded with a CREP demonstration project at WVU Reymann Memorial Farm. Mr. Lape noted the collaborative effort that was exhibited amongst all the represented agencies and congratulated the partners involved on their efforts in restoring water quality and habitat on agricultural lands throughout the area.



Jeffrey Lape, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program (right), talks with farmer Arthur Halterman at the farm during a tour of Hardy County, WV.

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Alternative Energy Possibilities in West Virginia

Submitted by Rob Pate

Wind Power in West Virginia

If you have the location with enough wind, it will cost you between \$20,000 and \$40,000.00 to install a small wind turbine. On February 17, 2008 President Obama signed the American Recovery and Re-investment Act of 2009 into law. With a significant emphasis on renewable energy technology deployment and job expansion, the bill improved upon the 2008 tax credit by removing "cost caps." This change allows consumers and small businesses to take a 30 percent tax credit off the installed cost of a wind turbine. You hook directly into the electric grid, so your meter runs backwards when the wind is blowing-no storage batteries are needed. This will pay for itself in about ten years. A turbine usually has a 30-year life, so the last 20 years is basically free electricity.

More information about wind turbines may be found at:

<http://www.awea.org/smallwind/>

<http://www.awea.org/smallwind/toolbox2/financing.html>

<http://archives.subscribermail.com/msg/747dfb01555f4467b99cf53c33025f7a.htm>

West Virginia approved "net metering", on enacted 1/26/07, allows for electric companies to credit your home produced electricity by turning your meter backwards. More information may be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_metering

<http://www.psc.state.wv.us/scripts/WebDocket/ViewDocument.cfm?CaseActivityID=201937>

Solar Power in West Virginia

A new solar technology is photovoltaic films. The following is a *YouTube* video about photovoltaic films. You cannot watch this on a government computer, so enjoy this at home, or search "photovoltaic film".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYJe12X6T50>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Low-cost_photovoltaic_cell (pdf)

Government Grants may be available. For more information go to:

<http://farmenergy.org/news/usda-announces-reap-energy-technical-assistance-funding>

West Virginia

Richard E. Satterfield, USDA Rural Development

75 High Street, Room 320

Morgantown, WV 26505-7500

(304) 284-4874

Richard.Satterfield@wv.usda.gov

http://clients.oxid8.com/fe/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/reap_eta_2009-05154_pi.pdf

"These projects (energy audits and renewable energy development assistance) are designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the nation's critical energy needs. The 2008 Farm Bill mandates that the recipient of a grant that conducts an energy audit for an agricultural producer or a rural small business require the agricultural producer or rural small business to pay at least 25 percent of the cost of the energy audit, which shall be retained by the eligible entity for the cost of the audit."

Solar equipment is now available to rent, so there is no large up-front cost to install a solar system.

West Virginia incentives may be found at: <http://www.dsireusa.org/library/includes/map2.cfm?>

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Bits and Pieces

The West Virginia Small Farm Conference

The West Virginia Small Farm Conference was a three day educational and networking opportunity for farmers from West Virginia and surrounding regions to improve and better market their products. Alternative energy was a topic.



A session focused on "Farming with Fewer Fossil Fuels" Barbara Broxterman, Agricultural Engineer, gave a brief overview of solar pumping systems which included topics on:

- how to determine water needs
- how a solar water pump works
- pump selection and battery power
- how and where to find NRCS assistance (by use of the WWW)

The second part of the presentation provided a brief description of farm program assistance.

James Cooper, Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D Coordinator, staffed an RC&D exhibit. NRCS featured the new Farm Bill exhibit.

West Virginia Agriculture and Conservation Day

March 10, 2009 was West Virginia Agriculture and Conservation Day at the Legislature. The area surrounding the Senate and House chambers was filled with informational booths run by agencies from around the state.



The NRCS display featured the Farm Bill and was staffed by Charlotte Elliott-Friend (left) and Carol Lagodich. Greg Kist (right), Greg Stone, and Kevin Wickey met with legislators and explained NRCS programs.



Jackie Byars (pictured) and Nicole Viars represented the RC&D programs.

Lost? Let A Cow Be Your Guide

People spend a lot of money on GPS directional systems, but it turns out all they need is a cow. Researchers say cattle seem to have some kind of internal compass. They studied satellite photos of thousands of cows around the world. No matter which continent they're on, grazing or resting cows tend to align themselves north and south. Call it CPS: You can find your way as long as you know which end is north.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93970746>

Power Lines Upset Cows' Internal Compass, Researchers Say

Researchers don't know why cows and deer tend to face magnetic north or south, but they have discovered that high voltage power lines seem to disrupt this natural alignment. When near power lines, cows and deer faced any old direction. But their alignment grew increasingly more regular — north-south — the farther away from power lines they were.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101945271>

Going to Market

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture counted about 55 tailgate markets and 59 "farm stands" last summer.

Farmers' markets are common facilities or areas where several growers gather on a regular basis to sell all varieties of fresh fruits, vegetables and other locally grown products straight from their farms to consumers.

They are becoming the vendor of choice as the result of a consumer movement toward locally grown food, "green consciousness" and public awareness of food safety.

<http://www.statejournal.com/story.cfm?func=viewstory&storyid=54713>

West Virginia Horse Expo

Submitted by Katy McBride

The first West Virginia Horse Expo was held April 18, 2009 at the WV State

fairgrounds in Fairlea, WV. The expo included an equine trade show, horsemanship clinics, educational seminars, horse demonstrations, and youth activities, etc.

Tom Vance and Katy McBride of the Lewisburg Field Office along with Bill Harris of the Princeton Field Office set up a display and handed out information on horse nutrition, pasture management. They talked to farmers from Raleigh, Fayette, Monroe, Greenbrier, and Roane Counties. Farmers were interested in having their hay sampled and soil samples taken.

Interagency Public Outreach

WV NRCS teamed up with USDA State and Private Forestry and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to hand out information at the Morgantown *Walk for Life and Breath* on Saturday, April 25, 2009.



Tom Elliot, Plant Protection Technician; Devan Wanner, Public Affairs Specialist; and Carol Lagodich, Public Affairs Specialist provided natural resource information.

As sister agencies in USDA's Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Mission Area, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are uniquely positioned to promote conservation on America's public and private lands. Since early in the last century, both agencies have helped to shape the nation's stewardship ethic and to provide significant public benefits such as cleaner air and water, healthier soils, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, open space and, of course, food, fiber, feed and fuel.

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Conservation Education

West Virginia Grassland Evaluation Contest

The West Virginia Grassland Evaluation Contest was held on Friday, April 10, 2009. Student teams of three or four Future Farmers of America (FFA), or 4-H members, competed for scholarships with their conservation knowledge of pasture condition, plant identification, soils interpretation, and wildlife habitat.

Nine high schools met at Jackson's Mill and traveled to a the Jerden farm. 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 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. The students took a test at each of the four outdoor stations.

The Clay County 4-H Team placed first. For more information, go to the at the [West Virginia Conservation Agency news release](#). All members of the first place team received a \$500 scholarship, second place team members received a \$250 scholarship, and the highest scoring individual received a \$500 scholarship.

Technical support for the WV contest was provided by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Jamey Darlington, Gary Redden, Katy McBride, Barbara Greenleaf, Rebecca Flanagan, Greg Stone, Jared Nestor, Andy Sentz, Dustin Adkins, Brandon Duckworth, and Rob Pate participated.

Sponsors for this year's contest were: the WV Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society; WV Grassland Steering Committee; WV Conservation Districts; WV State Conservation Committee; WV Association of Conservation Districts; WV Conservation Agency; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Farm Service Agency; WV Department of Agriculture; WV FFA Association; WVU Extension Service; WVU College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Science; WV Association of Professional Soil Scientists; WVU Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station; WV Farm Bureau; WV Cattleman's Association; WV Shepherd's Federation; Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D; Capitol Conservation District; and Local Agribusinesses.

Grassland Management is important because the most basic human need is for food; grassland is essential in meeting that need. Forages make up two-thirds or more of the feed utilized for livestock. Forages are also very important to the health of the environment. They provide food and shelter for wildlife as well as greatly reduce soil erosion, and protect water quality.

For more information, go to http://www.wvca.us/education/program.cfm?page=program_grassland_contest



Gary Redden started the WV Grassland evaluation contest 8 years ago.

Watch a news story video at <http://www.wboy.com/story.cfm?func=viewstory&storyid=56448>



Katy McBride observing the wildlife station.



Barbara Greenleaf explains the plant station procedure.



Rob Pate monitors the soils test. In the background students are grading pasture condition.

West Virginia Envirothon

Twenty-one teams from all parts of the Mountain State traveled to the Greenbrier County Youth Camp, near Lewisburg, W.V. to compete at this year's competition, held on April 23-24, 2009. The Envirothon is a conservation education program available to students in grades 9 through 12. The Envirothon gives students from across the region the opportunity to test their skills at aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and this year's current environmental topic, *Biodiversity in a Changing World*. For information on the winning teams go to

http://www.wvca.us/news/upload/wvca_news/1718_2009%20West%20Virginia%20Envirothon.pdf



The first day of the Envirothon was a teaching day. Students had the opportunity to hear from the experts in aquatics, forestry, soils, and wildlife. Rob Pate taught at the soils station.



Greg Kist (left), the NRCS representative on the Envirothon Committee, talks with Rob Pate at the soils teaching station.



Susan Davis (pictured), Carol Lagodich, and Debra Murphy were at the *Biodiversity in a Changing World* oral presentation station.



Rob Pate (left) Eileen O'Neill (right) and Randall Lester administered the soils station test.



Katy McBride (left) was an all-around coordinator and Dewey Broyles (right) was a runner.



Laura Davis assisted at the aquatics station.



Barb McWhorter taught at the forestry station on teaching day and graded tests on Friday.

Debbie Dorsey, Teddy Hanson, Tom Vance, and Lee Godbey also assisted. Kevin Wickey represented NRCS as a judge at the finalist presentation.

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Useful Links

The **West Virginia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society** is located at <http://www.wvswcs.org/>.

2009 West Virginia Money Conferences**Improve your personal finance skills**

Money Conferences are informative, free presentations designed to help people better handle their personal finances. Included are planning for retirement, getting out of debt, saving for college, building a household budget and more. The conferences are organized by the WV State Treasurer.

2009 Schedule

- May 8 - Shepherdstown
- September 18 - Wheeling
- October 9 - Charleston

For more information, go to

<http://www.wvsto.com/Financial+Education/2009+Money+Conferences.htm>

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West Virginia's Civil Rights



Cinco de Mayo May 5, 2009

Submitted by Heather Hinson, Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager

Cinco de Mayo (Spanish for "Fifth of May") is a regional holiday in Mexico that celebrates the defeat of the French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862; not to be mistaken for Mexico's Independence Day, which falls on September 16, 1810. The Battle of Puebla was significant due to the fact that the Mexican army was outnumbered two to one and the French army had not been defeated in nearly 50 years.

Today, celebrations in Puebla and Mexico City consist of military parades that honor the heroes and soldiers that gave their lives for Mexico, school bands marching in the parades, and a re-enactment of the battle for the locals to enjoy. No celebration would be complete without food. Restaurants begin preparing authentic Mexican recipes days before the event.

Although Cinco de Mayo is not a federal holiday in the United States, it is widely celebrated as a cultural event by the growing Latino population, just as St. Patrick's Day, Oktoberfest, and the Chinese New Year are used to celebrate the Irish, German, and Chinese cultures respectively.

To participate in a Cinco de Mayo celebration near you, check with your local TV, radio stations and newspapers to find out about activities.

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Earth Team



After nearly 35 years of service with SCS/NRCS, Peg Reese retired on April 3, 2009. She spent her first retirement week as an Earth Team Volunteer, working Farm and Ranchland Protection Program Easements and clearing out her work area.

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Meet . . .**Joe Hatton**

Farm Bill Specialist

He may not be a new name to NRCS but he is the new WV NRCS Easement Specialist. Joe has worked with NRCS for seven years, beginning as a Soil Conservationist in the Morgantown Field Office in July 2002, and then to the Kingwood Field Office in December 2003. In the spring of 2005 he was selected as the District Conservationist for Mineral County. He spent four years in Mineral County working with farmers implementing conservation. One of the many highlights to his time in Keyser was assisting with the implementation of four irrigation systems for truck crop producers. These four farmers produce over 250 acres of crops-asparagus through zucchini. Before joining NRCS, Joe worked for the WV Conservation Agency for twelve years in various roles most recently as a Program Specialist for Nutrient Management.

Joe has a master's Degree from West Virginia University in Agricultural Economics, is an American Society of Agronomy Certified Crop Advisor, WV Department of Agriculture Certified Nutrient Management Planner, and is an American Forage and Grassland Council Certified Grassland Professional.

Joe is married to Deborah and they have three daughters, Mariah (16), Jennifer (14) and Nicole (9). They live on a farm outside of Morgantown.

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Personnel Updates

Name	From	To	Effective
Hatton, Joseph	Reassignment District Conservationist Keyser FO	Farm Bill Specialist State Office	4/12/2009
Reese, Margaret	Farm Bill Specialist	Retirement	4/3/2009
Donelson, Denise	Program Assistant Parkersburg AO	Disability Retirement	2/17/2009

**HR Minute**

Submitted by Diana Bokoch

We are finalizing our FY09 training plan and look forward to a smooth transition to FY10. Some things you will be seeing are:

- Improved Individual Development Program (IDP) format focusing on the KSA's (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities) of your position.
- Streamline the request for training process using IDP's, while budgeting tuition, fees, and travel costs.
- Human Resources Share Point Site with training information, forms, and instructions.

Your help is needed to keep HR (Ms. Bokoch) informed of any training and conferences that are external of AgLearn.

1. Credit card holders should verify that SF 182's are approved in AgLearn before paying for any training, conferences or fees associated with training.
2. Employees should copy [Ms. Bokoch](#) when organizing any courses or conferences, external of AgLearn.
3. File your travel voucher reimbursements in a timely manner.
4. Employees should provide copies of any FY09 training certificates or proof of completion for training that is not scheduled through AgLearn. These documents would be filed in your training file.

Favorite quotes:

The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.

Leaders don't create "followers"; they create energized leaders.

Phone Directory

An updated phone directory is available at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/employeeDirectory/app?agency=nrCS&state=wy>

Contact information may be found by searching on the employee name, city, all employees in the state, or by Service Center.

If your phone number or contact information is missing or incorrect, go to <https://icams.usda.gov/> (password required) and update your personal information.

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