



# Conservation Conversations

October 2009 - Issue No. Nine

*Energy and Environment Cabinet  
Department for Natural Resources  
Division of Conservation*

## Letter from the Director Kentucky Division of Conservation

I hope each of you have enjoyed the recent clear and sunny days that will help our farm producers harvest what we hope is a bumper crop. We have a lot to be thankful for and during harvest time it is even more obvious how blessed we are. As you read through the articles in this edition of the newsletter you will see some of the many accomplishments of the "Kentucky Conservation Partnership." I hope you are as proud as I am of the tremendous successes from your efforts.

There are still a lot of unknowns at this time concerning the budget and how the 2010 Kentucky General Assembly will deal with many important funding issues. The Division of Conservation, like conservation districts, is dealing the best it can to manage the delivery of services during these difficult budget times. Travel for field representatives is still limited. The next two-year budget looks even worse and the division needs support for increases in its operating funds, in addition to the request for increased funding in direct aid and dam rehabilitation. Division staff are working with districts to provide additional funding through special contracts or projects like the 319 Nonpoint Source Agriculture Water Quality Survey in five watersheds; the hiring of four forester positions in cooperation with Division of Forestry, nine farm bill administrative positions in addition to the 50/50 technical positions being funded in cooperation with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The division is also working on a grant proposal on behalf of conservation districts regarding the Mississippi River Basin Initiative recently announced by NRCS. These efforts will help bring additional funds to districts for

services provided and likewise help pay for division staff to assist in these conservation efforts in Kentucky.

We reap what we sow and I appreciate all the efforts each of you have made to inform your legislators on the important priority of funding the conservation district programs in our state. I assure you that we will be keeping you informed of any developments or changes as they may occur.

I would like to end by saying thanks to all of you for your continued hard work and dedication to the conservation movement and to challenge you to continue to work hard and have faith that we will also see new growth as this season of challenge passes for all of us. I would like to thank all the hard working Division of Conservation staff that work each day to help you as conservation districts serve the citizens of the Commonwealth. Please feel free to contact me or any of the division staff if you have any questions or need any assistance.

Please pass this newsletter along to others that be interested.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Coleman, Director  
Kentucky Division of Conservation



# Award Recipients Recognized at Annual KACD Convention

Submitted by Kimberly Richardson

The Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) hosted its 66th annual convention at the Galt House in Louisville on July 12-14, 2009. Conservation district supervisors from across the state gathered at the convention to discuss and be educated about conservation efforts that affect them on the local, state, and national level. KACD was honored to have speakers such as Kentucky Senator David Givens and Dr. Leonard Peters, secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet.

Also during the convention, KACD took time to recognize Kentucky conservation districts, supervisors and land-owners who bring so much to preserving Kentucky’s natural resources. The following districts and individuals were recognized:

- Pendleton County Conservation District received the Outstanding Soil Stewardship Award.
- Years of Service Awards were given to those supervisors who have served 25 years or more.
- Scott County Junior Conservation Board received the Outstanding Junior Board Award.
- Ohio County Conservation District received the Outstanding Conservation District Award for west Kentucky and Harrison County Conservation District received the Outstanding Conservation District Award for east Kentucky.
- Johnson County Conservation District received the Outstanding District Education Award.
- Anthony Baker from Pendleton County was the Conservation Education Teacher of the Year.
- Anne and Randy Dailey of Bourbon County and Reality Farms of Henry County received Prescribed Grazing Awards.
- Mark and June Porter of Ohio County and Marion Howard of Taylor County received No-Till Farming Heroe Awards.
- Douglas Coyle of Boyle County received Cooperator of the Year.
- Jeff Bertram of Wayne County received Cooperator of the Year Runner-Up.
- Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service received the Special Recognition Award.
- Supervisors Jerry Greer, Barney Denny and William Lawrence each received the Distinguished Service Award.



Cooperator of the Year, Douglas Coyle and family



Ohio County Staff and Supervisors



Jane Thomas, Harrison County Supervisor



Distinguished Service Award

Barney Denny

Jerry Greer

William Lawrence



Scott County Junior Conservation Board

## Thomas E. Neil Inducted into Hall of Fame

Submitted by Steve Coleman



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Neil

This past summer Mr. Thomas E. Neil, supervisor on the Daviess County Conservation District Board was nominated and inducted into the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Southeast Regional Conservation Hall-of-Fame by the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) Board of Directors. Tom became the seventh inductee from Kentucky. He joins such outstanding Kentucky conservationists as Mr. Stanley Head, Mr. Harry Young, Jr., Mr. Billy Joe Miles, Mr. David Sawyer, Mr. James Lacy and Mr. Larry Jeffries who KACD has recognized for their outstanding contributions to Kentucky's and the nation's conservation movement.

Mr. Neil has served as a district supervisor since January 1, 1973. He served on the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission for 20 years and has chaired that Commission for 15 of those years. He was the sixth to serve as chairman of the commission during its now 63 year history and he leads a long tradition of outstanding supervisors who have served in this leadership role in Kentucky. Under his leadership the commission took a more active role on the local level by assisting conservation districts in carrying out their local programs and on the state level by assisting with such programs as the Agricultural District Program, the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program, the Agriculture Water Quality Act, the Equipment Loan Program and the State Direct Aid to conservation districts. Many of these are new programs created by the Kentucky General Assembly during Mr. Neil's chairmanship and have grown into valuable programs that assist the Kentucky Conservation Partnership in strengthening the conservation district program across Kentucky.

More recently Mr. Neil has been asked by the KACD Board of Directors to assist in completing one of its major, long-term goals of establishing the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Foundation, Inc. Mr. Neil's legal expertise has guided Kentucky through the process and deliberations of establishing this 501(c)(3) foundation for the purpose to accept tax deductible donations to promote and support all phases of the conservation of natural and living resources in the Commonwealth through research, education, and outreach efforts by local conservation districts across the state.

Tom's leadership, advice and dedication in these many efforts have greatly influenced the conservation district programs in Kentucky. It is a privilege and honor to recognize Mr. Thomas E. Neil as Kentucky's 2009 Southeast Regional NACD Hall-of-Fame inductee.

## Conservation Districts-Kentucky's Best Kept Secret

Submitted by Brian Hacker



Brian Hacker is a conservation technician working for the Knox County Conservation District and also serves as president of the Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees.

Today, I am a part of one of the best kept secrets in society – Conservation Districts. What a privilege to be a part of such a great family. Everywhere I go in the state of Kentucky, there are folks doing the same thing that I do in every single county. All of them are striving to put conservation on the ground; attempting to educate others on the basics of getting the most out of their land and making great strides to better their communities, counties and governments by promoting best management practices.

Throughout the course of my life, I have had various opportunities to gain new skills. Everything from working the family farm as a child in Knox County, KY, to being a mail carrier, to a teacher, to a tax preparer and even a pastor – each job prepared me for my current job with the Knox County Conservation District.

With the District, I am able to put all those various skills to work. My farming experience helps me to develop conservation plans for local farmers. My teaching skills allow me to cooperate with local teachers and youngsters to pass along conservation in the classrooms. My tax skills help to keep accurate records and bookkeeping. My time as a pastor helps me to feel comfortable discussing issues before larger groups of people, whether it be local citizens or politicians.

One of the highlights for me over the past several years is being involved with the District Employees Association (KACDE). I have never met people with more passion, enthusiasm, or work ethic than those who sit in district offices throughout the state ready and willing to help every land owner who walks through their doors. I quickly learned that KACDE was more than a “clique” or a club – it was an association with passion for leadership, a passion for training, a passion for excellence and passion for conservation districts and district employees in Kentucky.

The partnership among agencies and organizations in Kentucky is phenomenal as well. Districts rely on partners such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Division of Conservation, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Conservation Districts, NCDEA, Soil and Water Conservation Commission, US Department of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Forestry, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service ... the list is endless. They are all team players with that same passion to better their communities, counties and governments through conservation.

I have the privilege of being a part of something much larger than myself. What I do in my own community or district coupled with what you do in your own community or district, multiplied by the hundreds of partners we have here in Kentucky and all across our country, helps to get the word out. The more we get the word out, the less of a secret we become. Let's tell folks what we do for them every single day. Let's let them know that the best kept secret, conservation districts and the role they play, is not a secret anymore!

## Fifth Annual KACDE Training Workshop and Convention

Submitted by Brian Hacker

Conservation district employees from across the Commonwealth joined together to attend the Fifth Annual KACDE Training Workshop and Convention. The entire week was filled with hands-on activities and training opportunities for all district employees.

Some highlights for the week included outdoor activities related to the development and management of outdoor classrooms, designing and building man-made habitat for wildlife, training others to identify birds and their habitat and how to manage and install food plots that attract wildlife native to Kentucky.

Several educational sessions were offered for Quicken and QuickBooks and taught by district employees Linda Smith, Leslie Fourqurean, and Wanda Gilbert, and a conservation education roundtable session was facilitated by Jennifer Hardwick.

One afternoon was dedicated to a session on the importance and construction of rain barrels. PRIDE representatives Mark Davis and Jennifer Johnson explained

the significance of rain barrels and how to construct them. Several attendees took them home to share in their own districts!

Representatives from partner agencies also attended to inform district employees of recent developments and updates. Some of these partners included President Jeff Rice of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Kimberly Richardson of the Division of Conservation; State Conservationist Tom Perrin; Assistant State Conservationist, Tim Hafner; and Civil Rights Chair Diana Angle for USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Also in attendance were officers representing district employees on a regional and national level. SECDEA President Mendel Wade and NCDEA Treasurer Linda Smith reported on recent activities affecting district employees in Kentucky.

KACDE is committed to supporting all district employees by offering professional development opportunities. You may want to begin making plans today to join us next year for this dynamic professional development and training workshop.



## Fulton County Conservation District Employee Receives Extra Mile Award

Submitted by Debra Hinton

Tatia Bradshaw, Fulton County Conservation District Administrative Secretary, has received the 2009 NRCS Civil Rights Extra Mile Award for Area 1.

While working for the district, one of Tatia's main responsibilities has been to plan an annual farm tour for the board members in Fulton, Hickman and Graves counties. Over the years, the groups have traveled to St. Louis to visit Monsanto and attend a St. Louis Cardinals game; Iowa to see the John Deere factory and the Amana colonies; New Orleans to see the Bungee shipping facility; Chicago to be on the floor of the Board of Trades; and a family trip to Louisville and Star Light, Indiana to see the Children's Museum, the Falls of the Ohio and the Discovery Center. In 2009 the tour went to Mississippi to visit Natchez.

Since Fulton County is a stand alone office with no USDA employees, Tatia works with local landowners during sign-up periods for various state and federal programs. She also works with the Fulton County schools on various conservation education programs.

During this year's ice storm, Tatia volunteered with the

Hickman-Fulton RECC to answer phone calls, provide food to volunteers and talk to customers without power. She also volunteers her time to coach the Fulton County High School Golf Team. She takes the team to various meets, brings in instructors to assist the team and goes above and beyond to see that the team members get whatever they need to become better golfers and individuals.

Tatia is a hard worker for not only the Fulton County Conservation District but also for the citizens of Fulton County.



## Franklin County Sponsors County-Wide Metal Recycling

Submitted by Johnna McHugh

The Franklin County Conservation District has been helping landowners get rid of their unused metal by collecting it for recycling. In March 2002 the district sponsored its first metal collection event in the parking lot of the Frankfort Wal-Mart. The metal collection is now a biannual event, occurring in the spring and fall at Lakeview Park in Frankfort.

During the spring metal collection, the district partners with the Franklin County government to clean up sinkholes. A dumpster is also provided by the county at the park for landowners to discard material other than metal. The district utilizes a \$7,500 environmental grant from the Division of Conservation to help fund this program. Items accepted include, but are not limited to, metal, appliances with and without Freon, fencing, sheet metal and farm equipment. No tires, batteries or oils are accepted.

Providing this service for the citizens of Franklin County has kept 2,138.65 tons of metal waste from being placed in a landfill or disposed of improperly in illegal dump sites. The next metal collection event has been tentatively scheduled for November 2009. Please contact the Franklin County Conservation District (502-695-5203) for more information.



Franklin County Conservation District Chair Alvin Bogey with metal collected at a previous metal collection.



## Bracken County Conservation District Purchases Office Building

Submitted by Linda Hunter

In May 2009 Bracken County Conservation District purchased the office building it formally rented at 218 Frankfort Street in Brooksville. Due to federal budget cuts, the USDA closed the Farm Service Agency office in the building and moved it to Mason County, along with their portion of the rent. The Bracken County Conservation District had to move quickly to keep an office open for their county residents.

The conservation district is mainly funded thru the county millage tax and state tax dollars with additional funding from the federal government received on occasion. Without USDA sharing office expenses, it was necessary to obtain more funding. Working with the Kentucky Division of Conservation, a low interest loan was obtained through the Revolving Equipment Loan Program to purchase the building. Additional funds for office expenses were also obtained under the division's direct aid grant program. The district is also renting out part of the building and paying utility costs with the proceeds.

The conservation district provides invaluable educational and technical services as well as access to state cost share and other environmental programs to the county. In 2008 the Bracken County Conservation District was able to distribute over \$169,591 to county residents in the form of cost share funds and for other conservation programs. In addition the Natural Resource Conservation Service is able to house employees at this office to provide technical and engineering services to landowners in Bracken County.



Newly purchased building for Bracken County Conservation District

## Agricultural Districts-A Vehicle for Farmland Protection

Submitted by Jimmy Marcum

Jimmy Marcum is the Education Liaison for the Madison County Conservation District.

Quality and quantity of our food supply becomes more of a concern each year. Prime farmland is of major importance in meeting the nations short- and long-term needs for food and fiber. Preservation of prime farmland also is an important factor regarding security. Since September 11, 2001 our nation has been more aware of outside influences on our food chain protection. Because the supply of high quality farmland is limited the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes that responsible units of government, as well as individuals, should encourage and facilitate the wise use of our nation's prime farmland. Prime farmland, as defined by USDA, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, fiber, feed, forages and oil seed crops and is available for other uses. The ability to produce and protect the quality of our country's food supply is vital to our well being. Depletion of prime farmland reduces our ability to provide critical needs for our country. Once prime farmland has been developed for non-agricultural uses, it is nearly impossible to restore the land back to agricultural use.

Kentucky's Agricultural District Program is a vehicle for prime farmland protection. The Agricultural District Program allows landowners to form special districts where agriculture is encouraged and protected. They are designed to protect the land as an important and valuable natural resource, as well as protecting agriculture as a viable part of Kentucky's economy. Agricultural districts make public review of the acquisition of property by a government body necessary and for a government to consider impacts on agricultural areas concerning their actions. Agricultural districts offer members protection under KY Revised Statute 262, (1) The right to have their land assessed at agricultural value, (2) Protection against involuntary annexation and (3) The right to defer assessment fees for waterline extensions, until land is removed from the agricultural district and sold for non-agricultural purposes.



An agricultural district must contain a minimum of 250 contiguous acres which are in agricultural use. Each landowner within the proposed district must have at least 10 acres without a homestead or 11 acres with a homestead, or 5 acres without a homestead if horticultural land. Membership in an agricultural district is voluntary and can be terminated at any time by notifying the conservation district in writing. To establish an agricultural district, landowners obtain a petition from their local conservation district. Petitions require the original signature, name, address and number of acres of each landowner. Also included is a map of the proposed agricultural district and names and addresses of adjoining property owners. The petition is submitted to the county conservation district which notifies the fiscal court, county planning and zoning or any nearby cities or towns for a 30-day comment period. The conservation district board reviews the petition and agency comments before forwarding to the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission for action. The Kentucky Division of Conservation administers the Agricultural District Program with oversight by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Conservation districts in each county locally administer the program. Benefits of the agricultural district program also include receiving high priority for state cost share assistance and high ranking in the Kentucky Purchase of Conservation Easements (PACE) program application review process.

Other programs for protection of prime farmland include purchase of development rights (PDR) and purchase of agriculture easements (PACE). For further information contact your local county conservation district office or the Kentucky Division of Conservation at 502-573-3080 or [www.conservation.ky.gov](http://www.conservation.ky.gov).



## Morgan County Conservation District Utilizes Environmental Grant for Dead Animal Disposal Program

Submitted by Pam Williams

The Morgan County Conservation District and Morgan County Fiscal Court have entered into a partnership this year to implement the county's first dead animal disposal program. The conservation district applied for and was awarded a \$5,000 environmental grant to implement the program.

The Morgan County Conservation District's board of supervisors began discussing the issue of fallen livestock in February. The board determined that without assistance to landowners in the county to properly dispose of fallen animals this could and would at some point become a water quality issue within the county.

"Since many tobacco farmers have transformed their idle tobacco fields into pasture fields adding additional cattle and horses to their farming operations and the many streams and hollows that run throughout Morgan County, this increases potential contaminants from fallen livestock reaching our water sources, and we want to do what we can to prevent this from occurring," said Chairman Collins.

However, even with the initial grant money they lacked one vital element, equipment necessary to complete the program.

After much discussion the board agreed that fiscal court was the obvious choice to assist with the program implementation. A meeting was set up with the county judge executive to discuss the guidelines of the grant funding and the district's program proposal.

Judge Executive Tim Conley said, "We, the fiscal court have the equipment and means available to transfer the dead animals from the farms for disposal, and this no cost to farm operators disposal program should be a great opportunity that our livestock producers will take advantage of to properly and legally dispose of their dead animals. I believe that fiscal court will agree with me on this and partner with the district on this program." With that meeting and the concurrence of fiscal court the Morgan County dead animal disposal program partnership was developed.

Implementation of the disposal program began September 1, 2009. During the first month six landowners utilized the disposal program. Clearly farmers in Morgan County are taking advantage of this program to assist them in complying with EPA disposal regulations. The Morgan County Conservation District and Morgan County Fiscal Court would like to thank the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission for their approval of grant funds to assist with the implementation of their disposal program.

## Carlisle County Conservation District Coordinates County Rinse and Return Program

Submitted by Debra Hinton

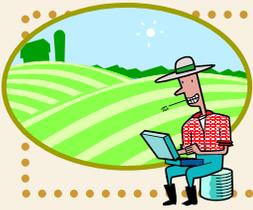
In 1993, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture began a statewide rinse and return program for farmers to bring in their empty chemical containers for recycling. The Division of Conservation, conservation districts, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and farm businesses across the state have assisted the Department of Agriculture in coordinating the Rinse and Return Program.

Only three counties participated in 1993 collecting 10,000 pounds of containers. But in 2008, 111 counties participated collecting over 45,200 pounds of containers. In the 15 years the program has been in existence over 1,146,000 pounds of empty pesticide containers have been collected.

The Carlisle County Conservation District has helped coordinate the Rinse and Return Recycling Program in Carlisle County since its inception. The district holds two recycling days, one in the spring and one in the fall, for empty container returns. The district cooperates with the Carlisle County Fiscal Court to use the county garage as a drop off site for the containers.

According to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the Carlisle County rinse and return program is the most successful in the state. Approximately 6,000 containers are collected annually and more than 6,750 pounds of plastic have been recycled from the containers since Carlisle County began participating in the program.





## Fayette County Conservation District Recognizes Non-Traditional Producer

Submitted by Crystal Renfro

Non-traditional producers are becoming common visitors in our local district offices, and the Fayette County Conservation District recognizes this trend. On September 9, 2009 the Fayette County Farm Field Day was held at Walnut Hall Stock Farm in Lexington. After an afternoon of sharing knowledge on topics such as federal and state cost share opportunities, pasture weed control, grass-fed beef production, fencing demonstrations, and more, various agencies presented special recognitions to local producers who have went above and beyond expectations.

Erik Walles was this year's recipient of the Fayette County Conservation District's Cooperator of the Year Award. Mr. Walles and his family have a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation. A CSA is a community of individuals who are "share-

holders" that pledge support to a farm operation. The farmland then becomes the community's farm, with all members providing support while sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Throughout the year members visit the farm to collect their equal share in the output of the farm. The family strives each season to build the soils fertility by using a combination of crop rotation, cover crops, mulching, and composting.

The Conservation District has worked with Mr. Walles on numerous occasions providing technical assistance as well as cost share opportunities to help protect his land. He has installed a water well, irrigation system, greenhouse and is currently in the process of installing grassed waterways to help minimize soil erosion. After five growing seasons it is evident that the Walles family is truly concerned about the future and well being of their land.

## Grant County Conservation District Recognized by Northern KY University

Submitted by Linda Hunter

The Grant County Conservation District has been recognized by the Northern Kentucky University Grant County Foundation for Higher Education for their support and efforts in establishing a local branch campus where both an associate degree and a bachelor degree may now be earned. The district has been included in the list of Northern Kentucky University (NKU) Fellows. The NKU Grant County Campus has become a significant resource for the educational improvement of Grant County.

In 2006 The Grant County Conservation District board of supervisors established the Grant County Conservation District Non-Traditional Scholarship for students attending the NKU Grant County Campus. The scholarship was offered once a year for the summer/fall semesters. In 2008 the District's board of supervisors decided to offer the non-traditional scholarship twice a year to also include the spring semester. Four scholarships for \$1,000 each are now awarded each year to

non-traditional students who wish to attend the Northern Kentucky University Grant County Campus. To date there have been 12 recipients of the scholarship. Interested students should apply at the NKU Grant County Campus.



D. Hancock and K. Ritchie, recipients of Grant County's non-traditional student scholarships.

## Kentucky Team Places 14<sup>th</sup> at the 2009 Canon Envirothon

*Teams from 45 States and Seven Canadian Provinces Competed in One of North America's Largest High School Environmental Education Competitions*

Submitted by Kimberly Richardson

A five-member team of high school students from Model Laboratory School in Richmond placed 14th at the 2009 Canon Envirothon. The winning teams were announced on Friday, August 7, 2009 during the closing ceremony of the week long North American environmental education competition held at the University of North Carolina – Asheville and sponsored by Canon U.S.A., Inc. The Kentucky team consisted of Caleb Fligor, Meghann Hart, Blake Neumann, Chinenye Nnoromele and Mary Wimberly. The advisors for the team are Susan Neumann and Scott Carlson.



Kentucky has had great success in the Canon Competition each year. In 2008, Model competed and placed 11th in the international competition. Each year at the Kentucky State Envirothon, participants find that it's getting tougher to reach the coveted goal of attending and participating in the Canon Envirothon.

More than 260 teenagers from 45 states and seven Canadian provinces studied environmental issues and resource conservation while competing for a share of more than \$125,000 in scholarships and Canon products.

The National Association of Conservation Districts, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service are Canon Envirothon partners in the United States. The Provincial Forestry Associations are key partners in Canada.

The Canon Envirothon tests teams on their knowledge of soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife and a current environmental issue. The current issue for this year's competition was *Biodiversity in a Changing World*. The competing teams analyzed the long-term and short-term impacts of natural environmental occurrences and human activities on genes, species and ecosystems relative to how each may influence or directly impact their future.

Each team's knowledge is tested under the supervision of foresters, soil scientists, wildlife specialists and other natural resource professionals. Teamwork, problem-solving and presentation skills are evaluated as each team offers a panel of judges an oral presentation containing recommendations for solving the specific challenge that is presented during the competition.

The 2010 competition will be held at California State University – Fresno, July 31 through August 7, 2010.



## Mercer County Conservation District Kicks-Off Art and Writing Contest with Luncheon

Submitted by Kimberly Bartley

The Mercer County Conservation District kicked off its annual art and writing contest on August 28, 2009 with a very popular event. Every year before the start of the contest the district hosts a luncheon for teachers and principals at Beaumont Inn in Harrodsburg. This has proven to boost and retain participation, especially with all of the changes that have taken place in the contest through the years.

Teachers, principals and superintendants in each public school system along with private and home schools are invited to a free meal. This gives the district a chance to explain the contest topic and rules and to pass out any information that is available. The district also announces their awards for the contest which they try to improve each year. They offer cash awards, t-shirts and plaques for the top three winners in each school as well as the top two county winners in each contest. The teachers also receive cash money for participating. The district board feels that teachers have a lot of these contests to choose from and they have to spend so much money out of their own pockets that this gives them a little extra incentive to participate in ours. Last year the district found that the teachers were able to access the information but the students really needed that information in front of them. It became very costly for the teachers to copy it for the students so the district has offered to copy any materials that are needed by the teachers related to the contest.

This gives the district a chance for good public relations and an opportunity to share what they offer to the teachers in the way of scholarships and conservation education. Overall, the conservation district board feels that the district's efforts are a great investment in keeping their programs in the school systems and very beneficial to students both in the urban and rural areas.

For more information about how the Mercer County Conservation District runs their art and writing contest or other educational programs, you can contact their office at 859-734-6889.





## Safety Day Held in Marshall County

Submitted by Debra Hinton

The Marshall County Conservation District helped coordinate Safety Day held on September 25, 2009 for all fifth graders in Marshall County at Mike Miller Park in Draffenville. There were eight stations set up around the park to inform the students of how to be safe around home, on the water and around the farm. The Jackson Purchase RECC with the help of the Big River RECC presented two demonstrations for the students to inform them about the dangers of electricity. This demonstration is one of the most popular stations during any safety field day.

## Annual Agriculture Day Held in Calloway County

Submitted by Debra Hinton



The Calloway County Conservation District held its annual Agriculture Day for local fifth graders September 23 - 24, 2009 at the Murray State University EXPO Center. Students from Calloway County elementary schools attend this event. At Agriculture Day students learn the importance of agriculture and the use of our natural resources by visiting 12 different hands on learning stations. All stations address various components under the students core subject learning areas.

## Rockcastle County Conservation District Coordinates 17th Annual Farm Field Day

Submitted by David Keltner

The Rockcastle County Conservation District's 17th annual farm field day was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at the farm of Bill and Nancy Sigmon. Fourth grade students from Brodhead, Mt. Vernon and Roundstone elementary schools were treated to hay rides, entertaining messages from selected guest speakers about conservation, lunch and the chance to purchase a pumpkin from Sigmon Farm. The conservation district's annual farm field day gives kids the opportunity to learn about different areas of agriculture and the importance of agriculture and conservation. The field day, sponsored by the Rockcastle County Conservation District, Sigmon Farm, and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, has been held at Sigmon Farm every year since it was started in 1992.

The conservation district would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sigmon family for their outstanding cooperation and devotion to the field day. They have always been a true partner in the event by providing lunch for the students, tractors and wagons for the rides and the place for the field day. The district would also like to

thank all those who helped make the day a huge success: guest speakers, Zach Gentry, Rockcastle County Conservation District; John McQueary, county 4-H agent; Tom Mills, county extension agent; Jamie Alton, KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Michael Froelich and Marvin Stone, KY Division of Forestry; all the many tractor drivers and the grade schools for allowing their students to participate. For those teachers or any others that would like pictures from the event, please contact the Rockcastle Conservation District office at 606-256-2525.



Rockcastle County Conservation District Technician Zach Gentry talks about the importance of soil to 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Mt. Vernon Elementary.

## Lyon County Conservation District Coordinates Farm Field Day

Submitted by Connie Gray

Third grade students of Lyon County elementary school took a break from the classroom on September 29 and enjoyed the beautiful fall weather at Rod Murphy's farm in Lamasco. The trip was coordinated by the Lyon County Conservation District along with Lyon County third grade teachers.

The students spent the morning visiting with the resource personnel of various agencies. After lunch the students had a friendly visitor - Smokey the Bear joined the group to encourage the children to be safe around fire and to remind parents of the burn laws. They ended the day with a not so natural nature hunt.

Resource personnel participating in the field trip were Don Lam, Kentucky Division of Forestry; Justen Mooney, Conservation Technician of the Webster County Conservation District; Susan Fox, Lyon

County extension agent for agriculture natural resources; soil scientist Rudy Forsythe, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Lyndsey Winfrey, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Stacey Hayden and Brenda Irvan, Marshall County Conservation District and and Johnetta Taylor of Livingston County Conservation District.

Those assisting from the Lyon County Conservation District included Rod Murphy, district chairman; Kim Brown, district education coordinator; Dominique Wood, district secretary; conservation technicians Gaylon King and Thela Blythe; district youth board members Alex Bugg, Anna Ellis and Karol Kinnis and Connie Gray, Division of Conservation field representative.

Don Lam of KY Division of Forestry showed students damage caused by the ice storm and explained the long term effects while teaching them about tree identification.



Students learn what happens to unprotected soil close to creeks and streams with the use of the stream table.

Lyon County third graders enjoyed a day at Rod Murphy's farm learning about the effect we have on our natural resources and ways they can help conserve our natural resources.



Rudy Forsythe, soil scientist for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, showed students what a core sample of soil looks like and what good soil qualities to look for.



## Environmental Education is Important in Floyd County

Submitted by Anthony Mullins

The Floyd County Conservation District prides itself on sound environmental education. Environmental educator Michelle Goble works throughout the year preparing resources that will enable her to teach students in local school districts about conservation issues. Michelle has given captivating presentations that stir up excitement and amaze students, especially about Kentucky's Art and Writing Contest.

During the 2007 art and writing contest, the Floyd County Conservation District purchased fake scat of Kentucky animals. This enabled the district to show students how to identify animals by the small items they leave behind. During the 2008 contest Michelle brought project learning kits to the classroom and students learned about the many types of trees in Kentucky. Games were played with each class to educate them and get them ready for the art and writing contest.

This year's art and writing theme is "*WATER-Every Drop Counts.*" Environmental presentations in Floyd County schools are off to a good start. Ms. Goble treated over 100 eighth grade Allen Central Middle School students to hands-on activities using an enviroscape. Even though concepts seem elementary, these students saw first hand how easy it would be to quickly pollute a watershed. This enviroscape model demonstrates point source pollution through an industrial plant, sewage treatment plant and storm drains. The model demon-

strates nonpoint source pollution through logging operations, golf courses, construction sites, residential areas, farm operations, removal of stream bank trees and brush, littering and oil and gas leaks. After the activity, Michelle discussed ways to prevent water pollution. Each student received Floyd County Conservation District pencils, Prestonsburg City Utilities rulers that help determine water loss on the size of faucet water drips, handouts on safe alternatives to household cleaners and a worksheet to determine how much water each student uses per day. More presentations are expected to be scheduled.

The Floyd County Conservation District is proud to provide environmental education classes to all students in Floyd County. Over 2,000 students participate annually in the Art and Writing Contest. Many of those have participated in the environmental education classes offered by the district. If anyone would like assistance with environmental education and to learn about the successes of the Floyd County Conservation District please call 606-889-9800.



Michelle Goble, environmental educator from the Floyd County Conservation District at work in the classroom.





## Butler County 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Progressive Agriculture Safety Day

Submitted by Shanna Drake

On Wednesday, April 23, 2009, the Butler County Conservation District, along with the Butler County Farm Bureau Federation, hosted the fourth Annual Progressive Agriculture Safety Day. Approximately 200 students and adult volunteers came together at the Morgantown city park to make the day a success.

In spite of all the good things that happen at the progressive agriculture safety day, rain always seems to find its way to the event. Actually, it has rained three of the four years the safety day event has been held and this year was no exception. It began raining early that morning and nearly caused the event to be moved. Thankfully, it cleared up in the nick of time. By 9 a.m. the clouds were rolling out and the children were rolling in. Volunteers and presenters scurried to get set up, doing their best to avoid the mud.

Presentation subjects at this year's event included ATV safety, tractor safety, drug awareness, fire safety, firearm safety and first aid. A special presentation included a visit from the air evacuation team. All the students enjoyed seeing a helicopter land in the park.

The Butler County Conservation District and the Butler County Farm Bureau Federation each donated \$500 to the event which covers the cost of bussing the students, snacks, and adult lunches. The Progressive Agriculture Foundation provides t-shirts, goodie bags and excess insurance for the event. A special thank-you goes to all of those who helped make this a great day.



Students and volunteers attend fourth annual progressive agriculture safety day.



## In Memory of Hiram Whitaker

Submitted by David Keltner

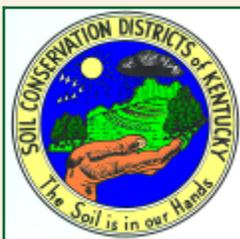
Hiram Whitaker, a long time advocate of soil and water conservation in Jackson County, passed away February 16, 2009. Hiram served on the Jackson County Conservation District Board for 35 years. He served as chairman of the board for eight years. He also served on the Cumberland Valley Resource and Development Council for 19 years and as their president for nine years. Mr. Whitaker was the Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Jackson County High School for 27 years. He attended college at both the University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky University. Hiram raised vegetables, Christmas trees and maintained bee hives. He was a long time member of the Mount Gilead Baptist Church where he taught Sunday school. Steve Whitaker, Hiram's son, is the current vocational agriculture teacher at Jackson County High School. Hiram was 73 years young when he was suddenly and sadly taken from his family and friends. Those who new Hiram admired and respected his enthusiasm for all things connected with the land. He will be missed, but his accomplishments for all things good will be remembered.

Energy and Environment Cabinet  
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## 2009-2010 Conservation District Quarterly Calendar

### November

- National Conservation Poster Contest entries due to Frankfort Office
- Equipment Revolving Loan Payments—10th to division
- KACD Board of Directors Meeting—17th at 10 AM
- Commission Meeting—16th at 9 AM
- Conservation District Supervisors Leadership Development Workshops
- State Cost Share Status Reports—15th to division
- Monthly Treasurer Reports and CD Employees' Time Sheet

### December

- Writing and Art Contest-Top School Entries Judged at District level, due to DOC by 31<sup>st</sup>
- National Conservation Poster Contest entries Due to National Office—1st
- Equipment Revolving Loan Payments—10th to division
- Conservation District Supervisors Leadership Development Workshops
- State Cost Share Status Reports—15th to division
- Monthly Treasurer Reports and CD Employees' Time Sheets

### January

- KACD Legislative "Wild Game Dinner" – 7<sup>th</sup>
- KACD Board of Directors Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM
- Soil and Water Conservation Commission Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM
- Equipment Loan Statements & Payments – due 5<sup>th</sup> to district
- Equipment Loan Payments and Report – due 10<sup>th</sup> to division
- District Rent Reimbursement Payments – due 10<sup>th</sup> to division
- State Cost Share Status Reports – due 15<sup>th</sup> to division
- NACD National Convention – Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> – Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Orlando, Florida
- Monthly Treasurer Reports and CD Employees' Time Sheets