



SOILS

Worlds/Beneath Your Feet

Marion County
Soil and Water
Conservation District
64th Annual Report

DISTRICT DIRECTORS



Ken Heinzmann
Chairman



Duane Snow
Vice-Chairman



Steve McConnaughay
Secretary-Treasurer



Tom Beyers
Board Member



Steve Jones
Board Member

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Evelyn Bartley
Danny Fark
Jack Holt

Randy Comer
Mac Garrett
Rob Jones
Ray Searby

Steven Donoho
Ed Gerstenecker
Roger Meyer

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES



Burke Davies
Resource
Conservationist



Debbie Holsapple
Administrative
Coordinator



Tony Antonacci
District
Conservationist



Laura Smithery
Soil
Conservationist



James Petrea
Soil Conservation
Technician

USDA/NRCS EMPLOYEES

HONOR ROLL OF PAST DIRECTORS

Dennis Armbrust*
Evelyn Bartley
James Britt*
Lee D. Britt*
Leslie Britt
Omer Chitwood
Frank Cicigoi*
Cecil Clifton*
William M. Collum*
Harold Crippen*
Melvin Currie *
Jake Davis*
Roy Doolen*
Steven Donoho
Frank Duncan*
Theodore Ernest*
Danny Fark
Ezra Feller*
John S. Ford*

Robert E. Ford
Charles Fulton
Carroll Garrett*
Mac Garrett
Lucian Gaston*
Ed Gerstenecker
Ernie Henson
David Hester
F.O. Holler*
Jack Holt
Charles Huff*
George P. Irwin*
Ron Jones*
Randy Kent
Sammy Lowe
Estel Luttrell*
George McGuire*
Harry McLaughlin

Roger Meyer
Leon Miller*
Irwin Parrill*
Jerry Phillips
Raymond Richardson*
Jim See
William See
William Seidel
Orville Sharp
Eugene Shufeldt
David Sutherland
Ray Vandever, Sr.
Rolland Vandever
Russell Vandever
Merle Walkington
Dennis Wenger
Jerrold Whitchurch
William E. Williams

* Denotes Deceased Members



Twenty and Out

By Ken Heinzmann, Chairman
Marion County Soil and Water District

Our 64th Annual Meeting will bring to an end 20 years of serving on the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation Board. For the most part, these 20 years have gone by quickly. It seems like yesterday when Ron Jones, the Chairman of the Board in the fall of 1988, called me asking if I would be interested in serving on the local Soil and Water District Board. At that time I was serving on nine other boards and farming with a father who was getting older and slowing down, so my first thought was did I have the time to serve on yet, another board? Well after thinking about it for a few weeks and talking to my family, I decided to give it a try. I remember thinking that I would serve a few years and then turn it over to someone else. Now, twenty years later; a full time GM for a seed company and only farming part time; now living in Centralia and not on the farm as I was in the beginning; my oldest child now the father of two of our grandchildren, was only 16 and just starting to drive. During those 20 years all four of our kids have grown up and finished college, one about to get a PhD. And after 10 years of being a single parent after the death of my first wife I married a very special lady who has made her impact on the area serving as the youth director of Kinmundy UMC church for three years and is now serving at Grace Methodist in Salem. I don't want to dwell on the personal side of my life during the twenty years I have served on this board, but everyone that has served on a board, be it school, church, public or service, realizes that it is a commitment of time that has to be squeezed in between the tasks that are most important to us...LIVING AND GROWING WITH OUR FAMILIES.

Marion County SWCD has not been without a lot of changes over the twenty years either. Some of the ones that I remember most were as follows: We acquired a farm that we refer to as GPICES; hired a new AC, Administrative Coordinator {Debbie} when Dorthy Smalley retired after 30 years service to the District; had our District Conservationist resign, only to return after months of the board trying to find a replacement and he deciding that Marion County was a better place to work anyway. Dealing with city of Salem over a spike in Atrazine in the cities water supply and realizing that we could help be a mediator between two groups, a city and local farmers, who were both trying to do their job, only to have a difficult spring create a problem that created tension both sides. A problem that we were able to resolve, I believe to everyone's satisfaction. And then this year, we dealt with several months of concern regarding the Governor of Illinois holding up our funding which I will discuss in more detail later in this report. The District has had four Chairman, four VP's and two Secretaries' over the twenty years. Two great board members that I served with have gone on to serve in other parts of God's creation, Ron Jones and Denny Armburst.

One of the great services that we provide and one of the great benefits to the land owners of this county is CPP funded projects. Through the work of our great staff, almost \$680,000 has been provided through the District, over the last twenty years, in conservation projects

that have helped to conserve our soil and water. Through grants and other funding sources we have received over \$1,130,000 that we have used to buy grain drills, tree planters, scrapers, and other items that our county residents can rent and in which hopefully helped them to save money, time and our natural resources.

As I mentioned earlier, we dealt with some troubling funding issues this past year. There are several SWCD's within the state of Illinois that struggle to have enough financial resources to do the level of work they desire, but at Marion County, because of the hard work of our staff doing tree sales; servicing and handling rental items and a vast array of other projects, this district has been one of strongest Districts financially, in the state of Illinois and I will always be proud to be a small part of that success. The benefit of this became very clear over the last year, when our Governor held up funds that the legislature had appropriated for SWCD's, Extension, schools, etc. The end result was that a crisis developed for several Districts in the state and a few had to close their doors for a short time until enough pressure was applied to release these funds. During this time several Districts lost employees who were concerned about their future, and then trying to fill and open position with funding very much in doubt was an even bigger problem. If the funds had not been released, the Marion County SWCD would have been able to operate for longer than the majority of the states SWCD's, but it was a scary time nonetheless. Today, many districts are still facing funding difficulties and 1 out of 5 districts are still experiencing personnel shortages. The Districts have reached a time, with all the financial problems that the state of Illinois is experiencing and will likely continue for several years, regardless of whom the Governor is, that SWCD districts must start looking to other sources to help fund their work.

Working with farm people, I often hear the term, "We just want to leave the land that God has given us to use, even better than when we first started using it." Well, I hope that in some small way, I have helped to leave the District, plus the land and water resources we had the responsibility to help protect and improve, even better than when I came on twenty years ago.

I know that I am leaving the future work of the District to a very strong and competent set of directors who have your best interests and the interest of all the residents of this county at heart. Thanks to the current board, Dwaine Snow, Steve McConnaughay, Tom Beyers, and Steve Jones for their work and dedication over the past year. This has been an excellent board to work with and I have no doubt that these individuals along with their new board member will continue to serve Marion County with the dedication this board has always shown toward its responsibilities. I also want to thank the other numerous men and women that I have had the pleasure of working with over the last 20 years. And last but not least is to thank Burke, Debbie and Tony for the many years of help and support while serving as either, an officer or a board member. I would also like to thank Dorthy Smalley for her help in the very early years I was on the board. It is hard for me to believe there is a better set of employees and support staff in the State of Illinois and for that we should all be thankful.

**64th ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER
MARION COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - EXHIBITION HALL
FEBRUARY 26, 2009 - 6:30 P.M.**

6:00 p.m. REGISTRATION

6:30 p.m. WELCOME - Ken Heinzmann

INVOCATION followed by BUFFET DINNER

7:30 p.m. Introduction of Guests, Directors & Personnel

FIFTH GRADE POSTER CONTEST WINNERS FOR 2008

First Place - Rhiannon Branch, Iuka Grade School

Second Place - Trenton Mitchell, New Horizon Grade School

Third Place - Erin Worthy, Central City Grade School

PRESENTATION OF MARION COUNTY LAND USE CONTEST WINNERS

South Central FFA

8:00 p.m. Business Meeting

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S REPORT

PRESENTATION OF CONSERVATION "TEACHER OF THE YEAR" AWARD:

Vivian Creed

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD: Kaskaskia College

PRESENTATION OF THE COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD: James Bates

PRESENTATION OF JACOB "JAKE" DAVIS "FRIENDS OF CONSERVATION" AWARD:

Senator John O. Jones

PRESENTATION OF MARION COUNTY CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY AWARD:

William and Erma Borcharding Family

PRESENTATION OF DISTRICT DIRECTOR AWARD: Ken Heinzmann

ADJOURNMENT

DOOR PRIZES

**63rd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
MARION COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
FEBRUARY 28, 2008**

The Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District held their 63rd Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 28, 2008 in the Exhibition Hall at the Marion County Fairgrounds located in Salem. Steven Donoho led the group in reciting the pledge of allegiance and gave the invocation. Dinner was served at 6:45 p.m.

Chairman Roger Meyer welcomed everyone and introduced NRCS, FSA, CES, Marion County Farm Bureau, Media Representatives, Directors and Associate Directors. The Chairman acknowledged and thanked the District's "Friends of Conservation." The Chairman then introduced the George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station Board and the Marion County Agriculture Literacy Partnership members.

The Chairman introduced board member Duane Snow who announced the following 5th grade poster winners: First Place – Abby Claybourne, Sandoval Grade School; Second Place – Charity Chitwood, South Central Grade School and Third Place – Cassie Brashear, Iuka Grade School. Charity Chitwood was presented with a medallion for second place. The other contest winners could not be present at the meeting.

Burke Davies presented medallions to the South Central FFA soil judging team who placed first among Marion County schools at the Tri-County Land Use Contest.

The business meeting was called to order by Chairman Roger Meyer at 7:32 p.m. Steve McConnaughay, Secretary-Treasurer asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the Sixty-Second Meeting as printed in the annual meeting report. Randy Comer motioned to approve the minutes as printed in the annual report. Dorothy Smalley seconded the motion. Motion carried. Steve then presented the 2007 financial statements for the District Operations, CPP and DNR Ecosystem as printed in the Annual Report. A motion to approve the treasurer's reports as printed in the Annual Report was made by Jack Holt and seconded by Glenn Clark. Motion carried.

Chairman Meyer introduced Emerson Smalley, Chairman of the Nominating Committee. Smalley introduced his nominating committee which included David Uchitjil and Bill Mathena. Leslie Britt served as an alternate. Smalley placed in nomination Duane Snow, Steve Jones and Tom Beyers. Board Member Ken Heinzmann conducted the election and requested nominations from the floor three times. Since no nominations were received from the floor, Ed Gerstenecker motioned that the nominations be closed and the nominees be elected by acclamation. Glenn Clark seconded the motion. Motion carried. Heinzmann then presented Roger Meyer with a district director award for his service to the Marion County SWCD. A district director award will be presented to Mac Garrett at a later date.

Tony Antonacci, USDA/NRCS District Conservationist was introduced. Antonacci introduced Bill Gradle, State Conservationist. Bill thanked Roger Meyer for his leadership as chairman of the Post Oak Flats RC&D. Tony reported that 2007 could be remembered for its cloud of uncertainty. He also reported that Marion County had 40 EQIP applications that were processed during 2007. Of these, 36 were funded.

Ag Literacy Coordinator Meggan Hiestand was introduced and presented Marilea Hunter who teaches fourth grade at Selmaville Grade School with the 2007 Conservation Teacher of the Year Award. Since the speaker for the evening could not be attend, Hunter shared a poem entitled "The Heartland."

Resource Conservationist Burke Davies presented a special recognition award to Deep Rock Energy Corporation for their assistance at the George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station.

Ken Heinzmann presented Marion County Farm Bureau with the 2007 Jake Davis Friends of Conservation Award.

Roger Meyer presented the 2007 Conservation Farm Family award to the Shannon Hayes Family from Kell.

James Gilliland motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Gary Hunter seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The directors awarded door prizes to the following individuals: One Day Free Equipment Rental – David Jones; Prairie Plant Assortments – Eileen Chitwood and Dorthy Smalley; Bundle of Scotch Pine – Jace Hunter; Bundle of Norway Spruce – Glenn Clark; Bundle of Canadian Hemlock – Harry Combs; Bundle of White Pine – Nancy Gaston; IAAP Cookbooks – Becky Jones and Erma Borcharding; Gift Certificate from Aldag & Associates- Gary Hunter; Centerpiece – Salem Flowers; Gift Certificate from the Petal Parlor – Cindy Webster; Hams – Chris Webster, Daniel Webster, Jared Hunter, Charity Chitwood, Julie Jones, Bob Brink, Alexa Irwin, Adella Swisher, Harold Lutz and James Gilliland; Key Chain – Betty Barall; Clark County Supply hats – John Gasten, Gene Pitts, Bruce Kropp, Larry Smith and Ted Swisher.

Submitted by Steve McConnaughay, Secretary-Treasurer

Transcribed by Debbie Holsapple, Administrative Coordinator



DISTRICT OPERATIONS ACCOUNTS

FINANCIAL REPORT FY 08

JULY 1, 2007 - JUNE 30, 2008

Balance on Deposit Illinois Funds - Operations - June 30, 2007	\$71,146.63
Balance on Deposit Illinois Funds - Farm - June 30, 2007	\$33,236.27
Balance on Deposit - Marion County Savings Bank - June 30, 2007	\$3,600.48
Balance on Hand - Petty Cash	\$25.00
Accounts Receivable	\$4,013.72
Liabilities 6/30/07	\$3551.41
Board Designated Equity 6/30/07	\$29,900.00
Equity Balance 6/30/07	\$78,570.69

RECEIPTS

State of Illinois - District Operations	83611.30
Farm Income	8300.00
Insurance Administration	13439.66
Interest Income	3758.07
Sale of Fabric/Flags	2775.00
Sale of Tree Seedlings/Prairie Seed/Plants	14315.36
Equipment Rental—Hook Up Fees	7831.30
Annual Meeting - Tickets/Donations	1483.00
ICCI Administration	2131.42
Finance Charges	59.63
Miscellaneous Income	225.00
Total Receipts	137929.74

DISBURSEMENTS

Employee Salaries	76244.85
Employee Travel/Training	4260.13
Employee FICA/Medicare	5308.84
Employee Unemployment Insurance	192.00
Employee Sec 105 Medical Reimbursement	4750.00
Employee Retirement	5054.24
Other Misc Payroll Expenses	12173.52
Director Travel/Training	5044.59
Tree/Prairie Plant Purchases	9775.70
Postage/Bulk Mailing Permits	855.59
Insurance - Commercial Package	1547.00
Office Supplies & Equipment	1123.78
Newsletters	794.25
Annual Meeting Expenses	1349.86
Ag Literacy Donation	3500.00
Educational Activities	506.09
Dues: NACD,AISWCD, Council 13	3388.34
Soil Stewardship	301.75
Equipment Maintenance	1386.21
Miscellaneous Expenses	373.00
Total Disbursements	137929.74

Net Income **\$0.00**

Balance on Deposit Illinois Funds - Operations June 30, 2008	79,044.73
Balance on Deposit Illinois Funds - Farm June 30, 2008	34,394.53
Balance on Deposit Marion County Savings Bank June 30, 2008	2,350.30
Balance on Hand Petty Cash	25.00
Accounts Receivable	5,712.38
Liabilities Balance 6/30/08	2,113.75
Board Designated Equity 6/30/08	41,605.47
Equity Balance 6/30/08	79,245.85
Total Liabilities & Equity	122,965.07

**MARION COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
CONSERVATION PRACTICES PROGRAM
JULY 1, 2007—JUNE 30, 2008**

Balance on Hand—Illinois Program Account—July 1, 2007		\$28394.10
IDOA—Cost Share Allocation	\$32000.00	
Total Receipts plus Balance on Hand	\$32000.00	\$60394.10
Cost Share Payments	\$33310.39	
Total Disbursements	\$33310.39	\$33310.39
Balance on Hand—Illinois Program Account—June 30, 2008		\$27083.71

**MARION COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
IDNR ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP GRANT
JULY 1, 2007—JUNE 30, 2008**

Balance on Hand—Illinois Prime Fund—July 1, 2007		\$64000.00
Interest	\$235.30	
Total Receipts plus Balance on Hand	\$235.30	\$64,285.30
Cost Share Payments	\$ 6520.00	
Total Disbursements	\$ 6520.00	
Balance on Hand—Peoples National Bank—June 30, 2008		\$57765.30

**Illinois Conservation and
Climate Initiative**

Over 100 producers and landowners have been assisted with completion of ICCI applications since the program's inception in 2006. Of these 100+ applications, 78 applications were approved on 5683.1 acres. The breakout for Marion County is 2907.2 acres of grassland plantings, 1791.8 acres of tree plantings and 984.1 acres of no till plantings. Statewide 169,826 total acres have been enrolled on 875 contracts for 27,070 acres of grass, 124,532 tillage and 18,224 forest acres. In 2 1/2 years, over \$1 million in payments have been made to Illinois landowners. At the 2008 Illinois State Fair Ag Day, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Doug Scott and Illinois Director of Agriculture Tom Jennings recognized Resource Conservationist Burke Davies with an award of appreciation for going "above and beyond" with the Illinois Conservation and Climate Initiative. Marion County leads the state in total grassland and forested acres and is second in the state for total contracts.



Resource Conservationist Burke Davies accepts his "Above and Beyond" award at the 2008 Illinois State Fair.

2008 District Meetings and Activities

Board Meetings: The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District holds twelve monthly board meetings each year. The board meets the second Thursday of each month in the Soil and Water Conservation District/Natural Resource Conservation Service office, 1550 East Main Street, Salem at 6:30 or 7:30 p.m. depending upon daylight savings time.

District's Annual Tree and Prairie Plant Sales: The District's Annual Tree Sale continued to be popular with Marion County residents in 2008. Thirteen species were offered with 5,075 tree seedlings sold during the reserve and extra tree sales. Through a job shadowing program, Salem High School students, Andy Rose and Kyle Rose assisted Resource Conservationist Burke Davies with the task of sorting and packaging 93 reserved orders. In 2008, Marion County continued assisting the Gallatin County SWCD with the organization and purchase of tree seedlings for their tree sales. This year, the District has twelve species of trees available for purchase. Order forms were included in the District newsletter and we are now in the process of collecting reserve orders for 2009. We encourage to you get your order placed by March 27, 2009. Please call the District office (618)548-2230 ext 3 to request a tree order form if you did not receive one. In 2008, 253 Prairie plants were sold. This year, wildflower seed will be sold instead of prairie plants.

South Central Land Use Council # 13: The South Central Land Use Council 13 met on March 27, July 17 and November 20, 2008. Jefferson County SWCD hosted the March meeting and the budget situation was discussed. Marion County SWCD hosted the July meeting and Rich Nichols from AISWCD came and discussed the need for AISWCD to access dues on the insurance funding. Washington County SWCD hosted the November meeting and the 2009 Summer Conference and the FY09 budget were discussed

AISWCD and SUMMER CONFERENCE MEETINGS: The 60th Annual Meeting and Summer Conference held in Springfield on July 28-29. Three board members and both employees were in attendance. The theme of the conference was "Walk Without Footprints." Two Marion County SWCD directors, Ken Heinzmann and Steve McConnaughay were recognized for 20 years of service to our district.



District Rental Equipment



The Great Plains no-till grassland drill pictured above was rented by 32 producers in 2008 to drill 472 acres of cool and warm season grasses and legumes. These plantings provide needed wildlife habitat and food sources.



The John Deere 1560 no-till drill was rented by 14 producers to no-till 859 acres. The use of these types of drills continue to save valuable Marion County soil.



The filter fabric installation plow was used by 6 customers to install 2812 feet of nonwoven geotextile fiber. The use of this plow allows the installation of fabric checks to be completed in record breaking time. In addition to our rental equipment, the district also offered tree bars, prescribed burn equipment, measuring wheel and broadcast seeders to area residents at no cost.

Stop by the district office to find out more about our equipment program.



The Torque earth scraper was used by 4 producers to complete earthwork related to conservation.



Five producers rented the Athens Model 62 wheel disk to establish firebreaks and food plots or to strip disk heavy sod.

We would like to say "Thank You" to all producers who rented equipment through this important program. Your continued participation provides needed funding to maintain the many programs and services offered by the SWCD.

2008 Conservation Practices Program Accomplishments
Total Cost of All Practices: \$8,555
\$5290 Cost Share Provided by CPP Program to 8 Producers
\$3,265 Spent by Producers

Grass Waterways: 2 producers, 2.5 acres, \$3621 cost shared

Nutrient Management Plans: 1 producers, 44 acres applied, \$349 cost shared

4 producers, 330 acres planned, \$1320 cost-shared

- **Due to the late release of state cost share funds and weather conditions, these numbers are considerably lower than past years!**

Soil Saved Per Year

Sheet and rill erosion—570 tons of soil

Gully erosion—190 tons of soil

Sediment reduction—52 tons of soil

Load Reductions Per Year

Phosphorus reduction—52 pounds

Nitrogen reduction—104 pounds

Marion County Local Working Group

Local work groups were designed to be part of the conservation process by recent farm bills. The local work group process provides soil and water conservation districts across the nation the opportunity to direct the formation and lead the activities of a locally led conservation process. Marion County SWCD embraced this opportunity and helped to organize the Marion County Local Work Group. In January 2008, the first meeting of the group was held. Two surveys followed. One was taken at the Marion County Farm Bureau breakfast and another was mailed to elected officials at the county and city or township



The Marion County Local Work Group met three times in 2008. The group is continuing its work to identify and prioritize Marion County's natural resources.

level. The results were tabulated and reviewed at a meeting in April, 2008. At the November 2008 meeting, it was decided to hold public input meetings in February 2009. More meetings will be held by the group and tonight, we will be asking attendees to participate in a survey. We hope you will take a few minutes to help us with the survey that will be provided to the Local Work Group to assist them as they continue to identify and prioritize Marion County's natural resources.

64 Years of Conservation Practices

	<u>2008</u>	<u>64 Years</u>
District Cooperators		2246 No.
Conservation Reserve Program Acres	256 Acres	42927 Acres
Conservation Reserve Re-enrollments	3072 Acres	7322 Acres
Contouring & Contour Stripcropping		4947 Acres
Critical Area Plantings	7 Acres	769 Acres
Drainage Ditches		287.2 Miles
Diversions		10.4 Miles
Fence	1.4 Miles	20.6 Miles
Filter Strips	10 Acres	1824 Acres
Grade Control Structures	6 No.	180 No.
Grassed Waterways	15 Acres	1446 Acres
Nutrient Management Plans	535 Acres	13562 Acres
Pasture and Hayland Plantings		44448 Acres
Pipelines	2002 feet	7672 feet
Planned Grazing Systems		1318 Acres
Ponds	4 No.	1447 No.
Terraces		73.4 Miles
Tree and Shrub Plantings	16 No.	7003 Acres
Shallow Water Wetlands	39 Acres	209 Acres
Wetland Easements		185 acres
Wildlife Habitat Management	3721 Acres	56435 Acres
Windbreaks		11 Acres

2008 Educational Activities

Envirothon

Thirty-four teams from nineteen schools participated in the competition which tested students on soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry and the fifth category, "Recreational Impact on Natural Resources." Flora Team #2 from Clay County placed first overall in the competition and advanced to the Illinois State Envirothon held May 7-8 at Allerton Park in Monticello. Administrative Coordinator Debbie Holsapple served as a room monitor on the last day of testing at the state competition.



Sandoval High School Team #1 placed first among Marion County schools.



Rhiannon Branch from Iuka Grade School placed first in the 2008 Poster Contest. The theme for the poster contest was "Water is Life."

Poster Contest and Annual Fifth Grade Tour to Forbes State Park

Administrative Coordinator Debbie Holsapple visited twenty-one 5th grade classrooms in the spring of 2008. Students were provided information and encouraged to participate in the annual poster contest. Rhiannon Branch from Iuka received first place in the competition. Trenton Mitchell from New Horizon received second place. Third place went to Erin Worthy from Central City Grade School. Best of School awards were received by Shelby Holst, Franklin Park; Sierra Woodward, Kell; Cory Hanks, Odin; Katlynn Mullins, Patoka; Samantha Cameron, Raccoon; Cheyenne Walle, Sandoval; Cassidy Hays, Selma; Ali Pontious, South Central and Emily

Wilzbach, St. Theresa. Prizes and certificates were given to the students at the Annual Fifth Grade tour held on May 6th and 7th at Forbes State Park. Resource Conservationist Burke Davies provided students a look at soil cores and the opportunity to make their own core at the tour.

Third Grade Tree Program

Burke Davies visited twenty third grade classes at 13 schools last spring for the 18th annual program which is provided in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Forestry Division. It was initiated to provide every third grade student in Illinois with the opportunity to learn about, plant and nurture their very own white pine seedling. The classroom presentation teaches students the many uses of trees and their products and the essential values they provide. Last year, Davies distributed more than 500 white pine seedlings and during the last 18 years more than 33,500 seedlings have been presented to the students and area residents. The District would like to thank the Centralia Sentinel for donating the bags/flags for the trees and the Salem High School Agriculture Department for individually packaging the white pine seedlings for third graders.



South Central received first for Marion County Schools. Pictured left to right are team members Gaylan Gentry, Justin Schaal, Kyle Hanks, Alexa Irwin and Tyra Glass.

2008 Land Use Judging Contests

The Marion/Fayette/Effingham Counties FFA and FFA Section 19 Land Use Judging Contest were held on Tuesday, September 30th at the Judge Gene Schwarm farm in Effingham County. Burke Davies Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District's Resource Conservationist judged the contest. The pits were dug courtesy of the Fayette County Highway Department. FFA chapters from 14 schools participated. Participating schools included South Central,

Greenville, Vandalia, St Elmo, Ramsey, Altamont, Beecher City, Cowden-Herrick, Mulberry Grove, Pana, Shelbville, Nokomis, Hillsboro and Dieterich.

The first place honors for Marion County went to South Central. The South Central team was led by Justin Schaal followed by Alexa Irwin, Kyle Hanks, Gaylan Gentry and Tyra Glass. This is South Central's 11th first place finish out of 12 at Marion County contests. Randy Comer has been South Central's instructor for all 11 first place finishes.

On October 1st, the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District assisted Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District with the Jefferson County Land Use Judging contest. Gene Langa sponsored the contest at his farm, provided the backhoe and dug the pits. FFA chapters from 4 high schools competed. The first place school was Bluford followed by Waltonville, Mt Vernon, and Woodlawn.

The Section 21 FFA Land Use Judging Contest was held on October 8th at the Nelson and Bonita Heinzmann farm. The contest is sponsored annually by Kaskaskia College Agriculture Department. The Marion and Clinton County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Clinton County Natural Resources Conservation Service provide the technical assistance. Fourteen high schools from five counties completed in the 2008 Section 21 Land Use Judging contest. Bluford High School took home first place honors. Bluford's Kaisi Dye earned the highest individual score for the contest. The highest scoring senior/junior was Bluford's Amy Sneed who was presented with 18 credit hours at Kaskaskia College for her achievement. The second highest scoring senior/junior was Bluford's Clay Lunsford who received 9 credit hours at Kaskaskia College. Mt. Vernon captured 2nd place with Benton taking home 3rd place honors.

Marion County Ag in the Classroom

Marion County Ag Literacy Coordinator Meggan Hiestand continues to teach Marion County students about the importance of agriculture. Her main focus is students in 4th grade classrooms. Meggan is currently teaching around 550 children with 27 classrooms and the home-schooled group participating in the program. This school year students have studied lessons featuring nutrition, pumpkins and most recently, dairy. During March and April, Hiestand is offering county wide lessons to Pre-K through 5th grade classrooms. The lessons to be presented are Mrs. Wishy-Washy Lovely Mud (handwashing) and Trees.

Currently, Meggan is actively planning the first Marion County Farm Safety Day. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15th at the Marion County Fairgrounds. If anyone is interested in helping with the event, please contact Meggan. Clinton and Marion county coordinators are again hosting a Summer Ag Institute. This is a course offered through SIU-C and will be held at Kaskaskia College. The workshop will include guest speakers as well as tours of various agribusinesses. Meggan is also looking forward to attending the National Ag in the Classroom Conference. The conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri in late June.

Meggan also works with other programs throughout the year. They include Kid's Day at the Fair, Selmaville Health Fair, 8th grade Career Fair, Natural Resource Tours at Forbes State Park and Salem FFA's Petting Zoo. She also helps set up and works at the Mt. Vernon and Centralia Teachers conferences.



Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions about the ag literacy program, please feel free to email Meggan at agintheclassroom@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to donate to the program, please contact Meggan or Gary at the Marion County Farm Bureau at (618)548-2100.

George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station (GPICES)

Established in September of 1993, the education station was named after George P. Irwin, a past Marion County SWCD director and former president of the Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD). Through a total resource management approach, the Marion County SWCD and the George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station (GPICES) board are implementing a whole farm plan which integrates management activities for multiple land uses and natural resource benefits. A five member board governs GPICES. Current board members are Steve Kern, Harold Hunzicker, Evelyn Bartley, Tony Wagner and Steve McConnaughay. GPICES is approved as an IRS 501(c) 3 tax exempt organization and donations are accepted on a tax deductible basis.

GPICES acreage consists of 175 acres of marginal cropland and 212 acres of forest and woody fence lines. Currently, all marginal cropland is enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The CRP acreage includes 120 acres planted to warm season grasses and legumes, 25 acres planted to cool season grasses and legumes and 30 acres planted to trees and shrubs. Ten acres of wildlife food plots are scattered throughout the farm. Twenty-five acres of constructed wetlands provide erosion reduction, waterfowl resting and feeding areas. In addition, the wetlands provide habitat for reptiles, amphibians and other aquatic species which serve as important prey species for waterfowl.

Plant evaluations are being conducted for the NRCS Elsberry Plant Materials Center at GPICES. A study evaluating the establishment of a quail covey headquarters was initiated in 2005. Two sites established using a Glycine/Bobwhite soybeans, Desert False Indigobush and Showy Tick Trefiol are being evaluated. Other studies include the evaluation of native American Hazelnut and American Plum plantings and an Ozark Little Bluestem seed mix planting in clay pan soils. These plant materials have been showcased in the Illinois plant materials tour. The native prairie legume demonstration plot funded by a sustainable agriculture grant continues to be managed.

The Marion Co. SWCD continues to implement a high successful controlled access hunting program at GPICES. Last July, more than 50 applicants enrolled into a lottery to determine hunting privileges. Hunting privileges are drawn for deer, turkey, rabbit, squirrel, dove, quail, coyote & raccoon. Disability hunting privileges are available upon request.

The Upper Little Wabash Ecosystem Partnership grant titled the "Irwin Conservation Education Station Enhancement Project" practices are continuing to be maintained. This project was designed to restore and maintain the natural plant community. The project's goal is achieving control of exotic species and woody encroachment by greater use of prescribed burns and woodland management practices. Prescribed burn along with exotic and invasive control equipment purchased through the grant is available to Marion County residents. The second

grant, "Shallow Water Wetlands Project" was designed to ensure an adequate water supply year round to the wetlands below the constructed water retention structures. The ability to regulate the water levels in the natural and manmade wetlands enhances the habitat for avian, both migratory and nonmigratory, amphibian and mammalian species. The completed water retention structure helps maintain a high quality wetland wildlife habitat.

In 2007, the learning center was the training site for the National Wild Land Fire Fighter II Certification. Four instructors from the Illinois Fire Service Institute conducted the training to 17 volunteer firemen from 5 Illinois counties. The training certified the firemen for conducting prescribed burns. This has become one of the greatest benefits to Marion County landowners who have land in CRP and planted to warm season grasses and legumes. Mid contract management provisions in the CRP contract provides funding to compensate fire department for their work. One of the more active fire departments, Kell, uses the additional funding for advanced training and fire fighting equipment. Since the completion of the training, the Kell Fire Department has completed 694 acres of prescribed burns for 23 landowners.



In the picture above, GPICES Chairman Steve Kern shows a cardinal flower in one of the native prairie plantings.



In the picture above, Kell Fire Department completes a prescribed burn at the Education Station.

GPICES board members pictured below are meeting with a contractor to discuss completion of a low water crossing.



In the picture below, volunteers work to maintain the completed low water crossing.



USDA-NRCS Report

By *Tony Antonacci*

Wow! What a year! Between the election, the economy and the weather, few Americans probably paid much attention to the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill in June. And yet, the lives of most Americans will be touched in some way by this piece of legislation.

With 15 titles (Conservation is Title II) and 600 provisions, the **Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008** covers everything from ACRE Guarantee Parameters to Working Land Programs. According to one report, full implementation will require 170 regulatory actions and 100 reports and studies. Of course, the greatest challenge for this Farm Bill and its 600 provisions will lie on the funding side.

As the title implies, conservation has a role in the new farm bill. Locally, farmers and landowners should continue to have an opportunity to implement conservation practices through EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program), WRP (Wetland Reserve Program) and CRP (Conservation Reserve Program). In addition, new opportunities may be available for farmers and landowners with established conservation systems through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Although the rulemaking process must be completed before the new or revised programs can be offered or discussed in more detail, applications for all the existing programs are still being accepted. The latest indications are that NRCS will begin to roll out the 2009 program details within the next few weeks. As with the past farm bill, having a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP), forestry management plan (FMP) or NRCS conservation plan helps in the development of a high quality application.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program or EQIP continues to serve as the NRCS flagship for financial assistance with more than \$1 billion in annual appropriations. For contrast, annual CRP payments total about \$1.8 billion each year. The size and importance of EQIP is best explained by the shift of conservation programs towards the “working lands concept” and away from the “land retirement concept”. Last year, Marion County farmers and landowners utilized EQIP contracts to address soil erosion, nutrient management, livestock waste, forestry management and grazing lands issues. Under the new Farm Bill, NRCS will attempt to broaden the cross-section of EQIP participants by implementing provisions that reach out to beginning, socially disadvantaged, limited resource and organic farmers and ranchers.

As in past years, Illinois NRCS will utilize the input from farmers, landowners, agriculture and conservation organizations and other grassroots groups to identify and address the state's most pressing conservation issues. Earlier this month, the county's Local Working Group held two meetings to hear from the residents of Marion County on important issues and concerns. Please don't pass up the opportunity to share your thoughts on conservation needs and priorities through a survey, letter or conversation with one of the local working group members.

In recent months, USDA initiated actions to better protect the personally identifiable information you share with us. The initiative, known as PII, involves the implementation of new security measures and information handling procedures. In addition, provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill will limit the release of certain types of information that were previously available through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). As a consequence of these actions, your written permission may be required for the release of information to contractors, agents and others whom routinely work for you on USDA matters.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Ken Heinzmann for his dedicated support and leadership for the soil and water conservation district mission these past twenty years. Through collaboration, positive actions and a willingness to look beyond the traditions of the past, he has helped many throughout the state. Great leaders inspire others through their words and actions. Thank you Ken! You have been such a leader.

On behalf of James Petrea, Laura Smithenry and myself, I would like to thank you for your continued interest and support for conservation in Marion County. Although programs and funding are important, its people like yourself that ultimately make a difference. Your day to day decisions on how to farm, how to manage natural resources wisely and how to preserve a productive and balanced landscape for future generations are what matter most. Thank you!



Helping People Help the Land

Post Oak Flats Resource Conservation and Development

The CEO (creating entrepreneurial opportunities) class, populated by students from around Effingham County, now has a semester under its belt. Craig Lindvahl, the instructor for the class, says that it has been a busy and eventful start to the year.

“It’s really been an unbelievable experience,” Lindvahl says. “These students are part of an unusual experience, and I can’t imagine too many other young people around the country are the beneficiaries of this kind of program.” Students in the CEO class began the year by hosting a premiere of the television documentary *Cobb Field, a day at the ballpark*. The premiere took place at the Rosebud Theatre in Effingham, and the class was responsible for all aspects of the event, from securing sponsors and advertisers to ticket sales to logistical details. All money raised will be invested back into class activities, but Lindvahl said that the undertaking was about much more than money. “Our students had the opportunity to really understand customer service, and to understand that attention to detail lies at the heart of most successful businesses. In fact, a few of our students have come up with businesses of their own that they’d like to run as a result of this experience.”

Nearly fifty area business people have visited the class during the first semester, and the class has visited a number of area businesses as well. Lindvahl says that visitors play various roles when they spend time with the class. “Some of our guests actually teach while they’re with us,” he said, “others consult with students who are working on various projects, and some just come and sort of hang out, just to see what’s going on. That’s the kind of atmosphere we try to create in the class.”

The class has completed three business ventures as a group, and students have also created sample business plans for businesses they may run later in the year. Students are currently working on plans for individual businesses that will be run during the first quarter of 2009. They’ll create business plans, have them examined by business professionals, execute their plan, and run a detailed analysis of their small business.

The class, which is funded by a group of area business partners, meets in a business location each day. For January through mid-March, the class will meet in the Midland States Bank facility in the Lincolnland building in Effingham. The class meets from 7:30-9:00 A.M. each morning, and Lindvahl says that visitors are welcome any day. “We encourage our business partners and anyone else who is interested in the class to stop by any time they’re in the neighborhood,” says Lindvahl.

Post Oak Flats RC&D would like to expand this program into other counties and if you are interested in expanding this program into Marion County, please give John a call at (217) 347-7107 ext. 6 for assistance.

Conservation Awards



From Left; Bill, Erma, Beth, Rockie, Kyla and Levi along with the family dog Merle, stand in front of their pond constructed for livestock and garden watering through a filtered cistern system.

CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY: William "Bill" Borcharding Family

Bill and Erma purchased their farm in 1955 when farm ground in Marion County was selling for \$100 an acre. To supplement their income and help with the FHA land payments, both Bill and Erma held jobs off the farm. Over the years, they have raised livestock and grain farmed. Sales of hay, straw, red clover seed, produce and strawberries have been essential to their farming operation. Today, with the assistance of son Rockie and grandson, Levi, they farm 778 acres. Crops grown include corn, soybean and wheat. The Borchardings also have 56.9 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. Most of these CRP acres are in filter strips and riparian buffers.

along their fields. Several acres of pasture hayland are also managed. Soil erosion is fresh in their minds since some of their worst erosion problems occurred during the winter months of 2007-2008 and they are still striving to correct these problems.

"FRIENDS of CONSERVATION"

Award: Senator John O. Jones

Senator John O. Jones has been named the recipient of the Jake Davis "Friends of Conservation" award for his dedication and assistance to Marion County SWCD and the agricultural community. Senator Jones is married to Mimi and is the father of two and grandfather of five. He graduated from Mt. Vernon Township High School in 1958 and served in the U.S. Air Force from 1959-1963.

Senator Jones is the Republican Spokesman on the Senate Agriculture & Conservation Committee. He also serves as a member on the state government, veteran's affairs, gaming, executive, environment and energy committees. Senator Jones

served as a member on the Woodlands Task force which protected landowners from skyrocketing property taxes on vacant woodland, grassland and wetlands. He has been a strong advocate for township government, school construction funding and ethanol promotion. Senator Jones is a member of the Jefferson County Farm Bureau and the Mt. Vernon Christian Church and has received numerous agricultural related legislative awards.



Vice-Chairman Duane Snow presents Senator John O. Jones with his award at the February board meeting. Senator Jones is unable to attend this evening due to legislative sessions in Springfield.

Conservation Awards



Mrs. Creed is shown with her student and his winning poster while attending a Conservation Field Day tour held at Forbes State Park.

CONSERVATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR: Vivian Creed

A graduate of Sandoval Grade and High Schools, Kaskaskia College and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Vivian Creed will complete her 30th year of teaching this year at Odin Elementary School. The daughter of Bill and Marion Lammers, Vivian is married to Jim Creed and is the mother of one daughter, Alicia. Soil and water conservation awareness is a very important part of Mrs. Creed's classroom curriculum. She believes this awareness is important to her students well-being and occupational choices. Her classroom participates each year in the annual poster contest and 5th grade tour at Forbes State Park regardless of the weather situation. Mrs Creed participates in the Marion County Ag in the Classroom program; attending

workshops, applying for grants and requesting classroom presentations. This year, Mrs. Creed is one of the teachers chosen to attend the National Ag in the Classroom conference with Ag Literacy Coordinator Meggan Heistand.

COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR: JAMES BATES FAMILY

Jim and DuAnn Bates live on a Centennial Farm in Patoka. They have 4 children and 10 grandchildren who all live in the area and enjoy the farm. Jim's great-great grandparents were the first ancestors to the United States. In 1862, Joseph and Margaret Bates relocated their home from Alsace, France to a location only a quarter of a mile from the Centennial farm home location occupied by Jim's parents. This farm home was established in 1896 by Joseph and Kate Bates and handed down to grandparents, Louis and Ada Bates, then to his par-



DuAnn and Jim Bates are pictured above with their family dog Mollie on their centennial farm in Patoka.

ents, James and Marilyn and grandson Jim and wife, DuAnn. Ancestry is important to Jim and DuAnn and they were able to use sand stones from the foundation of the first Bates home for their patio walls when they built their home located in the old orchard area on the centennial farm. DuAnn has a farming background as well since she grew up on a farm in Sandoval with parents Duane and Wilma Hahn. With 5 sisters and no brothers, running a tractor and farming are very familiar to her. The Bates farm 1112 acres planted to a corn/soybean/wheat rotation. They have 48.2 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. The majority of these acres are in filter strips and quail buffers. They report they are very grateful for the conservation programs offered at the local office. Their goal is provide a heritage to their future generations that is just as blessed as the one they received.

Conservation Awards



Pictured from Left; Kaskaskia College President, Dr. Jim Underwood, Beau Waggoner, 2007 Soil Judging Individual Award recipient, Kent Sickmeyer and Aaron Heinzmann.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD: Kaskaskia College and KC Ag Department

Kaskaskia College and the KC Agriculture Department are the recipients of this year's "Special Recognition" award. Each year, the KC Ag Department sponsors the Section 21 land use judging competition. In addition for the last two years, Kaskaskia College provided scholarships and funding for the high scoring individuals in that competition. All three individuals recognized this evening have farming backgrounds. Kaskaskia College President, Dr. Jim Underwood is a Vietnam Veteran and holds an MBA and doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Arkansas. He has worked as farm worker, cattle and grain truck driver and as an accountant for a irrigation pipe manufacturing firm. Aaron Heinzmann and Kent Sickmeyer are both assistant professors in the agriculture department of KC. Heinzmann was born and raised on a dairy farm in eastern Clinton County. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois with degrees in Animal Science and Agricultural Education. Sickmeyer was raised on a grain and livestock farm near Campbell Hill in Jackson County, Illinois. Most of his adult life has been spent in Ag Education at the community college level. Sickmeyer and his wife also operate a small beef operation utilizing intensive grazing management and forage stockpiling. The Marion County SWCD would like to thank these individuals and Kaskaskia College for their efforts to provide students the opportunity to further their interest in agricultural and agribusiness industries.





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"Friends of Conservation" members
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Thanks!

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District Board Members and Employees would like to thank you for your attendance this evening as we have honored conservation leaders in our county. Your support and interest in the conservation and wise use of our natural resources is greatly appreciated.

We would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to join us at our board meetings held on the second Thursday of every month in the conference room at the USDA Service Center building.

Again, Thank you for the opportunity to serve your conservation needs in Marion County!