

Conservation Conversation

SWCD DIRECTORS

- Dale Jahraus
Chairman
- Kelly Tarter
Vice Chairman
- Gale Meseke
Secretary
- Steve Henna
Treasurer
- Jake Hortenstine
Director

DISTRICT STAFF

- Tony Pals, RC
- Karen Sanders, AC

NRCS STAFF

- Mary Ann Hoeffliger, DC
- Scott Smith, SCT

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Vandalia Lake Appreciation	1
Website Available after May 15th (Hopefully)	1
Sponsors	2
Vandalia Team Wins Envirothon	3
Nelsie's News	3
Carbon Dioxide and Climate Change	4
Calendar	4



Vandalia Lake Appreciation Day Held

By Tony Pals

Vandalia Lake Appreciation Day was held again this year for all the 6th graders in the Vandalia school system. There were about 135 students out at the lake on a beautiful Tuesday, May 8th. The kids were exposed to a lot of information on:

Snakes, Water Quality, Soils, Conservation Jeopardy, Erosion, Wildlife, and Watersheds.

As you can see, all of the topics dealt with conservation, with some specific to Vandalia Lake watershed. Presenters were: Dave Meyer, from the Army Corps of Engineers, Denise Willenborg, from the Effingham County Soil & Water Conservation District, Mary Ann Hoeffliger, NRCS District Conservationist, Jamie Elmore, with the University of Illinois Extension, Bob Hammel, who works for the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, Margaret Fertaly and Scott Shasteen from the Illinois Environmental



Protection Agency, and little ole me. Karen Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, made all of the arrangements for the event, made sure all groups moved to their next stop on time, and found time to cook lunch for the presenters. Everyone always talks about government employees, how they are overpaid and lack dedication.

But, like most generalizations, this one isn't so. The only people that were required to be at Vandalia Lake Appreciation Day were Karen and I. All of the others could have told us they were busy with 5,000 other things – and they would have been right. But they came to this event because they feel that conservation education is important. And it is. And these 6th graders will have a better appreciation of conservation because of it.



Website Available After May 15th (Hopefully)

By Karen Sanders

Over the past few newsletters we have been talking, or more like bragging, about the district putting together a website. Well, we are almost there. We should be connected to a server and ready to roll by Tuesday, May 15th, if everything goes as planned. And everything always goes as planned, NOT! I'm not sure what the web address will be yet but by the time this goes out we should be up and running so you can either go to your favorite search engine and type in Fayette County

SWCD, but if that doesn't work you can just give us a call at the number listed on the back and we will be happy to let you know what it is. There will be several things on the website that hopefully will be of interest to everyone. If there is something not on the site that you would like to see there please send me an email and I will see what I can do about getting it on. Either way please give us some feedback on what you think of the site and what you think could be changed or added.

These are our advertisers and sponsors.

**Roger Clark
Welding**

Culligan Water

**Double D
Plumbing**

Sunset 66

**Red Fox Cater-
ing**

**Champion
Trophies and
T'S**

Mars Plumbing

**Neeley
Excavating**

**First State
Bank of
St. Peter**

**Blankenship
Construction**

**Woolsey
Brothers Farm
Supply**

**South Central
FS**

**Craig
Excavation**

**Kidd's
Plumbing**

FNB Vandalia

Cripe Grain

**Ragan
Appraisal
Service**

**Bluff
Equipment**

**ADM Grain Co.
St. Peter Elevator**

**Karcher's
Forestry
Service, Inc.**

Farina Bank

**First National
Bank of
Brownstown**

Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck

Well, how are you folks doing today? Hope things are going great for you. Let's get the weather out of the way. So far the weather has been cooperating with the farmer. It was getting sort of dry around here. The farmer's were getting along good with the corn planting. Tyler got our people in gear and planted our corn in record time. I'll tell you when the Kruenegel's move in, it's tractors, trucks and people all over the place. It keeps Janice and I busy just trying to keep track of them. The wheat is heading out good in most fields, the hard freeze we had early could have damaged it some. We'll have to see if the yield is Ok pretty soon. We had an inch or so of rain a week ago that really made the corn grow. Jason got Janice's corn planted in Lone Grove Twp., at least we got the fertilizer bill, that's a good sign. It sure does take a lot of money to put out the crops any more. As soon as the weather fairs up the beans will go in just as fast as the corn did. Janice and I are taking it a little easy today. We had cut up the wood for the shop a while back. We've been splitting it up the past few days. Let me tell you that's hard work for old people. But, it will be nice and warm in the shop next winter. One thing, we got double duty for the wood, once when we cut it, and once when we burn it. How about these gas prices? The oil companies are making money hand over fist. They make billions of dollars in profits in a quarter; doesn't seem right to me. They have good reasons for it; its winter, its summer, the refinery has trouble, cars don't get enough gas mileage, bad weather, good



weather. Course none of that's our fault, we just pay. Ok, that's enough of getting on a soap box. Let's see, weather, farming, what else. Been working in the shop every chance I get. There's always something to make. Hope I can sell all the toys I make. Oh well, they don't eat anything. We've been mowing grass once or twice a week. That takes a half a short day. The grass was tall last week. Probably have to sweep it this week. The weather people are predicting rain the next few days. We may have to mow between showers. Grandkids: Jordy has been running track this season. He had a meet the other day, he ran the 440 and the 880, what ever that means (the Tartars' know what it means) but he came in second in each race, did good. Jaron is going to have a band concert this week. They are having it outside, which should be interesting if the weather doesn't cooperate. Tim and Travis keep working. Tim bowls on our church team some, and had a couple of good night's a while ago. Travis just got back from Kentucky last weekend; he's on Kelly's race team. They race most ever weekend, then work on the car the following week. The kids, they just work. By golly, its close to the end of the page. Too late to state an Army story - I usually get carried away with them, so I'll close for now. My question for the day: "Why is the third hand on a watch call the second hand?" The thought for the day is this, "Remember, there are no bad days; some are just better than others."

Vandalia Team Wins Envirothon

By Tony Pals

Vandalia High School's Envirothon team won the Council 10 Envirothon competition held at Ballard Nature Center in Altamont on April 12th. They competed next at the state level at Monticello on May 2nd and 3rd. Members of the team included: Zach Roper, Austin Wollerman, Sara Schwarm, Taylor Wollerman, Drew Bell, with alternates Scott Boas, and Will Cowger. The team sponsor is Barbie Elliott.

The Envirothon is a national contest testing students on five subjects dealing with the environment. Four subjects are used every year: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, and Wildlife. The fifth subject changes each year, with this year's subject being Alternative/Renewable Energy. The students are first given a short presentation on each of the subjects, and we get help for



that from: the Army Corps of Engineers, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Council 10 contest included schools from Cumberland, Effingham, Jasper, Shelby, and Fayette counties.

This is the second year in a row that Vandalia has won the Council 10 contest. They will now compete against 15 other teams at the state level. The winner of this event will participate in the national contest to be held at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York July 29 through August 4. First, second, and third place team members at this event win scholarships that can be used at any four year or two year college or any trade school.

Conservation Conversation
FAYETTE COUNTY SWCD
301 South Third Street
Vandalia, IL 62471
618-283-1095, Ext. 3
Fax: 618-283-4962

Non Profit Organization
Permit #53
Vandalia, IL

Conservation Calendar

April 2007

8 - Easter
22 - Earth Day
25 - Administrative Professional Day
27 - Arbor Day
26 - Board Meeting

May 2007

9 - Jake Hortenstine Birthday
13 - Mother's Day
24 - Board Meeting
28 - Memorial Day

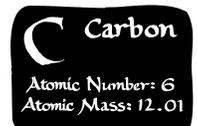
Carbon Dioxide and Climate Change

By Tony Pals

I'm going to use part of an article written by Della Moen, Earth Team Volunteer with the Stephenson County Soil & Water Conservation District. It's on the subject of releasing greenhouse gases – specifically carbon dioxide – into the atmosphere. Now, let me get up on my soap box. I think of all the natural resource problems we have facing planet earth today, this is the most serious. And, while I'm up on the soap box anyway, you may have heard about selling carbon credits for doing no-till or planting grass or trees. And, when someone offers you money for something you're already doing anyway it's hard to turn down. But selling those credits has no effect on the amount of carbon dioxide getting into the atmosphere since you are doing those practices anyway. What it does is give big business the opportunity to use your credits for carbon sequestration so they don't have to clean up their own air pollution problems. It's kind of like smoke and mirrors. Now let me get down from the soap box before I fall off. Here's the article.

Natural processes have managed carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, since life on earth began. With rapidly expanding populations and changing lifestyles over the last 200 years, humans have loaded these natural processes with excess carbon dioxide and other atmospheric gases. The increasing amount of these gases is measurable. An educated guess is that the increase of greenhouse gases will challenge the processes of the atmosphere. A changing atmosphere will have an effect on life everywhere in the world. Considerable scientific investigation has gone into showing us how the natural processes of the atmosphere may be challenged and documenting atmospheric changes that are already in evidence. People, industries, and govern-

ments are beginning to meet this challenge although often limited by desires to preserve traditions, lifestyles, and economic profitability. In 2003 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) stepped up to play a role in reducing greenhouse gases. They acknowledged that our country's cropland soils lost 30-60 percent of their stored carbon when agriculture converted to crop production. USDA conservation programs supporting changes in land use and land management foster the accumulation of carbon in soils. Research reports from 2006 indicate that tillage is detrimental to the storage of soil organic carbon. No-till practices for row crops (planting through last year's crop residue) not only reduce surface runoff and erosion, but also have carbon levels similar to soils under a meadow. www.ars.usda.gov. Start up your lawn mower and you have released greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Buy a sack of groceries and you have released greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from fossil fuel based transportation – from transporting the food to the store and you transporting it home. Flip a light switch and you have released greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from the fuels used to produce electricity (and produced nuclear waste besides). To keep warm in the winter you released greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. To keep cool this summer you will release more. More than six billion people around the world use energy sources that release greenhouse gases to meet their needs and wants. You can meet the challenge by carefully considering your energy needs and wants and reducing them. You can lend your support to alternatives for energy production that do not challenge natural atmospheric process.



The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability. This policy covers all programs, services, and procedures of the district, including employment.