

Conservation Conversation

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Another Vandalia Lake Day

By Tony Pals

Vandalia Lake Appreciation Day was held on Tuesday, May 6th out at the lake as usual. But there was nothing usual about coming up with the funds to hold the event this year. In our March district board meeting, it was decided to cancel Vandalia Lake Day, along



with most other educational activities, because of our financial dilemma. If you recall, we had only received 16% of our allocation from IDOA for the fiscal year, and were feeling the pinch. But Karen was able to get two local grants (White Foundation and Scarpaci Foundation) to cover the cost of the tee shirts and the food for the presenters. She then talked to McDonald's about furnishing all the bottled water we needed, and to Sonic for all the ice for the event. So at the April board meeting the Vandalia Lake Day was restored. As you have probably heard, our funds have

been released, but they were still being withheld at the time we were trying to figure out how to put on the Vandalia Lake Day. So, I guess the moral of the story is, where there's a will, there's a way. Or maybe that should be, where there's a Karen, there's a way. Thanks, Karen. Thanks also to: McDonald's for the water, Sonic for furnishing all of the ice, FS for loaning us a trough to put the water and ice in, and the city of Vandalia and Chuck Ruot for letting us use the area around the boat dock and for arranging picnic tables for us. Thanks also to our presenters: Bob and Kim Hammel, Jo Stine (on very short notice), Matt Stroud, Jamie Elmore, Margaret Fertaly, John Blythe, and Scott Shasteen.

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Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck



We sure have had our share of nasty, cool, wet weather so far this year. And windy, it seemed like the wind was blowing most of the time. I'll say one thing; it sure did dry the ground out fast. Speaking of ground, the erosion was bad this spring. It washed in places that it never has. When the ground is still froze a little and we get the big rains, its going to wash. Course, some of it is our own fault. A lot of the fields are slick and clean in the winter after all of the fall tillage. Then it rains. Remember, each raindrop is like a little bomb. It loosens the soil and off the field it goes. Check with your local NRCS office, they can help you with your erosion problems. Another thing I noticed this spring, the posts heaved up more than usual this year. Speaking of the ground, how about the earthquake? That was different. We had a quake in the sixties, but I didn't remember any noise. I thought this one was the cold front moving through. I guess we needed to get all shook up again. Maybe that's why Elvis wrote the song, "All Shook Up"; he went through an earthquake. Anyway, the farmers are getting with the program now. The Kruenegel's got our corn planted the last day of April. I thought it was going to be later than that this year. It seemed like it rained every other day in March and April. Then we finally missed a few rains, and the tractors started to roll. It doesn't take long to get crops in the ground this day and age. So much for that, Granny and I finally got the wood for

the shop cut yesterday. We usually have it cut a lot earlier, but this year was different, again, because of the cool, wet, just plain nasty weather. Since it was so much later, we had to get through taller grass, briars, and stuff. When one gets older, it's harder to get through that stuff. But I think we have enough cut for next winter. We're going to start splitting it today. We got some of our garden planted too, so, you can see, we've been busy. Let's see, varmint report. You know, we haven't had any skunks, coons, or possums this spring. I think they all must have gone to neighbor, Keith's. Every now and then I'll hear a shot. He just has to shoot once. I usually shoot till I'm out of shells. OK, the grandkids. Two are working, two are in school, and no sports at this time. We've got a graduation for Jaron, a band concert, and an awards deal to go to next week. Travis went to Kentucky four wheeling last weekend. That takes care of the grandkids; looks like it might be a shorter article this time. Granny says I should take notes on what to write about. Sounds like a good idea, maybe she'll do that some time. We could talk about the price of gas, food, and just about everything, but let's not, it's too disheartening. There's not enough room for an army story, so, here's a question; why is it that doctors call what they do "practice"? The old saying; it's easier to start something than to finish it.

Food Plot Seed

By Karen Sanders

We had food plot seed available once again free of charge for anyone interested this spring. The seed was made available by the Il. Department of Natural Resources (Thanks Gary), who furnished the sunflower seed and milo. But, we also had a new sponsor this year, South Central FS. They provided us with 17 bags of corn (thanks). We also made arrangements with Mr. Wagner's Vo-Ag class at St. Elmo High School, and, for the price of a pizza, they bagged the seed into 1/3 of an acre bags. Food plot seed should be planted before the middle of June for the best results. Thanks to everyone that donated.



Envirothon Results

By Tony Pals

The annual Envirothon competition was held again this year at Ballard Nature Center near Altamont. If you recall, this competition is for high school students from five counties: Cumberland, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Shelby. The students are tested on five subjects dealing with conservation: Soils, Aquatics, Wildlife, Forestry, and, this year, Recreation Impacts on Natural Resources. This year Altamont won the overall competition, with South Central getting the highest score for Fayette County. Congratulations to both Altamont and South Central.





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Conservation Calendar

<p>June 2008 14 - Flag Day 15 - Father's Day 20 - Summer Begins 26 - Board Meeting</p>	<p>July 2008 4 - Independence Day 24 - Board Meeting 27 - 29 - Summer Conference</p>
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Cost Share Sign Up and Stuff *By Tony Pals*

As you probably have heard by now, the funds for district operations have been released. We will now be able to continue all of our ongoing programs and activities. One of those activities was printing and mailing out the newsletter. In the last issue I said that we may have to only publish the newsletter on our website. With funding restored the printed version will be mailed out. However, if you are able to access our website, www.fayettecountyswcd.com you can save the district some money by emailing Karen and requesting a reminder when the latest newsletter is posted on the web. We can then cut postage

costs (and printing costs if we get a big enough response). Besides, on the website the newsletter is in full color – much more attractive. Another program we will now be able to continue is our conservation practice cost share program. So, what looked like a very bad year for applying conservation practices may end up being a very good year, since, in addition to 2008 cost share funds we will have 2009 monies in a few months. So, if you have a project you've been thinking of doing, now may be the time to sign it up. We can cost share on: grass waterways, structures, diversions, terraces, water and sediment control basins, pasture and hayland seeding, nutrient management, and well sealings. Come by the office to sign up to get the process rolling. We can pay 60% of the cost, not to exceed our average costs in the county. There's a lot of wheat in the county this year, so this July through September would be a good time to install a practice on those fields without destroying crops (assuming we get crops planted this year).



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