

Conservation Conversation

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Last Printed Newsletter

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District began 'Conservation Conversation' as a quarterly newsletter on December 12, 1996. After one year, we decided to publish it every two months. We've been doing that ever since. For a while we were not only printing 'Conservation Conversation', we were also putting out 'Vandalia Waterlines', a three times a year newsletter about Vandalia Lake Watershed concerns, and 'At A Glance', three times a year also, about Carlyle Lake Watershed. In addition, in April, 1999 we started 'Nuts about Nature', a semi-annual newsletter for the second and third graders in the county. That newsletter has continued since then. That has all been a lot of work, but we felt important work, to keep everyone informed about conservation.

Recently, because of state funding uncertainties, we've talked about stopping publication of 'Conservation Conversation' for a while. And, even though the state legislature is trying to restore the governor's 50% cut in district operations and all of the funding for our health insurance, next year's budget looks to be "challenging" also. So the district board decided this will be the last newsletter we send out through

the mail. It costs us about \$1500 per newsletter mailing, or \$9000 per year. That's over 10% of our annual allocation from the Illinois Dept. of Ag! Even though the newsletter is one of our best conservation education tools, we simply cannot afford to continue spending that portion of our total allocation on this one activity. We will continue to produce the newsletter, but it will only be available at our website, www.fayettecountyswcd.com. I guess you should always look for a good side to everything. The newsletter on the web will be full color as opposed to the 2-color printed version - much better looking. We will also have more freedom at changing the format of the newsletter on the web. So, for everyone that has access to the internet, check out our website every now and then to keep up with the latest conservation news. Of course, that doesn't help anyone without the internet. I urge you to contact your legislators and let them know you think conservation districts are very important and worth funding.



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Conservation Field Days

By Tony Pals

Making Soil Profiles



Conservation Field Days were again held for all the 4th graders in the county September 15 and 16. They've been held every year since 1982. Most of those were held at Ramsey Lake State Park. We moved it five years ago to the fairgrounds at Brownstown. For the second year in a row we've had them out at



Vandalia Lake. The temperature was a little chilly, but it didn't rain, and went well. As I've said many times, this event is an indication of the dedication of a bunch of people from different agencies and organizations who feel con-

Gun Safety

(Continued on page 3)

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Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck

Here it is the last quarter of the year. The season of harvest is here. The problem is the crops don't know it. They're still green. Wonder why that is? Could it be we got the crops out late? I think that's the reason. The Kruenegel's had our corn shelled last year this time. The corn looks pretty good, but green. The beans don't look bad either. They're shorter than usual, but they have lots of pods. The problem with the beans is that we won't stand an early hard frost. This morning the temperature got below 50. Shoot, I put on a jacket to do the chores! While we're on the subject of weather, how about the "Ike" weekend? We got lucky with the rain. We didn't need what we got, but look at St. Louis' 4 to 5 inches in two hours! That's over a hundred year storm! That's a lot of water fast. We did have some strong wind. We were in church when it came through. It blew a big limb over AJ's car. As soon as church was over, a chainsaw appeared, and they got the limb off the car. You know, there were a few dents and scrapes, but not as bad as it first looked. The wind twisted the corn around a little, and left the usual small limbs in the yard. Janice and I went to the rabbit patch to throw the little limbs off the 4-wheeler trail. The wind had blown down a 24 to 30 inch hackberry tree for Keith – just uprooted it. Course, that's not all bad. He says he's going to use it for his tree stand for deer hunting this fall.



in Greenville. He visits on weekends, usually with a young lady named Heather. Jaron has started Pharmacy school in St. Louis. We don't see him much anymore, but with cell phones and email we still stay in touch. A few students, including Jaron, got invited to have a lobster dinner with the dean the other evening. He liked that. He wants his mother to have that for supper the

next time he comes home. Track season has started for Jordy. They have had a few meets so far. Jo said he ran the mile and a half in under 12 minutes. Granny and I go and watch him run when they have meets in Salem. You don't see him much, when they start, when they come by for the last lap, and when they finish. They run in the park or woods all the time.

The church did something different this year. Nine years ago, our church had a directory made. A committee was formed: Charlie and Iris, Don and Emily, Denny and Evelyn, Janice and me. It was decided it was time for a new one. Guess who was on the committee this time. You're right, the exact same four couples. There was meeting after meeting, scheduling, and reminding. We got the pictures taken by the photo people last Friday and Saturday. Scott, Karen, and a bunch of other people took the pictures. Now all the committee has to do is pick out what we want in the directory. The committee has decided that, when the next directory is made, all those people that think we need a new one get to be on the committee.

The old saying, "Someone you can't fool is yourself." Question: Why do people leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put their useless junk in the garage?

Well, let's see, grandkids. Tim's still in Taylorville. He used to stay up there on weekends some, but he comes home every weekend now. Granny and I think a young lady by the name of Amanda has something to do with that. Travis is still working

Conservation Field Days Held at Vandalia Lake

By Tony Pals

(Continued from page 1) Conservation education is very important. Like we tell the students at the beginning of the day, the only people who have to be there are Karen and me. Its part of our job duties



mel, IDNR, on Wildlife, John Blythe, Vandalia Fishing Club, on Fishing, Gary Potts, IDNR, also on Wildlife, and little old me, on Soils with the help of Melissa



Cauble, AC from Montgomery Co. Soil & Water Conservation District.

Snakes

The students got 25 minutes at each station, thought they spent the day goofing off, and, hopefully will remember that day (and what they learned) the rest of their lives.

spelled **Conservation Jeopardy** out in the district's Annual Plan of Work. Every other presenter could have been busy doing something else.

Presenters and subjects this year included, Mary Grapperhaus, IDNR, on forestry, Jo Stine, U of I Extension, on Watersheds, Kim Hammel, ACOE, on snakes, Jamie Elmore, U of I Extension, on Conservation Jeopardy, Chad Compton, IDNR, on Gun Safety, Bob Ham-



Watersheds



Wildlife

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Conservation Calendar

October 2008

13 - Columbus Day, Observed
23 - Board Meeting
30 - Tony Pals Birthday
31 - Halloween

November 2008

2 - Daylight Savings Time Begins
4 - Election Day
11 - Veteran's Day
27 - Thanksgiving Day

Fayette County SWCD Fact Sheet

1. Provide technical assistance and state cost share to install over \$425,000 of conservation practices in the last ten years (we had nearly twice that amount of interest, but had to turn them down because of a lack of funds)
2. Organized and helped develop watershed plans for Carlyle Lake and Vandalia Lake Watersheds (as a result of these plans, we were able to get over \$936,000 of grants resulting in over \$2,000,000 of conservation)
3. Provided technical assistance in applying \$200,000 of federal money in a special project in Vandalia Lake Watershed (the lake is the secondary water supply for Vandalia)
4. Helped develop conservation plans and provide technical assistance on Conservation Reserve Program signups. These CRP contracts have brought in over \$10,000,000 in the last eight years
5. Helped develop conservation plans on highly erodible land keeping farmers eligible for farm program payments (Fayette County has received \$128 million of those subsidies from 1995 – 2006)
6. Conduct an aggressive conservation education program that includes:
 - A) A semi-annual newsletter to 2nd and 3rd grader
 - B) Conservation field days and a poster contest for 4th graders
 - C) Annual assembly on wildlife for all 5th and 6th graders
 - D) A soil judging contest for Fayette, Marion, and Effingham county Ag classes
 - E). The Envirothon for high school students
8. Provide a grass drill to farmers interested in pasture establishment or renovation or for hayland seeding
9. Conduct an annual tree sale that resulted in 62,000 trees planted in the county over the last 10 years, protecting our soil and providing homes for wildlife
10. Provide a tree planter and a root plow for landowners interested in planting trees or protecting existing fencerows
11. Maintain a website (www.fayettecountyswcd.com.) to provide information on conservation activities and programs affecting Fayette County landowners. This includes our 'Conservation Conversation' newsletter published six times a year.

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.