



Landscapes

Boone, Campbell, and Kenton Counties Conservation Districts

March 2010

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Put your soil to work for you!

Soil Quality Field Day Sat., March 20

Join the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on Sat., March 20 from 1:30—4:30 p.m. to look at one of the most important, but often overlooked, factors in your farming success – soil. The field day will be held at Farm Haven in Union, home of Bruce and Stuart Ferguson’s Petting Zoo and Corn Maze. Topics for the workshop will focus on crop and pasture field concerns, including soil structure, texture, and organic matter; soil compaction; and soil nitrogen.



What is soil quality and why is it important to me, my land, and the resources in my community? Ed Thompson Jr., NRCS District Conservationist says he’s glad you asked! “Soil quality is the capacity of a specific kind of soil to function within its natural abilities to produce food and fiber, such as corn, fruits and vegetables, and forage for feed for livestock pasture. Soil quality is also the ability of the soil not only to maintain productivity for plants and animals, but the ability to support human health and habitation. This can affect the way we live and function at present and definitely in the future.”

As a crop or livestock producer you may be able to improve crop production yields by managing soil organic matter. Increased soil organic matter also reduces the need for adding nitrogen and phosphorus, and will increase the water holding capacity of the soil. Crops are better able to withstand drought when infiltration and water holding capacity are increased. Soils managed for organic matter may also suppress disease organisms, which could reduce pesticide needs.

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The benefits of improved soil quality can be felt by the community as dust, allergens, and pathogens in the air decline. Sediment and nutrient loads in surface water are reduced, and storm water runoff decreases. Ground and surface water quality improve because better structure, infiltration, and biological activity make soil a more effective filter. And, wildlife habitat is

Kenton CD asks farmers to update Ky Agriculture Water Quality Plans

Kenton County farmers who have a Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act Self Certification form or plan on file at the conservation district are being asked to help us update our records. Farmers will soon be receiving a letter and form in the mail to update information about their Agriculture Water Quality Plan (AWQP) and their agricultural operation.

Please take a few moments to review the form, correct any errors, and fill in any missing information. Then, return the form to the district in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. Accurate records at the conservation district office help to ensure that we can assist you in case of a regulatory review of your operation. Boone and Campbell Conservation Districts will be updating their records later this year, too.

The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act was passed in 1994 to bring Kentucky into compliance with Federal laws. There are over 60 state regulations governing water quality as related to agriculture and forestry. The majority of these regulations have been a part of the Kentucky Revised Statutes for many years. Most of them were adopted by Kentucky to meet requirements of federal water protection laws that date back to 1964, and the federal Clean Water Act of 1972.

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Landscapes

Landscapes is a publication of the Boone, Campbell, and Kenton Counties Conservation Districts, Kentucky - members of the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

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Ed L. Thompson Jr., District Conservationist

Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet
Department for Natural Resources
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Linda Hunter, Area Field Representative

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Home Front

News from your Conservation District Office

Landscapes – Please let us know if you have a change of address, or if you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list. *Landscapes* is also available in color on our web sites. And, forward your E-mail address to us so we can send you important announcements between newsletters. E-mail: mary.dickerson@ky.nacdnet.net, or call our offices.

Conservation District Board meetings

Board meetings are open to the public and follow these schedules unless otherwise announced.

Boone County: third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. When a Federal holiday falls on the third Monday of the month, the meeting is generally moved to the fourth Monday. Meetings are held in the Kells Room—Lower Level, Boone County Conservation District office, 6028 Camp Ernst Road, Burlington.

Campbell County: April - October, first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. November - March, first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are held at the district office, 8351 East Main Street, Suite 104, Alexandria (across from the courthouse).

Kenton County: first Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Meetings are held in the first floor conference room of the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission, 2332 Royal Drive, Ft. Mitchell, KY.

Conservation District Office Hours

Boone and Kenton counties: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Campbell County: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday, Wednesday & Friday.

NRCS adds Soil Conservation Technician

Allen Arthur was recently hired by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a soil conservation technician. He will be stationed in Williamstown, but will serve Boone, Campbell, Kenton, and Grant counties. Allen will be working with county landowners to implement practices through federal farm bill programs and other related programs of the NRCS and conservation districts.

Allen worked for two years as a Conservation District technician in Harrison County. He also has two years experience working as an independent Technical Service Provider, providing assistance to farmers on implementing best management practices on their farms. "I enjoy this work," Allen said. "I'm looking forward to meeting people and getting to know their farming operations so I can be of better service to them."

Allen owns a farm in Harrison County where he and his wife and three children raise nursery crops, tobacco plants, and produce. Allen, who describes himself as a life-long farmer, was raised on a dairy, beef and tobacco farm in Harrison County. He is a graduate of Harrison County High School and is taking courses at Northern Kentucky University toward a degree in Environmental Science.



Allen Arthur

Conservation District Board Members

We will continue to profile conservation district board members in this and future issues of *Landscapes*.

Kenton County Conservation District

Heather Mayfield, Erlanger, is the Director of the Foundation for Ohio River Education (FORE), a non-profit organization affiliated with the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO). She worked with both the

Northern Kentucky University Water Lab and the Northern Kentucky Water District Water Lab prior to joining FORE. Heather is



Heather Mayfield

a graduate of Northern Kentucky University and holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

She has worked on conservation issues in the Greater Cincinnati area for the past eight years, focusing mainly on water quality research and water quality education. She sees her service on the Conservation District board as an opportunity to pursue conservation issues in her own backyard.

Heather was elected to the Kenton County Conservation District board for a four-year term beginning January 2009. She currently chairs the Conservation District Education Committee, and hopes to ensure that the residents of the county are aware of the Conservation District and its mission. Heather said, "It is important to help people understand how preserving farms and natural areas, along with adopting responsible land-use and development practices, will ultimately enhance the overall vitality of Kenton County communities."

She also feels that it is very important that citizens know their concerns are being considered and addressed by

board members as they work to carry out programs to conserve the natural resources in their district.

Heather is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Council of Environmental Educators and local planning committee for the 2010 Ohio River Basin Consortium for Research and Education (ORBCRE) Scientific Symposium. She has also served on the board of Rivers Unlimited and the Sierra Club Chapter Executive Committee.

She and her husband, Mike, have one daughter, Josie.

Soil Quality Field Day

(Continued from page 1)

improved when residue management is improved.

Instructors include John Graham, NRCS State Soil Quality Coordinator; Sid Brantly, NRCS State Grazing Specialist; and NRCS District Conservationist Ed Thompson Jr. The workshop is sponsored locally by the Boone County Conservation District.

To get to Farm Haven, take Old US 42 through Union to Tadpole Lane, turn left into Farm Haven. (Located next to the Union YMCA Pool.) Follow the Conservation Field Day signs.

Following a brief orientation in the barn, we will take to the field. **Bring your own chair. Dress for the weather!** Be prepared for walking over crop fields and pastures. In the event of extremely inclement weather, the workshop will be rescheduled. Reservations are requested, but are not required, which will enable us to contact you if the workshop is rescheduled. Call 859-586-7903 or E-mail Sally.Aaron@ky.nacdnet.net by Wed. March 17 to reserve your spot.

Campbell County Conservation District

Larry Varney, Cold Spring, has served on the Campbell County Conservation District since January 1997. He



Larry Varney

currently serves as chairman of the district. Larry also serves as the district's web master. In July 2009 he was appointed by Governor Steve Beshear to fulfill an unexpired term

on the Kentucky Soil and Water Commission through June 2010.

Larry recently retired from a career as a computer systems engineer. He holds a Bachelor of Science in English and completed additional science and conservation-related electives.

Larry says that he sought election to the conservation district board because he likes helping to preserve the land and its resources and wants to help others become aware of the problems we face. "Providing assistance to the public and helping to educate people about best management practices are my priorities," said Larry. He added that he is dedicated to helping farmers stay on their land, keeping it as farmland for this generation and the future. He also wants to see better solutions to our energy supply problems and feels that we should look at alternative, renewable fuels such as switch grass.

He is a member of the Licking River Watershed Watch and serves as their web master. Larry is an avid bicyclist and volunteers with several county organizations.

Boone farmer survey underway

If your property is classified as agricultural land in Boone County, you have probably received a survey asking for information about you and your agricultural operation. This survey is a part of the Conservation District's Farm Initiative, started last year. The results of this survey will help answer questions regarding the current status and future of agriculture and farmland in Boone County.

If you haven't already, please fill out and return your survey. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be released only in summaries in which no individual's answer can be identified. An independent researcher is volunteering time to conduct the survey for the conservation district.

The Conservation District has also contracted with the University of Kentucky departments of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology/Community Leadership Development to prepare an Agricultural Industry Profile and a Cost of Community Services Study for the county. The farm initiative studies are made possible by grants from the Kentucky Soil and Water Commission.

Similar studies have been conducted in Campbell and Kenton counties, as well as other Kentucky counties undergoing

rapid land use changes. A meeting of county agricultural leaders in March 2009 formally launched the initiative. The district's goal was to bring together groups and individuals with a heartfelt interest in preserving the agricultural community of Boone County for present and future generations. A steering committee has been meeting to help guide the initiative.

Boone County Conservation District Chairman Jim Walton said "The district board envisions that this initiative will result in opportunities to not only ensure a future base of land available for food and fiber production, but will raise public awareness about the many contributions that agriculture makes to the county."

The results of the survey and studies will be made available through the district office, on the district web site at <http://www.boonecountyky.org/bccd/default.aspx>, at the Conservation District's booth at the Boone County Fair, and will be presented during a public meeting later this year.

If you have any questions about the initiative or the survey, call the Boone County Conservation District office at 859-586-7903 or Boone Farm Initiative Chair Rose Bunger at 859-384-4333.

Don't fit the mold?

Alternative agriculture producers cost share - apply by May 28

If your agriculture operation doesn't quite fit the mold for other cost share opportunities, this program might be for you. The Campbell County Conservation District has received funding through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund for a new program aimed at supporting alternative agriculture enterprises.

The program is limited to landowners in Campbell County with 10 or more acres involved in an agricultural enterprise not traditionally included in federal or state cost share programs. Examples include equestrian and small farm animal enterprises, horticulture, forestry, agri-tourism, aquaculture, and apiaries.

The program is geared to help with correcting natural resource issues on the farm. Projects must include one or more Best Management Practices endorsed by the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Authority that will help correct a natural resource management problem that is adversely affecting soil and/or water resources. Applicants will be required to provide at least 25% of the cost of the project. A total of \$7,500 in grant funds is available. Projects must be completed by Dec. 31, 2010. **The deadline for applications is Friday, May 28 at 4:00 p.m.**

For information or grant forms, contact Linda Grizzell at the Campbell County Conservation District, 8351 East Main Street, Alexandria, Ky. 41001; 859-635-9587; E-mail: campbellcd@fuse.net or visit <http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd>.



National Soil and Water Stewardship Week April 25 – May 2

Citizens, schools and communities can develop and maintain habitat areas using good conservation practices. Learn more about

- Using native plants & attracting pollinators
- Backyard conservation
- Rain barrels, rain gardens & pervious concrete
- Outdoor classrooms & green schools.

Sponsored by: National Association of Conservation Districts

Visit www.nacdnet.org

St. Anne wetland comes alive for visitors

Wetlands, once thought to be useless places, are coming to life for a new generation thanks to the Sisters of Divine Providence in Melbourne. The St. Anne Wetland Research and Education Center has long been a focus of interest for botanists, biologists, and educators. A committee has been working for several years to make the area accessible to visitors so they can learn more about the importance of wetlands.

"As human beings endowed with a unique form of consciousness, we embrace our responsibility to accept, protect, and nurture the life of our Mother Earth and all her life forms."

Philosophy of Land, Congregation of Divine Providence.

Through a Northern Kentucky University (NKU) Community Partnership grant, directed by Dr. Rebecca Kelley, NKU students have developed five self-guided educational sites. The two-year grant helped fund development of informational kiosks at the entrance and terminus of the trail system. NKU students will develop K - 12 lesson plans for each of the educational sites. A general brochure will also be developed.

The 100-acre wetland is protected by a conservation easement held by the Campbell Conservancy, Inc. The Sisters of Divine Providence signed the Conservation Easement with

the conservancy on October 24, 2007. The committee is currently working with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) to restore a portion of the wetland that had been converted to a crop field a number of years ago. Sister Mary Jo Hummeldorf anticipates that work will begin sometime in 2010. She is currently waiting for KDFWR to submit a design for the restoration project, then bids will be obtained for construction.

St. Anne Wetland Research and Education Center is not currently open to the public. For more information, contact Mary Jo Hummeldorf, CDP, at E-mail: mjhumcdp@hotmail.com.

For information about restoring wetlands contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service at 859-586-7903 or the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Partners for Wetland Wildlife Program, at 800-858-1549 or 859-246-2818.

For information about the Campbell Conservancy, Inc., call 859-635-9587.

*Yvonne Meichtry, Campbell Conservancy, Inc.
and Mary Kathryn Dickerson,
Campbell County Conservation District*

A trail system is being developed under the leadership of the Northern Kentucky University Center for Applied Ecology.

held by the Campbell Conservancy, Inc. The Sisters of Divine Providence signed the Conservation Easement with



Sister Mary Jo Hummeldorf, CDP, shows Wes Little, Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, left, and Jerome Faulkner, Natural Resources Conservation Service, right, some of the main features of the St. Anne Wetland Research and Education Center in Melbourne.

Photo by Mary Kathryn Dickerson

Did you know that...

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an estimated 3% of national energy consumption—equivalent to approximately 56 billion kWh—is used for drinking water and wastewater services.

The EPA estimates that 100 million kWh of electricity per year could be saved if one in every 100 American homes were retrofitted with water efficient fixtures. Using cost-effective measures to reduce energy use by 10% could realize \$400 million in savings annually.



Shaping the future of agriculture in Campbell County, Kentucky

Campbell County Farmland Work Group January 2010

Since the Campbell County Farmland Work Group was convened in October 2003, members have been working hard to secure the future of agriculture in Campbell County.

The Agriculture Industry Profile conducted in 2003 found that in 2002, Campbell County had a \$2.6 billion economy. Natural resource-based industries accounted for 13% of the total economic production of the county. Agriculture is an economic contributor that benefits the local economy through jobs, sales and products.

Even though farmland's contribution to the county economy may seem small, it provides a positive fiscal impact. A Cost of Community Services Study revealed that farmland pays more in local tax revenues than it receives in services. In 2003 - 2004, for every \$1 in taxes paid on farmland, the county spent only 38 cents providing services to that land.



For each \$1 paid by residential landowners, \$1.21 was spent providing services for them. For commercial land, for each \$1 received 30 cents was spent providing services.

Both studies were released to the public through a series of meetings, culminating in a community meeting in April 2006. The studies, which included a mail survey of county farmers that yielded a 36% return rate, showed that the public was strongly in favor of preserving the rural nature of Campbell County.

The public also saw the impending Campbell County Comprehensive Plan update as an opportunity to provide input and influence the process that could lead to stronger support for agriculture.

A strategic planning session held in November 2005 brought together community leaders to help develop a vision for agriculture and farmland. This work, coupled with the opinions from the community meetings, led to the development of a vision statement for the Campbell County Comprehensive Plan update.

Through the efforts of the Farmland Work Group and partners, the new Campbell County Comprehensive Plan

includes two Goals and Objectives that support agriculture:

- * Economic Development and Employment - *Support the continued economic viability of Campbell County's working farms and agricultural enterprises.*
- * Community Character Preservation - *Provide a viable and continuing strategy for preserving quality farmland.*

Promoting Campbell County agriculture and food production as a viable part of the local economy was the main goal of the *Farm to Fork* event held in August



2007. Locally grown foods were prepared by Chartwell's Higher Education

and Northern Kentucky University Dining Services.

Foods not available from local farmers were purchased from other Kentucky producers. Local entertainment and wines were included as a part of the event.

Featured speakers were Billy Van Pelt and Chris King with the Lexington/Fayette Urban County Government. They discussed how the area is achieving growth while preserving the rural service area. Questions from the 180 guests were discussed by a panel led by event chairman Richard Hoskin. The panel included Van Pelt and King, Dennis Walter, chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District, and David Peck, chairman of the Campbell Conservancy, Inc.

Campbell County Land Resources Vision for 2011

"The exceptionally attractive quality of life of the citizens of Campbell County is enhanced by actively protecting the land, air and water resources."

Campbell Co. Farmland Work Group, April 2006



Over 150 people gathered at A. J. Jolly Park in Campbell County on August 22, 2008, for the Northern Kentucky media launch for the Kentucky Adventure Tourism initiative. First Lady Jane Beshear; Kentucky Lieutenant Governor Daniel Mongiardo; and Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet Legislative Director David Lovelace addressed the group. The event was sponsored by the



Campbell County Fiscal Court and the Campbell County Conservation District's Farmland Work Group with the help of many partners across the region.

Events like this help to showcase to the public how agriculture contributes to the



economic benefit of the community, as well as the important role that agriculture-tourism has in the economy of our region. Agriculture-tourism goals go hand-in-hand with Kentucky Adventure Tourism in that both encourage self-sustaining economic development through travel in our own backyards.

Campbell County Backroads Farm Tour

The launch of the first annual Campbell County Backroads Farm Tour in July 2009 attracted more than five hundred guests to sixteen Campbell County farms. The tour crisscrossed the county showcasing greenhouse operations, a vineyard, a museum, horse farms, 4-H project farm, honey bee farm, and beef, grain and tobacco farms. Visitors were directed along some of the county's most scenic back roads, while stops along the way offered the opportunity to purchase fresh produce, honey and wine and learn

Save the date!

2010 Backroads Farm Tour

Sat., July 17, 2010

9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

about the farming process and the area's farming heritage.



Campbell County is growing a successful agri-tourism industry. Our cropland, forests and other working lands are being revitalized as a result of new and innovative enterprises.

Campbell County Farmland Work Group

Mission: The Campbell County Farmland Work Group is committed to improving the economic viability of agriculture, developing local programs and policies to protect our productive farmland, and providing education for the public about the values of farmland. Working through partnerships and the Campbell County Comprehensive Plan, the Farmland Work Group will endeavor to guide development to reduce sprawl and protect the inherent natural qualities of our county.

History: The Farmland Work Group was convened in 2003 by the Campbell County Conservation District to explore farmland protection options for the county. A matching grant through the Kentucky Department of Agriculture - Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Corporation helped fund a Cost of Community Services Study, Agricultural Industry Profile, and survey of county farmers.

Partners:

- Campbell Co. Cattle Association
- Campbell Conservancy
- Campbell Co. Conservation District
- Campbell Co. Coop. Extension Service
- Campbell Co. Farm Bureau
- Campbell Co. Fiscal Court
- Campbell Co. Planning Commission
- Citizens of Campbell County
- No. Ky. Horse Network
- No. Ky. University - Center for Applied Ecology

Campbell County Farmland Work Group

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Conservation leaders attend national convention

Conservation leaders from Campbell County and across the nation came together in Orlando, Florida, January 31 – February 3 for the 2010 Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The meeting centered on the theme “Committed to Conservation” and challenged attendees to identify and strengthen their commitments to conservation. Meeting participants networked, participated in workshops and breakout sessions. More than 700 representatives from across the United States and its territories participated in the event.

“Conservation districts have been putting conservation practices on the ground since the 1930s Dust Bowl. Each of our 3,000 member districts are governed by volunteer boards of passionate and committed people who recognize the importance of good stewardship of the land,” said NACD President Steve Robinson. In addition to NACD leaders, key speakers at the conference included Harris Sherman, U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment; Dave White, Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service; Ken Arney, Deputy

Regional Forester with the Forest Service; and Tom Porta, President of the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators. Additional conference details are available on NACD’s website at www.nacdnet.org.



The Campbell County Conservation District (CCCD) was represented at the 2010 NACD meeting. From left are: Bob Grizzell; Mary McCormick; Linda Grizzell, CCCD Administrative Secretary; Alan Ahrman, CCCD Treasurer; and Ken McCormick, CCCD board member.

Ag Water Quality Plans

(Continued from page 1)

The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (KRS 224.71-100 *et seq.*) did not establish any new water quality laws other than requiring that all landowners with 10 or more acres in agriculture and/or forestry production develop and implement an agriculture water quality plan (AWQP).

To develop a new AWQP or to update an existing plan, individuals list the best management practices (BMPs) that they are using, or plan to use, to protect soil and water resources. Additional notes can help clarify and schedule practices. Your plan will look at six different areas of your farming operation - Pesticides and Fertilizers, Farmstead, Crops, Livestock, Silviculture, and Streams and other waters. It may also include practices related to foreseeable activities, such as a future timber harvest, new crops, or new or expanded

livestock enterprises. AWQPs should be updated at least every five years or as your farming operation changes.

Landowners are not required to file their water quality plan with any governmental agency. A self-certification form should be filed with your Conservation District office. By signing this form, you certify that you understand the requirements of the Agriculture Water Quality Act and that you have developed a water quality plan for your operation. You will need to produce a copy of your plan if a water quality problem is identified and traced to your operation. The enforcement process is complaint driven. The Ky. Agriculture Water Quality Act provides landowners who have a current AWQP with the opportunity to correct problems, without penalty or fines, when a violation is found. Help is available through the local conservation district. However, if a landuser chooses not to correct the problem, they can lose eligibility for financial assistance and

the Ky. Division of Water can take enforcement actions, including levying fines.

Your plan will help ensure that you are protecting surface and ground water from contamination (sediment, nutrients, pathogens, chemicals) associated with agriculture, forestry and farmstead activities. Having a current plan enables you to receive priority for state cost share programs. A copy of your plan becomes part of your application and is put on file in the conservation district office.

For more information about the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act and how to develop your AWQP, you can visit the Ag Water Quality Home Page at <http://warehouse.ca.uky.edu/AWQP2000/index.html>. This web site has an on-line tool to help landowners assess their operation and identify BMPs to be included in their individual plan. If you would like personal assistance with a plan, contact your county conservation district office.

Laws of the Land

News about legislation and programs that may affect you.

Spring Forest Fire Hazard Season Feb. 15 – April 30

Kentucky law designates Feb. 15 through April 30 as spring forest fire hazard season. During this time, it is illegal to burn anything within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the daylight hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. The law is intended to prevent forest fires by allowing outdoor burning only after 6 p.m. when conditions are less likely to cause a wildfire to spread. Although unsafe debris burning is a significant problem, arson remains the leading cause of wildfires in Kentucky. To help combat this criminal offense, citizens are asked to report any suspicious acts of arson to the nearest Kentucky State Police post or the Target Arson Hotline at 1-800-27-ARSON. For more information about fire hazard seasons, outdoor burning laws and safe burning practices, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division's Web site at <http://www.forestry.ky.gov/>.

On-farm Energy Efficiency & Production Incentives Program

Applications are due to the Governor's Office of Ag Policy, postmarked no later than **March 26, 2010**. More than \$600,000 is available through this program for 2010. The energy stimulus incentive program will provide 25 percent reimbursement of the actual cost of a federally qualified energy saving item, up to \$10,000. Permissible items include, but are not limited to, energy audits, energy efficient farm building components, on-farm energy upgrades and on-farm energy efficiency training. Only expenditures made after Oct. 15, 2009 will be eligible for reimbursement. For questions about the application process for the On-farm Energy Incentives Program, please contact Bryan Thomas, special projects coordinator, at (502) 564-4627 or bryan.thomas@ky.gov. The application is also available online at <http://www.agpolicy.ky.gov>

Kentucky part of initiative to improve health of Mississippi River Basin

Kentucky is one of 12 key states selected to receive \$320 million dollars in a new initiative to improve water quality and the overall health of the Mississippi River Basin. The Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) will provide approximately \$320 million over the next four years for voluntary projects in priority watersheds in the selected states. Participation in this initiative, which will be managed by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), will be made available through a competitive process for potential partners at the local, state and national levels. The natural capacity of the Mississippi River Basin to remove nutrients has been diminished by a range of human activities over the years, including modification of floodplains for agricultural and urban land. MRBI will help agricultural producers implement conservation and management practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff. The initiative is performance oriented, which means that measurable conservation results are required in order to participate. Focusing on priority watersheds in these 12 states in the basin will coordinate resources in areas requiring the most immediate attention and offer the best return on the funds invested. MRBI will focus on 8-digit or smaller hydrologic units (watersheds) that contribute high loads of nutrients in the Mississippi River Basin. The target watersheds in Kentucky are the Licking River and Lower Green River, and in Kentucky/Tennessee, the Bayou De Chein-Mayfield, Obion and Red River.

In addition to other federal, state, and partner funding, NRCS is targeting \$80 million annually over the next four years through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, Conservation Innovation Grants, and the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program. This is in addition to other NRCS program funding and assistance such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and Conservation Stewardship Program.

The Mississippi River Basin is a critical ecosystem to the United States. Its entire land mass, totaling 41 percent of the contiguous United States and 15 percent of North America, drains into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi River runs 2,350 miles from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minnesota, to the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico and carries an average of 436,000 tons of sediment each day. It takes about 90 days for water to travel from the headwaters in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico where water is discharged at an average rate of 600,000 cubic feet per second. For information about the MRBI, including eligibility requirements, please visit the MRBI web page at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/mrbi/mrbi_overview.html or your USDA Service Center.

Restoring a Stream - Boone Woods Park

If you have been through Boone Woods Park in Boone County lately, you will notice some curious construction work has taken place near the frisbee golf course. This is actually a stream restoration project designed and implemented by Northern Kentucky University Center for Applied Ecology. The objectives of this project are to restore, enhance, and protect streams, floodplains, and riparian buffers at Boone Woods Park.

The project began as a partnership between Boone County Public Works and Sanitation District #1 when they commissioned a study to explore the potential for improving the management of storm water flows, restoring creeks and floodplains, and providing passive recreation opportunities throughout the headwater catchment of Allen Fork Creek. Allen Fork Creek is a tributary of Woolper Creek.

This study revealed that “many areas in Allen Fork are moderately to severely impaired with geomorphic and ecologic instability represented by active bed and bank erosion, channel incision and head cutting, denuded riparian buffers, invasive species colonization, channel alteration, habitat fragmentation, and impaired water quality.”

In other words, the trees and native vegetation have been stripped away from the stream, massive amounts of storm water from development upstream are blowing out the stream channel, invasive plants are taking over the area and the water is polluted. All of this is happening in one of our most popular parks in the middle of our community. Unfortunately this problem is not isolated to Allen Fork but is happening all over our community.

Stream restoration projects in northern Kentucky are funded through The

Stream and Wetland Restoration Fund. This fund collects in-lieu fees paid by Department of Army Corps of Engineer permittees as mitigation for stream impacts in northern Kentucky. The goal of the program is to improve stream and water quality. Each proposed project is reviewed by a team of agency professionals for approval and all appropriate permits are acquired before work begins.



Above: Stream in Boone Woods Park before restoration work.
Below: Reshaping the stream channel.

Photos by Mark Jacobs



The Boone Woods Park project included restoration of approximately 4,000 feet of perennial and intermittent tributaries of Allen Fork. Work included redesigning and stabilizing the stream channel. Portions of the stream were widened and a new floodplain was excavated. A 50-foot buffer along the stream is being restored or enhanced and turf grass and non-native plants are

being eradicated and replaced with native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees. The purpose is to restore the native plant communities that will help stabilize the stream bank and restore habitat and biological diversity. The native vegetation is also excellent at slowing and filtering storm water. Additionally, storm water from a nearby development will be diverted into a constructed wetland that will help improve water quality, provide additional habitat diversity and recharge ground water. The entire project consists of 12.2 acres and the area will be permanently protected through a conservation easement. Over time a mature forest canopy will develop and help protect the stream for many generations.

Stream restoration projects are expensive and will never be as good as nature’s original design. This project is a great start to restoring Allen Fork and reversing the damage that has been done to this watershed, but it is only the beginning. The Allen Fork Study made it very clear that extensive damage has been done to this watershed. The challenge will be to continue this work throughout this and other damaged watersheds in our community.

A better alternative would be to avoid these expensive mistakes in the first place. Protecting natural systems from development makes much more sense economically and spares taxpayers and municipalities considerable expense later. It is time to reevaluate the way we develop in northern Kentucky and make the protection of our valuable natural resources a priority to ensure a healthy and attractive community.

Mark Jacobs, Conservation Technician

Conservation Calendar

(Continued from page 12)

Raintainer Program, deadline to order Wed., March 31. SD1 is offering Raintainers, 55-gallon rain barrels that include multiple pre-drilled openings that make it possible to draw water from the barrel. The lid can be used as a self-watering planter and can be removed for easy cleaning. Cost is \$124.88. Order yours between February 1 and March 31 by visiting www.sd1.org.

Kenton County Spring and Monthly Clean Up, Thurs., - Sat., April 1 – 3, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. All items, except household chemicals at Kenton County Public Works on Independence Station Road, Piner Fire Department on Bracht Piner Road, DRT Construction on Walton Nicholson Pike. Monthly clean-up events are held the first Saturday of every month at the Public Works location. Call 859-392-1920.

Wendell Berry and Wes Jackson and Gene Logsdon, Sun., April 11, 2010, 7:00 pm “An Informal Conversation” Cintas Center. Wendell Berry, a Kentucky farmer and writer; Wes Jackson, President and co-founder of the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas; and Gene Logsdon, a farmer and writer in northern Ohio. Free and open to the public. Call Xavier University, 513 745-3000.

Wes Jackson, April 12, 2010, 1:30 pm "The Necessity and Possibility of an Agriculture Where Nature is the Measure" Cintas Center. Wes Jackson is president and co-founder of the Land Institute in Salina, Kan., a research and demonstration center dedicated to developing polyculture perennial grains. Free and open to the public. Call Xavier University, 513 745-3000.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day, Sat. April 24. Details pending. Check the web site at www.nkyhhw.org for information as it becomes available.

Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats, National Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 25 – May 2. See article on page 4 and visit www.nacdnet.org.

Spring Clean Up in Boone County, April 26—May 2, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Boone County Public Works, Maplewood Drive, Burlington and Union Pool, Old Union Road, Union. Bring your junk for free disposal! CANNOT take batteries, liquid waste, hazardous waste, paint or anything from businesses. Can only take four tires per load. Please call 334-3151 for more information. In Florence, go to the Public Service Maintenance Facility, 7850 Tanners Lane. Call the City of Florence Public Services Dept. at 859-647-5416 for information or for disposal methods for excluded items. In Walton, contact the City of Walton at 485-4383.

A Legacy of Conservation - Helping People Help the Land for 75 Years. Tues. April 27 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the beginning of the federal commitment to conservation of natural resources on private lands. Join the

NRCS as they celebrate 75 years of conservation contributions to the nation and carry on the legacy of their first chief Hugh Hammond Bennett. Call your local NRCS office for more information, 859-586-7903.

Kentucky Forest Leadership Program, May 31 - June 4, Jabez, Kentucky. Deadline for applications is Fri., May 14. Weeklong program concentrates on forest management and related subjects including soil science, forest measurements, entomology, fire management, surveying, wildlife habitat assessment, water quality evaluation, wood products. Open to students entering junior or senior year of high school with a C or higher grade average. Fee is \$295, including the \$50 nonrefundable application fee. Enrollment is limited to 25 students. Program fee includes room and board at the Lake Cumberland 4-H Educational Center in Jabez (near Somerset). Scholarships may be available. For more information concerning scholarships, contact Mark Davis, Kentucky Division of Conservation at (502) 573-3080. For program information, contact Douglas McLaren at 859-257-2703 or e-mail: dmclaren@uky.edu.

Go Outside and Don't Come Home 'Til the Street Lights Come On – Sat., May 15, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Kenton County's Doe Run Lake. Go Outside is a half-day festival designed to bring public attention to a terrific place - Doe Run Lake and to help you explore fun stuff that you and your family might like to do this summer. Admission is free! Food and restrooms available. For more information, call 859-525-PLAY (7529)!

Hunter Education Class, Sat., May 22, 7:30 a.m. to completion. Moonlight Hunting and Fishing Club, 3655 Possum Path, Burlington. Call 859-472-1333 to pre-register. If you plan to hunt in Kentucky and were born after January 1, 1975 you must attend a Hunter Education Course. All courses are free, and are led by certified Hunter Education Instructors. Course content includes classroom instruction and shooting instruction with different firearms and archery.

Alternative Agriculture Cost Share Program, Campbell County Conservation District. Deadline for applications, Fri., May 28, 4:00 p.m. See article on page 4. For information or grant forms, contact Linda Grizzell at the Campbell County Conservation District, 8351 East Main Street, Alexandria, Ky. 41001; 859-635-9587; E-mail: campbellcd@fuse.net or visit <http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd>.

Campbell County Backroads Farm Tour, Sat., July 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Details pending. Visit <http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd> or contact the Campbell County Conservation District at 859-635-9587 for more information.

Conservation Equipment for Rent—Don't forget that the Conservation Districts have equipment for rent, including: a tree planter, native warm-season grass planter, lime spreader (Campbell County only), sprayers, tree planting bars, and other tree planting equipment. Call the conservation district offices or visit our web sites (see page 2 for contact information) for rates and availability.

**Boone, Campbell & Kenton Counties
Conservation Districts
6028 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005**

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Conservation Calendar

Soil Quality Field Day – Put Your Soil to Work for You. Sat., March 20, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m., Farm Haven (Bruce & Stuart Ferguson Petting Zoo/Corn Maze), Union. See article on page one.

Ky. Water Resources Annual Symposium, Mon., March 22, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Griffin Gate Marriott Resort, Lexington. Statewide conference featuring research about water and water resources. Registration \$80 in advance. Contact Geaunita Caylor at 859-257-2820 or e-mail gcaylor@enr.uky.edu for information.

Spring Clean Up in Campbell County, Fri. – Sun., March 26 – 28, 8 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Three locations: Campbell Co. Road Department (Racetrack Road), Pendery Park (Rt. 8) and Campbell Co. Police Station (US 27). No liquids. The road dept. is the only location that accepts scrap metal, appliances (including those with Freon), tires, batteries and propane tanks (valves removed). General debris only at Pendery Park and Police Station. Call ahead, 859-547-1802, for large quantities of tires or you will be turned away.

On-farm Energy Efficiency & Production Incentives Program. Applications postmarked no later than **Fri., March 26, 2010.** The program will provide 25 percent reimbursement of the actual cost of a federally qualified energy saving item, up to \$10,000. Permissible items include, but are not limited to, energy audits, energy efficient farm building components, on-farm energy upgrades and on-farm

energy efficiency training. Only expenditures made after Oct. 15, 2009 will be eligible for reimbursement. Contact Bryan Thomas, special projects coordinator, at (502) 564-4627 or bryan.thomas@ky.gov or visit <http://www.agpolicy.ky.gov>

Reforest Northern Kentucky: Can You Dig It?, Sat., March 27, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Community tree planting effort at Ryle High School Campus, 10379 Highway 42, Union. Bring your friends, family, and shovels for tree planting. Wear clothing suitable for outdoor activity. Registration is required. Call 859-586-6101 or register online at www.ca.uky.edu/boone.

Camp Webb Scholarship Essay Contest, Deadline for entries Wed., March 31. The Fifth District Federation of Kentucky Sportsmen is offering scholarships to students in grade 4 – 6 (under the age of 13) to attend the Ky. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Summer Camp program at Camp Webb. Students can win a scholarship of \$175 toward the \$215 camp fee. To enter students must write an essay of 250 words or less describing why they want to attend Camp Webb. Include name, address and phone number and mail your essay by March 31, 2010 to: Gary Turney, 8142 Heatherwood Dr., Florence, KY 41042. Winners will be notified by April 16. Camp applications must be completed and balance of the camp fee paid by April 30. Check the KDFWR website <http://www.fw.ky.gov> for more details on the Conservation Camps or call Ron Browning 859-327-6075.

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