

# Conservation Courier Newsletter



Volume 27 Issue 2

May 2013

## Pembroke Hill Students Invited to White House Science Fair

On April 22, 2013, two members of the 2012 North America Envirothon Championship team had the opportunity to participate in the third Annual National Science Fair hosted by President Obama at the White House. The students, Riley Sloan and Jeffrey Rubel—both seniors at Pembroke Hill High School in Missouri—joined a group of less than 100 students invited to take part in this special event which celebrates winners of a broad range of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competitions from across the country.



“We are very honored and proud to again represent our school, Missouri, Jackson County, and the Envirothon program at this event,” said SueAnn Wright, Pembroke Hill Envirothon coach. “I am very glad that the Envirothon program is getting this well-deserved national recognition.”

Sloan and Rubel have participated in the Envirothon program since their freshman years, and have been members of teams that have won the Missouri Envirothon and advanced to the Canon Envirothon for each of those years. Both hope to pursue environmental studies in college.

The event began with remarks from President Obama. Later, the students had an opportunity to look at displays and talk to other attendees about their projects and competitions. The event was broad via live webcast.

While in Washington, D.C. Sloan and Rubel also had the opportunity to visit with U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Senators McCaskill (D-MO), Moran (R-KS), and King (I-ME) and watch a live Senate vote in the U.S. Capitol.

Thank you Riley and Jeffrey for representing KC Region Envirothon and the State of Missouri!

Jackson County SWCD along with the Pembroke team wish to thank Missouri State Envirothon, Canon, MDC and the Jackson County Legislature for helping make the Envirothon in the KC Region possible.

The KC Region Envirothon will be sending Pembroke’s blue team, red team and Blue Springs South team to compete in the 2013 Missouri State Envirothon, May 2, at Williamsburg, MO.

**CONGRATULATIONS PEMBROKE HILL, THANKS FOR REPRESENTING MISSOURI!**

For information on the KC Region Envirothon email: [susie.struchtemeyer@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:susie.struchtemeyer@swcd.mo.gov)

## **BREAKING NEWS!**

The 2012 North America Envirothon Champs, Pembroke Hill have done it again! On May 2nd, the team competed in the 2013 State Envirothon and was award FIRST PLACE . The team and their coach SueAnn Wright will be traveling to Montana State University, at Bozeman, Montana, August 4-9 to represent Missouri in the 2013 North America Envirothon.

**CONGRATULATIONS PEMBROKE!**

# Jackson Campbell Farm

## 2013 Conservation Farmer of the Year

Jackson Campbell Farm was awarded the **2013 Conservation Farmer of the Year** from Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District, February 28, 2013, at the Ag Appreciation Night held in Oak Grove, Missouri. The award was presented by Jackson County SWCD Supervisor, Rob Montgomery.

The Campbell's were given a walnut plaque with the engraving that reads “*in recognition of outstanding achievement in the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.*”

The Jackson Campbell Farm Partnership was established in 1970 by the late Julian Jackson and his son-in-law, Chuck Campbell. Chuck’s son, John, joined the partnership in 1992. John is the sixth generation of the family to farm land that was first settled in 1857.

They began no-till farming in 1993, starting with soybeans. In 1995 they began no-till corn. By 1997 their farm was 100% no-till, except for NH3 application. Recently, they have started working with cover crops.

They like conserving their water and soil due to the no-till system. They see benefits in both spring and fall. One of the hardest adjustments in using no-till for these farmers, is in having to be patient to let the ground become ready for planting. They see an economical benefit in labor, equipment, and fuel cost over the year.

**Congratulations, to the JACKSON CAMPBELL FARM!**



From left: Jackson County SWCD Supervisor Rob Montgomery, John Campbell and Chuck Campbell

# Rachael Ross Conservation Educator of the Year 2013



Rachael Ross 4th grade teacher at Stony Point Elementary in Grain Valley was the recipient of the **2013 Conservation Educator of the Year** award. Dave Fry, District Technician II, with the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District presented the award in the form of a certificate and a \$50 check to Ms. Ross.

Ms. Ross graduated from Oak Grove High School and went on to receive a Bachelor’s degree from Central Missouri State University in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. Ross also has a Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Southwest Baptist University.

Ross has been teaching for 14 years and is currently a fourth grade teacher at Stony Pointe, in Grain Valley, Missouri.

The *Conservation Educator* is chosen by the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Ms. Ross was chosen for her fresh perspective of teaching soils and encouraging her students to conserve soil and the importance of conserving their Natural Resources.

Congratulations to Ms. Ross and Stony Point for the honor of having the

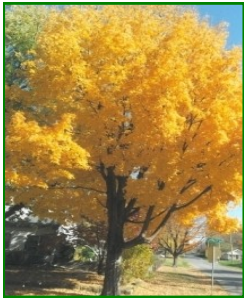
**2013 CONSERVATION EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR!**



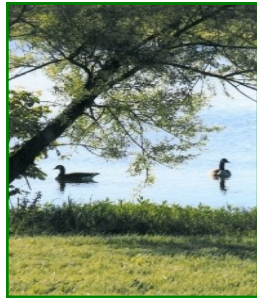
# Conservation Photo Contest Winners Honored

The winners of the 2012 Jackson County Conservation Photo Contest were honored Thursday, February 28, 2013 at the annual Ag Appreciation Night., in the form of a certificate and a cash prize of twenty-five dollars for each winning photo. Youth and Adults are encouraged to enter the contest. Scott Slusher, Jackson County NRCS Soil Technician, presented the awards. A special thank you to Carla Sands, educator at Oak Grove Middle School, for having her class participate.

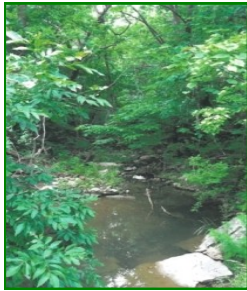
## Y O U T H



*"Fall Trees"*  
Montana Miller



*"Geese on Pond"*  
Kate Davis



*"Kendra's House"*  
Sammi Brindley



*"4-H State Shoot"*  
Morgan Davis



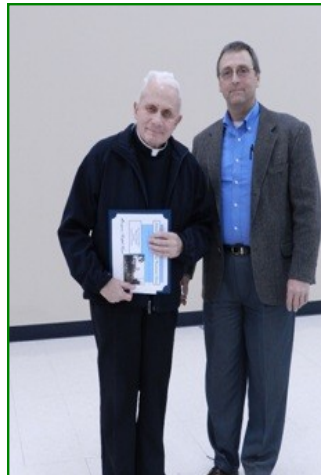
From left: Kate Davis, Montana Miller, Sammi Brindley, Morgan Davis and NRCS Technician Scott Slusher.



*"Evening on the Farm"*  
Tammy Baxter



*"Strike a Pose"*  
Tammy Baxter



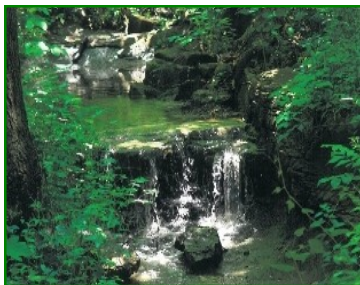
Monsignor Ralph Kaiser and NRCS Technician Scott Slusher

## A D U L T



From left: Tammy Baxter, C.L. Harra and NRCS Technician Scott Slusher

If you would like to participate in the Jackson County 2013 Photo Contest and win \$25 per winning photo, contact Linda at 816-228-1836 x 3 or email: [linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov)



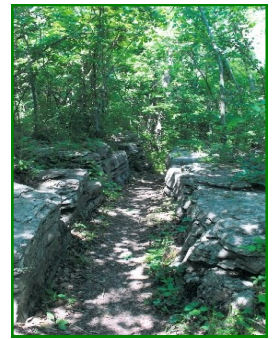
*"Natures Choice"*  
Tammy Baxter



*"Watching You-Watching Me-Watching You"*  
C.L Harra



*"The History Lesson"*  
Monsignor Ralph Kaiser



*"Woodland Path"*  
Kate Davis

# New Funds for Cost Share Begin July 1, 2013

The new fiscal year for Soil and Water Conservation Districts statewide begins July 1, 2013. MoSWIMS will be shut down June 15, 2013 to install funds for the new fiscal year. The landowners remaining on the present list will be contacted to make sure they are still interested in receiving cost share and to make sure all required paperwork is in order.

It is board policy that the landowner must make the request for cost share. It is also recommended that you make an appointment with Linda, to request cost share and at that time fill out the required paperwork or make sure your existing file is up to date.

You will be contacted when your name comes up. If you know ahead of time you will not be participating in cost share please call Linda so the funds may be allocated to someone else. Keep in mind, while going down the list, the landowner who is ready to start the practice immediately will take higher priority. It is recommended that if the acreage needing conservation work is in wheat, the practice could be started shortly after wheat harvest while others are waiting for corn or soybean harvest.

Everyone benefits from participating in cost share, the landowner to help with expenses and to save their soil, and the whole community to save our Natural Resources.

Contact Linda at: 816-228-1836 x 3 or email: [linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov)



## NRCS Advises Farmers to “Dig a little, Learn a lot”

COLUMBIA, MO— Spring is an excellent time for farmers, ranchers, and gardeners to focus their attention on the soil below them. The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service says a spring checkup of a soil’s health gives clues to the ground’s ability to feed plants, hold water, capture carbon and more.

“No fancy equipment is required. Just grab a shovel to dig a little and learn a lot”, says Doug Peterson, NRCS state soil health conservationist.

Small farmers, large farmers, organic farmers and even home gardeners can all benefit from this simple discovery project of one of their most important resources. And in the process they can reap big rewards for their crops and the environment around the, Peterson says.

Peterson suggests the following steps to investigate soil health:

**LOOK**—first at the soil surface which should be covered with plant residue, providing organic matter and preventing erosion. Dig into the soil and observe the color and structure. It should be dark, crumbly, and porous—rather like chocolate cake. Healthy soil is full of air holes, live roots and earthworms. Poorer soils are lighter in color, compacted or unstructured, and lack living roots and critters.

**SMELL**—Healthy soils have a sweet earthy smell, indicating the presence of *geosmin*, a byproduct of soil microbes called *actinomycetes*. These microbes decompose the tough plant and animal residues in and on the soil and bring nitrogen from the air into the soil to feed plants. An unhealthy, out-of-balance soil smells sour or metallic, or like kitchen cleanser.

**TOUCH**—Soil should be loose and it should crumble easily, indicating a porous texture. This holds water better, making it available for plants and stemming flooding and runoff. In healthy soils, roots can grow straight and deep, allowing plants to reach nutrients and water they need to produce food.

“We are blessed with productive soils in Missouri,” says Peterson. “We want to keep them that way and even build them where possible.”

In addition to the vital production values of soil health to individual farmers and gardeners, Peterson explains that healthy soils have clear impacts on many of the larger agricultural and environmental issues of our day from sustainable food production to water quality to mitigating climate change. Healthy soils hold, filter and regulate water, mitigate drought and flooding, reduce runoff and erosion, cycle nutrients, sequester carbon and suppress weeds and pests naturally. For all these reasons NRCS has recently launched a nationwide effort to “Unlock the Secrets in the Soil.”

For More information about soil health, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>, or contact your local NRCS office.

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# Soil Presentation Volunteers Appreciated

The Jackson County Board and staff gave recognition to the many volunteers who give their time to help give soil presentations in Jackson County schools.

The Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District offers soil presentations to 3rd and 4th graders in Jackson County. Soil presentations are presented to students with the students rotating around four different stations. The soil tunnel, apple demonstration, edible soil profile, and a video on soil. These presentations would not be possible without these volunteers giving of their time to help students learn about soil and where their food comes from.

The district is able to give these soil presentations with no charge using your tax dollars. One-tenth of one percent of your sales tax dollars which is split between Parks and Recreation and Soils is administered through Department of Natural Resources using an info/ed grant DNR has put in place to help inform the public about the importance of soil.

If you are interested in being a volunteer or would like to request the district come to your school in Jackson County, call Linda at 816-228-1836 x 3 or email: [linda.struewe@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:linda.struewe@swcd.mo.gov)



Left front: Stacie DeGrace, SueAnn Wright, Michelle Williams, Jerry Kirkpatrick.  
Left back: Scott Slusher, Andy Carmack, Mike Austerman, Lowell Burns and Dan Switznier



**Thank You to the City of Oak Grove**  
Thank you City of Oak Grove for allowing Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District to use your Civic Center free of charge. As you know without your help we wouldn't be able to put on an event such has our Ag Appreciation Night and workshops without your generosity. The accommodations are always so clean and Stacie and Dana polite and helpful. We can't say enough about the folks who set the room up for us. It is always just right. Thanks for your help in saving soil in Jackson County.  
**Working Together We Can Make a Difference**

# Rick Pearson New SWCD Employee



Rick Pearson of Eastern Jackson County has been hired part-time by Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District. Rick will be working as a district technician and helping with info/ed activities.

Pearson grew up on a farm in the Atherton bottoms and graduated from Fort Osage High School. He and his wife Julie, have five children, Troy, Kurt, Ryan, Blake and Natalie.

Rick enjoys technology and nutrition and has a full time job keeping up with his children's activities, and being a grandpa.

Pearson enjoys working outside in the field and looks forward to meeting Jackson County landowners to help stop erosion.

## Stopping Soil Erosion

N Y R E W T P I P E D T E I N  
M A T E R K E I M I W R L Z W  
B W X M S U T C V R T E I X V  
U R X M Q I T E H W O N T Q T  
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Z B H C L U M T T B T W H A N

Backhoe  
Bulldozer  
Contractor  
Diversion  
Erosion  
Gully  
Landowner  
Mulch  
Pipe  
Riser  
Soil  
Structure  
Technician  
Terrace  
Tile  
Trench  
Waterway

# Grazing School Offered in 2013

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service and University of Missouri Extension will present seminars on managing livestock grazing and forages in June and September 2013. The “schools” will be offered at Savannah, June 25th and 26th, Chillicothe, September 13th and 14th, and near Weston, September 25th and 26th.

The Weston session is scheduled for a Friday evening, all day Saturday, into Saturday evening. This session offers the opportunity for producers who have other obligations during the week to exchange ideas with other people interested in managed grazing.

The Savannah and Chillicothe sessions are weekday schools running from 8:00 to 4:30 both days.

The sessions offers the chance to exchange information on topics such as: The art and science of grazing management, evaluation of farm resources, economics of grazing management, livestock nutrition, grazing system layout and design, pasture growth, forages, soil fertility, fence and water systems, winter feeding of stockpiled forages, and no winter feeding.

The “tuition” will be \$100 to \$130 per person with an additional fee for late registration. The tuition covers the costs of the seminars including mileage reimbursement, meals, refreshments, on-farm tour equipment, fence and water system demonstration, materials and the following references: Missouri Grazing manual, Forages and Weeds of Pastures, and a grazing stick. You also receive these free publications: Electric Fencing for Serious Graziers, and Watering Systems for Serious Graziers.

Registration at each event is limited to 30 people. Contact your local NRCS office or Curtis Walker with the Natural Resources Conservation Service at 816-232-6555 extension 139 or at [curt.walker@mo.usda.gov](mailto:curt.walker@mo.usda.gov).

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## Planting Corn in Wet Soil Can Damage Root System

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*by Linda Geist —University of Missouri Extension*

Missouri corn growers chomping at the bit to plant should practice patience to prevent harm to their plants’ root systems.

University of Missouri Extension cereal crops specialist Brent Myers and agronomy specialist Bill Wiebold advise growers not to plant too soon when soils begin to dry. Planting and other traffic will compact wet soil. Roots in compacted, wet soil can’t grow properly and are more vulnerable to disease.

Due to frequent rains and low soil temperatures, corn planting was only 8 percent complete by mid-April, compared to 37 percent this time in 2012. However, last year’s planting season should not be used as yardstick, Wiebold says. The average over recent years is only 17 percent.

“There’s no reason for alarm,” he says. “Reasonably high yields can be obtained when corn is planted in mid– to late May.”

Wiebold has analyzed the effects of corn planting dates on yield in mid-Missouri and found little difference for planting dates in April. From May 1 to June 1, corn yields decrease about 25 percent, and decline more rapidly after that.

His data is averaged over five years, and at least four hybrids were used in each year of the study.

“As you might guess, differences occur among years for response of corn yield to planting date,” he says. “Weather conditions in July and early August affect corn yield far more than planting date, and weather during those weeks can mask the effect of planting date.”

That makes it difficult to predict how delayed planting will affect corn yield.

Myers cautions growers against a hasty decision to switch corn acreage to other crops such as soybeans. Results vary among farmers and fields, but MU data indicates that there is still time to plant corn as intended.

It may not make sense to switch to early-maturing hybrids either, Wiebold says.

“We found that corn hybrids with CRM (comparative relative maturity) of 110 out-yielded corn hybrids with cRM of 100 until the first week of June,” he said, noting that early-maturing hybrids are short, have shorter kernel-filling periods, and should be planted at greater seeding rates.

“We understand that drying costs are important,” he added. “Our data focuses solely on yield comparisons.”

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# Conservation Courier Newsletter

## JACKSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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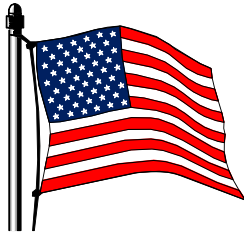
E-mail: [linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov)

*The Conservation Courier Newsletter carries the message of natural resource conservation to rural and urban Jackson County. To receive a quarterly e-mail notice listing new topics, just e-mail [linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov) with your request.*



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**Conservation Districts  
Conserving America**

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**JACKSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
1974 NW Copper Oaks Circle  
Blue Springs, MO 64015-8300**

