

Conservation Conversation

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Wollin Farms Honored as Conservation Farm Family

By Tony Pals



Darrel, Sandy, Thera and Dennis Wollin. Presented by Liz Heinzman from First National Bank of Vandalia

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Recycling location
changed to Vandalia
Distribution Warehouse
@ 1100 West
Randolph, Vandalia
from 9:00 -Noon



This year's Conservation Farm Family is Wollin Farms, Inc. which includes the Darrell and Dennis Wollin families. Darrell and wife, Sandy have one son, Josh. Dennis and Theresa have four children: David (wife Tracy), Chrissy (husband Bob Tighe), Anna, and Michael. Dennis and Theresa also have two grandchildren, Dennis Wollin and Jonathan Tighe.

Darrell and Dennis have been farming together since 1970. Their conservation practices include: 23.3 acres of Quail Buffer, 2 ponds totaling 1.5 acres, 9.8 acres of waterways, 11.3 acres of filter strip, 1060 feet of diversion, 8 structures, and 483.6 acres of conservation tillage.

Darrell and Dennis are also very active in the community. Darrell serves on the FS and Farm Bureau boards, and is currently a Trustee at the St. Peter Lutheran Church. Dennis served as a director on the Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District board and has held many positions at the St. Peter Lutheran Church. The kids have been active in 4H and the FFA.

The conservation ethic must be an inherited trait. Their dad, Alvin Wollin, won the Conservation Farm Family award in 1972. The Wollins received a plaque and a two-sided sign to proudly hang at the farm. The Conservation Farm Family Award is sponsored by the First National Bank of Vandalia.



Karen Celebrates 10 Years of Service

By Tony Pals

It's hard to believe, but Karen has been working for the Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District for ten years. To me it seems like at least twice that! No, just kidding. The board presented her with a plaque at the February board meeting to let her know they appreciate her hard work and dedication.



Karen receiving Plaque from director, Susan Holdeman

Karen is a proactive Administrative Coordinator. She has initiated classroom presentations to classes K through 4 on an assortment of conservation topics.

When the district decided to start up a website, she offered to take the training to develop our own site rather than paying someone to do it. She served six years

representing our region on the Illinois Soil & Water Conservation District Employees Association. She has given training sessions on Microsoft Office programs at the district employees annual winter training two years in a row. She has also lined up and given training on Microsoft Excel to other adminis-

trative coordinators in the southern third of the state.

Last year her "other duties as assigned" included helping survey conservation practices and stake quail buffers. So, all in all, she's done a pretty good job. We should probably try to keep her another 10 years.

Envirothon Logo Winner

By Tony Pals

Every year county schools participate in a local Envirothon competition. Each school brings five member teams to the event and they are tested on five subjects dealing with the environment. The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District provides each student participating from Fayette County with a tee-shirt. The shirts this year were



donated by Cumberland Trail Quail Unlimited Chapter. The district is responsible for putting a unique county logo on the back of the shirts. We come up with that logo each year by having a design competition in the vocational art department at Vandalia High School. This year's winner, and recipient of a \$100 Savings Bond, is Erin Meseke, daughter of Wade and Loretta Meseke.

Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck

If you came to the newsletter site to read "Nelsie's News", I'm sorry. Nelson was supposed to have knee replacement surgery on March 23rd, so he we gave him the newsletter off. His surgery had to be rescheduled for early



April. He should be ready to impart words of wisdom by the next newsletter. If you would like to send him a get well card, you can send it to our office and we'll make sure he gets it.

Poster Contest Winners

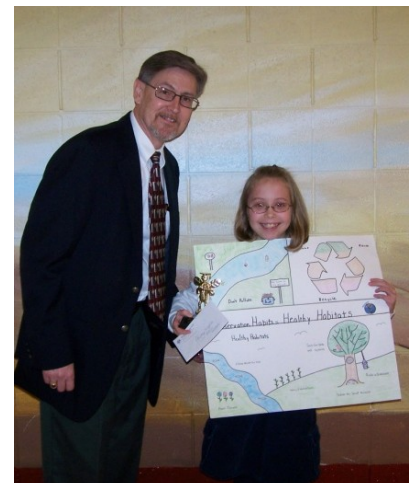
By Tony Pals

Every year the Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District holds a poster contest for all the 4th grade students in the county. A theme for the contest is set by the National Association of Conservation Districts. This year's theme was "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats". The idea behind the theme is we all can do a lot of little things to help create or improve wildlife habitat in our backyard and our communities. The students get a presentation on the theme, a poster board, and a deadline to have their posters completed. The district board, employees, and several volunteers then judge the posters and decide on a first, second, and third place.

The winners get an engraved trophy and a Savings bond (\$100, \$75, and \$50 for 1st, 2nd,

and 3rd, respectively). The First National Bank of Brownstown sponsors the event every year, providing the poster boards, the trophies and the Savings Bonds. I think Jerry Reed, President of the bank gets as big a kick out of it as the kids.

This year's winners were: 1st place, Audrey Myers from Christian Academy, daughter of Rick & Dana Myers of Shobonier, 2nd place, Olivia Marquardt, daughter of Todd & Meg Marquardt of Vandalia, and, 3rd place, Sydney Austin, daughter of Chad & Mandy Austin, also from Vandalia. Olivia and Sydney both attend Vandalia Elementary.



First National Bank of Brownstown President, Jerry Reed presents trophies and Savings Bonds to: (from left to right) Sydney Austin, Olivia Marquardt, and Audrey Myers.

Increase in Quail Buffer Acres

By Tony Pals

Good news! If you remember, several newsletters ago I mentioned that the state was down to under 4000 acres left to get into the CRP Quail Buffer. We received word last week that Illinois has just received approval for another 73,000 acres. That means you still can get that land next to fencerows and timber into this program. If you think about it, that land



doesn't produce anything, costs as much as your best ground to plant and fertilize, and tears up your equipment when you get too close to the overhanging limbs. Putting it to native grasses and forbs and getting an annual rental payment from FSA every year for ten years has to increase your net profit off that field. You'll also get about 90% of the cost of establishing the cover back from FSA also. Plus you will provide habitat for Bobwhite Quail.

We Honor B.J. Mueller

By Tony Pals

Every year the district tries to honor someone in the community that has helped promote conservation in the county. This year that person was B J Mueller, owner of the Ramsey News Journal. Chairman, Jake Hortenstine and Treasurer, Liz Heinzmann are shown here presenting B J with an engraved desk clock. I don't think he has ever not printed an article we have sent him on conservation. When Conservation Field Days were held at Ramsey State



Park, you could always count on B J being out there taking pictures and interviewing presenters.

B J is the third generation owner of the paper. In fact, in two years it will have been in the family 100 years. He and wife Sharon both attended SIU in Carbondale (no wonder he's such a nice guy). B J's hobbies include fishing, gardening, and mini trips.

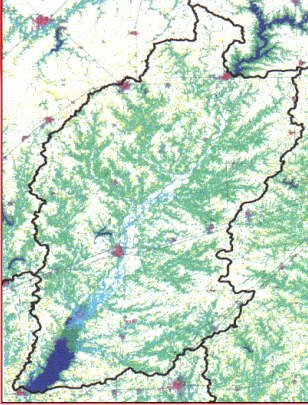
Congratulations on your award, B J, and thanks for all the help promoting conservation.

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.

Watching the Snow Melt

Della Moen, Earth Team Volunteer, NRCS/Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District

Carlyle Lake Watershed



Watching the melting snow as we watch for signs of spring is a good starting point for thinking about our watershed. You are in a watershed. The accumulated snow around you melts and runs off over the surface or under

the surface to a body of water.

All the area above and below the surface of the landscape that drains into a particular body of water such as a lake, river, stream, or wetland is the watershed of that body of water. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. For example, the Mississippi River watershed drains one million square miles and is made up of thousands of smaller watersheds. A smaller watershed drains only a few acres of land into a small stream, which flows into a larger stream and then into a larger water body.

No water molecules are created or destroyed, just recycled. The earth's hydrologic cycle - evaporation, condensation, precipitation, runoff, and infiltration - provides for the continuous flow of water through the watershed and its bodies of water. We share our watershed with all the people, plants, and animals that live there. Our human activities create many challenges to maintaining the quality of the water.

- Parking lots, streets, roads, and storm sewers allow runoff to enter directly to a body of water. Accumulated snow makes visible some of the sediment that will be carried with runoff.

- Buildings and paved areas change the direction and rate of the water flow.
- Construction sites, city streets, and planted fields allow runoff to carry sediment to streams, rivers, and lakes blocking out sunlight need to produce food for aquatic life. Sediment makes rivers more susceptible to flooding and, in roadside ditches, adds to the work of maintaining them.
- Urban lawns and croplands have fertilizers and nutrients applied to them that, if they runoff with the water, promote algae growth and lead to oxygen depletion.
- Septic systems, municipal sewer treatment systems, and small and large livestock facilities may release nutrients and bacteria into our water.
- Construction of bridges and roads alters the natural drainage patterns increasing erosion.
- Mining produces waste and other chemical byproducts, which are carried off by water.
- Industry produces wastes that may be discharged into the air, into the ground, or directly into a body of water.

As we watch the snow melt and run off and winter flow into spring, we must challenge ourselves to manage our work and daily lives to have the least impact possible on our precious water supply. The Soil and Water Conservation District can provide technical assistance for good management of our natural resources. Visit www.stephensonswcd.org and "Ask Jim" if you have a question.

