

Kansas Highlights

February 2002

STUDENTS AT PHILLIPSBURG ELEMENTARY HAVE A W.A.C.K.Y. DAY!

On November 5, 2001, approximately 250 students and teachers at Phillipsburg Elementary participated in a W.A.C.K.Y. (Wildlife, Agriculture, Conservation, and Knowledge for Youth) day. This special day was designed to help students learn about our natural resources and have fun at the same time!

Students rotated through a total of nine stations featuring three wildlife presentations, three agriculture related stations, and three natural resource conservation stations. Topics included migration of monarch butterflies, farm safety, how wheat is grown and used, healthy eating using the USDA food pyramid, how farmers protect and conserve natural resources on their land, and how natural fibers are produced and used.



Tony Ifland, Kansas Partners for Wildlife, shows animal pelts and other wildlife related items. (Photo Courtesy: Dawn Corcoran, District Manager, Ness County Conservation District)



Students work on a project at W.A.C.K.Y. day. (Photo Courtesy: Dawn Corcoran)

The Phillips County Conservation District, the Phillips Farm Bureau Organization, and the Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge sponsored the event.

Presenters for the day included: Larry Meili, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Dawn Corcoran, Norton County Conservation District; the Kansas Wheat Commission; Shannon Rothchild and Erich Gilbert from the Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge; Tony Ifland, Kansas Partners for Wildlife; Sally Brandon, Vicky Overly, and Bob Broweleit, Phillips County Extension Office; Ron Wyckoff, Farm Service Agency; Jean Stapel, Phillips County Conservation District Manager; Marly Denio, Farm Bureau. *For more information, contact Jean Stapel, Phillips County Conservation District, 785-543-2518 or jean.stapel@ks.usda.gov.*

FLAGS DISPLAYED ON WALLS OF USDA OFFICE

In a concerted effort, the USDA Ness City Service Center contacted all Ness County grade schools, kindergarten through sixth grades to color the United States Flag and return to the service center. This was an effort to make our young people feel like they are a part of contributing to the patriotism of our country during this difficult time.



The response was great! The service center received 215 colored flags. The flags were displayed on two long walls of the building. The USDA Ness City Service Center houses three agencies, the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Ness County Conservation District (NCCD). *Submitted by Kay Wasinger, District Manager, NCCD*

TEACHING ABOUT CONSERVATION

A brisk, sunny morning welcomed 35 fourth graders from Sylvan Elementary School and Lincoln Elementary School as they participated in the 8th Annual Fourth Grade Conservation Field Day last October at the Oetting Watershed Dam. Students were divided into groups and rotated through six different stations.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) presenters included Bob Murphy, Soil Scientist, Hutchinson AO, who demonstrated a soil probe. Students felt different types of textures and saw colors of the soil. Monty Brenneman, District Conservationist, used the Stream Model Trailer to demonstrate the purpose of controlling streams and protecting riparian areas so students could learn about the different practices being used today to help stop and/or prevent erosion. John Gardner, Civil Engineering Technician, showed the students how different types of surveying equipment is used. Linda Rosebrook, NRCS Earth Team Volunteer, also helped during the day's events by taking pictures, escorting students around to the different presentations, grading tests, and driving the bus.



Bob Murphy, NRCS, explains the various types of soils

Other presenters were Matt Peek, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) Biologist, who brought several examples of furs, horns, and skeletons and spoke about mammals of Kansas. Tommie Berger, KDWP Biologist, spoke about aquatic life using his display on different fish types. Brad Kratzer, Ellsworth County Non Point Source Coordinator, used the EnviroScape to demonstrate how pollution from houses, fields, and factories could eventually penetrate the water.

Once the students completed a quiz over the information covered, they enjoyed a sack lunch provided by the conservation district. All participants received a participation gift while members of the team with the highest score received a T-shirt. The winning team members were Ethan Schroeder, Keith Ancell, Dakotah Garner, Toni Nelson, Shelby Errebo, and Carissa Jorgensen. *Submitted by Patti Winters, District Manager, Lincoln County Conservation District*

NATIONAL AWARD WINNER IN AREA 2

Kay Wasinger, District Manager for Ness County Conservation District will be awarded the 2002 National Conservation Professional of the Year. This award will be presented at the NACD Annual Meeting in Reno, Nevada. Our congratulations to Kay. *Submitted by Connie Richmeier, District Manager, Finney County Conservation District*

EARTH TEAM NEWS

Again this year it has been a difficult discussion on which area office will be the proud owner of the Traveling Area Earth Team Award. Area 4 had the most hours and volunteers followed closely by Area 3. Area 3 did have more news articles and pictures to promote Earth Team volunteer activities. They also had the most award nominations to recognize their volunteers. For these reasons, Area 3 will retain the Traveling Area Earth Team Award. I would like to encourage all areas to actively challenge Area 3 for the Traveling Earth Team Award. Congratulations to Area 3!! *Submitted by Lonnie Miller, Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator, Salina SO*

TIDBITS

- Kansas' voices will be heard even louder in the Northern Plains due to the election of Herman Norwood as President and Marshall Handcock as Vice President of the Northern Plains Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees.

- With high temperatures in the 50s and 60s, winter may not be the foremost thing in one's mind these days. But as we all know, the weather in Kansas will soon turn colder and there will be a need for coats. For some families, purchasing coats can be a real hardship. For the second year, a coat drive has been held at the Anthony School, Leavenworth assisting those families in need. This annual event was started last year by Johnnie Freeman, Soil Conservationist, Leavenworth. While the coat drive is based at Anthony School, Freeman said he sees it as an effort of the entire community. *Article taken from The Leavenworth Times*

NEW NAME

Over the last decade, Green Thumb, a national nonprofit organization, has significantly expanded and enhanced its services to older individuals, communities, and businesses.



As a result, **Green Thumb, America's leader in older worker training and employment, will change its name to Experience Works.** This name change reinforces and supports the core mission, which is to put the experience of older individuals and others to work by providing them with opportunities to learn, work, and serve others. For more than 36 years, Green Thumb has been the leader in mature-worker training and employment. *To learn more about Experience Works, go to www.experienceworks.org*

ETHANOL VAN POWERS AGRICULTURE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

Connecting Kansas Kids, Crops, and Critters will be in your neighborhood! The school assembly, provided by the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC), will travel to your area in the near future. The assembly, coming in an E-85 minivan (powered by Ethanol) teaches elementary students the importance of agriculture in our daily environments. The assembly shares the wonders and excitement with local youngsters who may have little knowledge of how big Kansas Agriculture is!

During the assembly, students will get to manipulate Kansas' grains while practicing their math and science skills. After all, Kansas Agriculture and the assembly helps develop pride in what our state does best!



For more information about scheduling Connecting Kansas Kids, Crops, and Critters at your local school or to learn how you can donate to support the assembly, contact Barbara Oplinger, KFAC, at 785-532-7946 or check their web site www.ksagclassroom.org

2001 RENO COUNTY SERVICE CENTER 3rd ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

With all that has happened in our nation and local communities, the Reno County Service Center, South Hutchinson, felt a food drive was very important this year, especially during the holidays.

A letter was mailed to all the schools in Reno County asking them to participate in the food drive. Local radio stations and a newspaper were contacted, and a news release was mailed to KWCH, Channel 12,

Wichita to announce the food drive. One main event the service center participated in was the Christmas Parade in Wichita. Employees collected non-perishable food items as they walked through the parade and boxes were placed at businesses along the route to gather food.



The service center worked with six local schools. The Hutchinson Middle School 8 collected 1,600 food items weighing 1,397 pounds within one week. For the St. Teresa Catholic Grade School students, who wear uniforms, anyone that brought a can of food could wear jeans for the day. They collected 360 pounds of food. Other schools in the area collected 1,386 pounds. The Lucky 4-H Club and Orscheln Farm Store collected over 354 pounds. The service center staff and producers collected \$155 and 243 pounds of food. *Submitted by Joyce Wade, Soil Conservationist, South Hutchinson FO*

HISPANIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Through a grant to the Hispanic College Fund, the Sallie Mae Fund will offer college scholarships to Hispanic youth who are the first in their family to attend college. The "First in My Family" scholarships will range from \$500 to \$5,000. Applications are available through wiredscholar, which is sponsored by Sallie Mae, or by calling the Hispanic College Fund at 800-644-4223.

UPCOMING CONSERVATION EVENTS

March 17 – 24 - National Agriculture Week

March 20 - Ag Day

April 21 – 27 - National Volunteer Week

April 22 – 28 - National Wildlife Week

April 22 - Earth Day

April 28 – May 5 - Soil Stewardship Week

♦ Kansas Highlights is issued BI-monthly. For more information on how to submit a story, comments about Kansas Highlights, contact Sheila Forrester, NRCS Visual Information Specialist, at 785-823-4572, or at sheila.forrester@ks.nrcs.usda.gov.

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