

Boone County Conservation District

Boone County Conservation District captures Kentucky East Region Conservation District of the Year & Kentucky State Forestry Awards

The Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) board of supervisors and staff were honored by being selected by the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) as the Kentucky East Region Conservation District of the Year. The District received the award, which is sponsored by the KACD and the Tennessee Valley Authority, during the KACD Convention in Louisville in July 2005. The award is based on the Conservation District's Annual Plan of Work, Long Range Plan, and the activities and programs it conducts throughout the year. Their specific achievements included a forestry field day, co-administering a grant and providing technical assistance to work with horse pasture and waste management, administering a grant and providing technical assistance to help Big Bone Lick State Park with water resource concerns, scholarship program, conservation education grant program, and administration of and providing technical assistance for the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share program, Kentucky Agricultural District program, and other state and federal programs.

The BCCD was also the recipient of the Kentucky Forestry Award. Boone County includes approximately 80,000 acres of forest. Since Boone County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state, forest management is of particular importance to soil conservation, water quality and overall quality of life. The BCCD works closely with the Kentucky Division of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources in the conservation planning process. A forestry field day last year attracted over 50 local landowners. The district also makes equipment and supplies, such as tree planting bars, tree bags, sprayers, native seed broadcasters and other equipment available to landowners to aid them in management of their forests.

Native Grass No-Till Seeder - The Boone County Conservation District, with financial assistance from the Ky. Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Division of Conservation, and Northern Ky. Chapter of Quail Unlimited, purchased a no-till seed drill with a native grass box to rent to landowners in Northern Kentucky. Establishing native grassland species is difficult due to the fluffy nature of the seed and requires specialized equipment to plant it in large areas. Native grasses and native grass mixtures that include forbs need to be planted between April 15 and June 30. Nine people used the seeder this year to plant 63.3 acres of warm season grasses.

Big Bone Lick State Park –A grant through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share program was used to establish a new 30-acre pasture for the resident bison herd. Twenty acres of the pasture were renovated with cool season grasses and nine acres were seeded with native warm season grasses to provide improved forage. Water systems were added to complete a rotational grazing system. Also under the grant, a 2.5 acre wildlife viewing area was renovated. Signs describing both projects will be erected in 2006.

Central Park Wildlife Viewing Area - A demonstration area was renovated this year to include of native shrubs, grasses and forbs to improve plant biodiversity, attract a variety of wildlife species and demonstrate the aesthetic and ecological value of a native grassland landscape. The district provided technical assistance and funds for educational signage, which will be installed later in 2006.

BOONE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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www.boonecountyky.org
(Go to Regional Links)

The board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of every month at the District office.

Mission

The mission of the Boone County Conservation District is to conserve and promote the best use of natural resources of Boone County by encouraging the use of Best Management Practices, district involvement with land use policy decisions, public awareness and education to maintain and improve the quality of life in Boone County. (1996)

Board: Edward D. Moore, Chairman; Jimmy Walton, Vice Chairman; Debra Franks, Secretary-Treasurer; Jan Garbett; Mike Keller; Monty Taylor; and, Billy Rehkamp Jr.

District Staff: Sally Aaron, Administrative Secretary; Kristin Scott, Agriculture Conservation Technician; Mark Jacobs, Conservation Technician; and, Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator.

**NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE:**
Ed Thompson, District Conservationist

KY. DIV. OF CONSERVATION:
Linda Hunter, Field Representative

All programs and services of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and conservation districts are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.

Conservation Field Days Grant - The District, in cooperation with the Kenton and Campbell Conservation Districts, received a grant for a series of field days to address forestry practices, warm season grasses for forage, and the federal Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). A Summer Forage Field Day at Big Bone Lick State Park in August attracted 28 people and 45 people attended a Conservation Program Field Day in September at Split Rock Conservation Park. As a part of this grant, a forestry field day was held in October 2004 and a Farm Program Open House was held in January 2005. The grant was through the Kentucky Division of Conservation Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund.

Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program– One application was funded by the state in 2005 for a total of \$ 7,047 to help install Best Management Practices for improvement of water quality.

Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act - A total of 670 water quality plan certifications have been received by the conservation district. **An Agriculture Water Quality Committee** formed by the Boone, Campbell, and Kenton County Conservation Districts meets regularly to help local producers comply with this law enacted in 1994. The committee includes representatives from over ten agencies and organizations involved in agriculture and water quality. In December, the committee visited the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky International Airport to tour the de-icing/storm water system. In July, Ken Palisin, Northern Kentucky Area Development District, made a presentation on the scattered-site sewage project.

Farmer Appreciation Dinner - The district held their sixth Farmer Appreciation Dinner in November 2005 with 150 present. Music was provided by the The Rabbit Hash String Band, and Bruce Ferguson of Union was honored as the 2005 Cooperator of the Year. The district celebrated their 2005 Conservation District of the Year and Forestry Awards with a special presentation.

Dead Livestock Disposal Program - The District received a matching grant from the Kentucky Soil and Water Quality Cost Share program to assist county landowners with proper disposal of dead livestock. Since the program started in January 2000, 157 producers have benefited from the program. The grant also assists the county animal shelter with proper disposal of companion pet carcasses.

Agricultural Districts - There are 13 agricultural districts in Boone County, comprised of 7,768.9 acres of land owned by 77 families. This voluntary state program provides some protection for farmers who

wish to keep their land in agricultural production. District Administrative Secretary Sally Aaron coordinated the recertification of Agricultural District 008-12. That district now has 495 acres with six landowners. Aaron started the recertification process for districts 008-04, 008-05, 008-06, and 008-10, which are due in July 2006.

Technical Assistance – Technical assistance is provided to Boone County through Ed Thompson, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, our federal partner, and Boone County Conservation District Staff Mark Jacobs and Kristin Scott. Additional information and assistance is also provided by district staff Sally Aaron and Mary Kathryn Dickerson. In 2005 – 2006, they provided assistance to over 1,100 Boone County landowners concerning conservation planning, rotational grazing systems, wildlife habitat improvement, forestry practices, animal waste control, nutrient management, storm water runoff, drainage, erosion and sediment control, and other conservation considerations.

Conservation Progress:

Conservation Plans for Cropland Written	553 acres
Conservation Plans for Grazing Land Written	1,859 acres
Practices for Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat	591 acres
Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	379 acres
Reduction in the Acreage of Cropland Soils Damaged by Erosion	662 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	1,233 Tons
Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced	1 acre

Water Quality - Board members continue to gather water quality data to improve water quality in the county. Board members Jimmy Walton, Debra Franks, and Billy Rehkamp, along with staff Kristin Scott, Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson participate in the Licking River Watershed Watch monitoring program. As of June 2006, they have adopted 13 sites around the county to monitor at least three times each year. Habitat and macroinvertebrate assessments were also started this year.

Other projects and assistance:

- Board members Ed Moore and Jimmy Walton represent the Conservation District on the **County Agriculture Development Board**, which administers Phase I Tobacco Settlement Funds in the county.
- Agriculture Conservation Technician Kristin Scott

represented the board at a regional meeting of the Natural Resources Conservation Service **Environmental Quality Incentives Program** work group to develop criteria for local practices.

- Debra Franks represented the District at a public hearing on the **2005 Comprehensive Plan Review**. The District had offered comments and information for inclusion in the plan update.
- Conservation Technician Mark Jacobs represents the board on the **No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Committee**.
- District Coordinator Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the board on the **No. Ky. Area Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee**.

Education and Outreach

Workshops and Programs –

- **In the Midst of Growth** – The Conservation district helped sponsor a bus tour of Boone County in September to highlight historic and natural treasure of our community. The tour was organized by seven non-profit boards in Boone County who are “committed to growing to the future, while preserving the past.” Staff members Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson made presentations for the tour.
- **Big Bone Lick State Park Discovery Days** – The exhibit this year featured “Food From the Forest” and included native plants that were used as food in earlier days. District programs were also highlighted. Over 500 people visited the booth during the festival. Board members and staff from the Boone, Campbell and Kenton Districts helped with the exhibit.
- Board members hosted a booth at the **Boone County 4-H and Utopia Fair**. The booth featured Best Management Practices for equine operations, and native warm season grasses and other pasture improvement methods.
- District board members and staff participated in the “Spring Fling” **Arboretum Day** in June at Central Park. The display featured native plants and information on how to rid your property of invasive, exotic plants.
- Agriculture Conservation Technician Kristin Scott completed the Cooperative Extension Service **Master Grazer Program**. She also made a presentation to the group on conservation systems and programs.
- Conservation Technician Mark Jacobs completed a **Kentucky Woodland Owner’s Course**, a series of four field days and workshops and attended the **Ohio River Valley Woodland & Wildlife Workshop**.
- District Coordinator Mary Kathryn Dickerson made a presentation to the **Northern Kentucky Flyfishers** regarding the Gunpowder Creek

Watershed. The Flyfishers hope to undertake a project to help restore and protect the creek for fishing.

- Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson hosted a booth at the Northern Kentucky University **Earth Day** celebration in April, in cooperation with the Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts. They also made presentations for over 300 students during the **Sanitation District #1 Waterific** event in May.
- Jacobs presented programs for **Career Days** with Cincinnati Technical College and St. Henry High School. He also made a presentation for the Quail Unlimited Field Day.
- Mark Jacobs, Kristin Scott, and Mary Kathryn Dickerson assisted the Campbell County Conservation District with a **Conservation Field Day**, which was attended by over 70 people from Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties.
- The District supports the **NKU Environmental Education Alliance** and the **Environmental Education in No. Ky. Resource Guide** is available through the district office.

Education Grants - The Boone County Conservation District has been awarding grants to county educational institutions since 1994. Grant applications are accepted from October through January each year. This year, Split Rock Conservation Park received \$861 grant for their “Wetland Ecology Program” that will be used to help purchase aquatic nets, field guides and microscopes. Gabe Summe accepted the award at the district’s dinner in March.

No applications were received this year for the **Boone County Conservation District Robert W. Ellis Scholarship**.

Writing and Art Contests – *Kentucky’s Water – My Responsibility* was the topic for this year’s Conservation Contests. The theme focused on Kentucky’s water resources – their variety and importance, and ways that all citizens can help protect, restore and conserve Kentucky’s waterways and watersheds. This year there were 289 entries from five schools in the art contest and 217 entries from five schools in the writing contest. The District sponsors an awards banquet each year for contest winners, grant recipients, and other awards.

Newsletters - The quarterly newsletter, *Landscapes*, reaches over 2,500 Boone County households.

Web Site - The Conservation District web site is provided through the Boone County Fiscal Court at www.boonecountyky.org/bccd/default.aspx

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC) The annual meeting was held at Grailville, Ohio, in March with about 65 people attending. Farmland protection and water quality trading were featured topics. Staff Kristin Scott, Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended. Board member Debra Franks attended the conservation tour in September 2005 sponsored by the Clermont County Conservation District in Ohio.

The Ky. Association of Conservation District's (KACD) - The state convention was held in conjunction with the Southeast Region meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts in Louisville in July 2005. Debra Franks and staff Kristin Scott, Mark Jacobs, Sally Aaron, and Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended. Board members Mike Keller, Jimmy Walton, and Jan Garbett also attended the convention awards program where the District received the Conservation District of the Year and Forestry Awards. Debra, Jan, and Mary Kathryn attended a September meeting of the Boone County Fiscal Court to show the awards presentation and thank the Fiscal Court for their continued support of conservation in Boone County.

Jimmy Walton and Mark Jacobs attended the KACD Area 5 meeting in Campbell County, where the District presented a resolution to have the KACD and the Ky. Division of Conservation work with members of the Kentucky General Assembly to study ways to implement and enforce uniform requirements across the

state for sediment and erosion control. The resolution also addressed storm water runoff quality and quantity, and mitigation of damages to private property resulting from storm water and sediment. The resolution was forwarded to the state assembly in July 2006 for consideration.

Board Membership - Board member Sarah Drew Griffith resigned her position in February. The board appointed Monty Taylor of Union to fill the remainder of the unexpired term. The appointment was sent to the Kentucky Soil and Water Commission for action.

Legislative Action - Edward Moore serves as the district's legislative liaison.

The Executive Committee of the Boone County Conservation District meets regularly with those of the Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts. The boards work together on conservation programs and employee policy.

District Funding - The District received a grant from the Ky. Division of Conservation that included funding for the Conservation Technician position. Other revenue is provided to the District through the Boone County Fiscal Court and the Kentucky Division of Conservation. A complete financial report is available at the District office.