

**BOONE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

6028 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005
859-586-7903
FAX: 859-586-7683

www.boonecountyky.org/bccd/default.aspx

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:

Jim Walton, Chairman;
Rob Hall, Vice Chairman;
Monty Taylor, Secretary-Treasurer;
Rose Bungler, Tom Comte,
Debra W. Messer and Rick Soper.

District Staff:

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

**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.



Annual Report July 1, 2009- June 30, 2010

Boone County Conservation District

Farmland Protection Initiative

The Conservation District received a \$7,500 grant through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program in 2008 and another grant for \$7,500 in 2009 to work on an initiative to protect farmland in Boone County. The initiative will include an Agricultural Industry Profile, Cost of Community Study, and a survey of agricultural landowners in Boone County. A steering committee for the project was formed to help the district pursue this work. Results of the studies are to be released in September.

Gunpowder Creek Initiative

The Boone County Conservation District has been awarded an \$835,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Kentucky Division of Water, Nonpoint Source Section, in accordance with the Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987, §319(h). This grant will enable the Conservation District and partners to develop a watershed-based plan to address non-point source pollution and related issues in the watershed. A number of groups and agencies, including the Boone County Fiscal Court, the cities of Florence and Union, the Boone County Planning Commission, Sanitation District No. 1, Northern Kentucky District Health Department, and Licking River Watershed Watch, have stepped forward to serve on a steering committee under the leadership of the Boone County Conservation District. The steering committee, operating as the Gunpowder Creek Watershed Initiative, plans to complete its work within four years.

Woolper Creek Initiative

The district submitted an initial interest letter for a project to the Division of Water for the development of a watershed based plan for Woolper Creek and it has been selected for further development of a project application.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is provided to Boone County through Ed L. Thompson Jr., District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), our federal partner, and Boone County Conservation District staff. In 2009-2010, assistance was provided to over 448 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 needs. The NRCS, Conservation District, and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and Kentucky Division of Forestry work together to assist landowners with programs under the federal Farm Bill.

Landowners have several years to complete practices and are required to maintain the practices for up to 20 years, depending on the program requirements.

Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program

Applications have not yet been accepted for the 2010 Cost Share Program, a program that helps landowners install Best Management Practices for improvement of water quality, reduction of soil erosion and better management of natural resources in agricultural operations.

Federal Farm Bill Programs

Staff currently provides ongoing assistance for nine (9) landowners who are implementing or have completed **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** contracts under the 2002 (Farm Bill). EQIP helped fund \$254,665.95 in conservation practices on 2,685.5 acres of land. EQIP goals include the reduction of soil erosion and non-point source pollution, as well as promotion of at-risk species wildlife habitat conservation. Under the 2008 Farm Bill, twenty-one (21) contracts have been obligated for \$374,161.12 on 12,481.2 acres.

One landowner is currently implementing practices under the **Conservation Security Program** on 595 acres, representing a Farm Bill investment of \$91,302.

Seven (7) landowners are currently implementing practices under the 2002 Farm Bill **Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP)** that will affect 661.5 acres of land and represents an investment of \$49,937.41. Under the 2008 Farm Bill, eight (8) contracts have been obligated for \$55,275 on 586 acres.

Conservation Progress June 1, 2010

- *Conservation Plans Written* – 2,400 acres
- *Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality* – 1,312 acres
- *Land with conservation applied to improve water quality* – 1,599 acres
- *Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base* – 278 acres
- *Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality* – 47 acres

Agricultural Districts

There are 16 agricultural districts in Boone County, comprised of 8,179 acres of land owned by 80 families. This voluntary state program provides some protection for farmers who wish to keep their land in agricultural production.

Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act

A total of 534 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 as needed 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

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, 319 producers have benefited from the program. The grant also assists the county animal shelter with proper disposal of companion pet carcasses.

Farm Dump Removal Grant

The Conservation District received a \$7,500 grant through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program to assist farmers in cleaning up old dumps on their farms. Four applications were received and three (3) met the eligibility requirements and were approved. The grant has been extended into 2010-2011 and applications will be solicited for the remaining funds in the grant.

Forestland Conservation Grant and Tree Planter

The Conservation District purchased a **tree planter** through a grant from the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program last year. As a part of this grant, the District was able to assist Boone County Fiscal Court and Boone County Parks and Recreation with tree plantings in Boone Woods Park, England-Idlewild Park, Erpenbeck Park along the South Fork of Gunpowder Creek and at the Boone Conservancy Mine Site. The tree planter is available for rent to county residents for \$40 a day. To date over 9,460 trees have been planted on 40 acres.

Land Restoration Project

Staff Mark Jacobs continues to monitor the work to restore and reclaim land owned by the Boone Conservancy in

Bellevue. The land was a former gravel mine site which presents special conservation challenges. Work proceeded on the site with a grant through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program and was completed this fiscal year. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources assisted with a fish stocking program this year in anticipation of opening the site for public fishing in the future.

Native Grass No-Till Seeder

In 2006, 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. To date 46 landowners have used the seeder to plant over 987.40 acres of native grasses.

Water Quality

Board members continue to gather water quality data to improve water quality in the county. Board members Jim Walton and Debra W. Messer, along with staff Sally Aaron, Kristin Scott, Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson participate in the **Licking River Watershed Watch** (LRWW) monitoring program. They monitor 12 sites around the county at least three times each year. Habitat and macro invertebrate assessments were continued this year. The district also hosted several training sessions for the LRWW. Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson completed habitat assessments for 6 testing sites.

Staff has responded to concerns from county landowners about the water quality of their ponds, lakes and retention basins. Staff has been working with Northern Kentucky University to help identify problems with algae and fish kills.

District staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Kristin Scott are assisting the **Licking River Watershed Watch** with compilation of existing data for monitoring sites in the three counties. Work has started on sites in Boone County in the Gunpowder Creek Watershed, a targeted watershed for a focus study on bacteriological contamination. The focus study will be conducted next year.

Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and board member Tom Comte attended the **Licking River Watershed Watch Annual Conference and BMP Meeting** at Blue Licks State Park in February.

Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Mark Jacobs attended a two day **Workshop with ORSANCO/NKU River Currents** workshop. This workshop covered sampling methods and identification of fish and macro invertebrates, chemical tests, habitat assessment, and algae identification. Mark Jacobs gave a presentation on the conservation district and participated on a panel.

Conservation Dinner

The Conservation Dinner was not held in 2009 due to plans to have an event in September 2010 to announce the results of the Boone Farm Initiative surveys and studies.

Other Assistance

- Board members Jim Walton and Debra W. Messer represent the Boone County Conservation District on the **County Agriculture Development Board**, which administers Phase I Tobacco Settlement Funds in the county.
- Conservation Technician Mark Jacobs represents the board on the **Boone County Urban Forest Commission** and the **No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Committee**. Mark assisted the **Boone County Arboretum** with a volunteer work day in the native plant garden area. Mary Kathryn Dickerson assisted with an invasive species control workday.
- Mark Jacobs attends **Boone County Planning and Zoning Site Review** meetings, conducts site visits as needed, and assists the board in preparing comments on site reviews.
- Tom Comte and Mark Jacobs represented the District on the **Boone County Greenways Task Force**. Work continues on riparian buffer issues. Comments on the Boone County Subdivision Regulations were submitted to the Planning Commission.
- Mark Jacobs assisted the **Northern Kentucky University Center for Applied Ecology** with site visits to potential stream restoration areas, including Fowler Fork near the City of Union and the East Bend area.
- Tom Comte represents the district on the **Sanitation District #1 Watershed Council**, which was formed to assist SD #1 in formulating policies and procedures to assess and implement practices to improve storm water quality.

- **Reforest Northern Kentucky:** “Can You Dig It?” The district hosted this project of the No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Council held in Boone County at Ryle High School in March. The Boone County Conservation District furnished planting equipment, and staff Mark Jacobs and Kristin Scott assisted with event arrangements and the planting of 2500 trees. Over 210 volunteers participated in the event.
- **Kentucky Wild Game Dinner:** The district participated with displays in this annual event intended to be a time for county conservation district officials to meet with their legislators while they are in session in Frankfort. Over 350 people attended the event, which included displays and exhibits from participating agencies and conservation districts.
- **Natural Areas Management** – The Conservation District began discussion with the Boone County Fiscal Court about assisting with the management of areas that were purchased with funds from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board.
- **Invasive species** were the topic of a segment of **Trash TV**, which is hosted by Becky Haltermon of the Boone County Solid Waste Department. Mary Kathryn Dickerson co-hosted a segment for this show, which was filmed in cooperation with the **Boone County Arboretum**.
- **Invasive Species Project with Northern Kentucky University** students will conduct the survey of local farmers about invasive species knowledge. The results will help the districts better understand the extent of the problem and what types of educational programs and resources/tools are needed to assist landowners.

Education and Outreach

A Community Information Fair was held at the Boone County Farmers Market in September. The district had an exhibit to highlight the farmland initiative. Tom Comte attended the district booth.

Big Bone Lick State Park Discovery Days - The exhibit this year was Water and Watersheds in Kentucky. District programs were also highlighted. There were puzzles and land forms for the school children to investigate. Over 240 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 theme for the booth was “Watersheds in Boone County”.

The Boone County Conservation District assisted the Natural Resources Conservation Service in hosting a **Soils Quality Workshop** at Farm Haven in Union, operated by Bruce and Stuart Ferguson. Topics included soil structure, texture, compaction, nutrients and organic matter. Ed Thompson Jr., District Conservationist, John Graham, State Soil Quality Coordinator and Sid Brantley, State Grazing Specialist were instructors. 13 people attended.

District Staff hosted a booth for **Earth Day** events at Northern Kentucky University along with Ed Thompson Jr., NRCS District Conservationist.

Education Grants - The Boone County Conservation District has been awarding grants to county educational institutions since 1994. Grant applications are normally accepted from October through January each year. No applications were approved this year.

Boone County Conservation District Robert W. Ellis Scholarship for \$1,000 was awarded this year to Kenton Sena who attends Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Writing and Art Contests – ***WATER: Every drop counts!*** was the topic for this school year’s Conservation Contests. The theme focused how water is used, the water cycle and other aspects of water. In Boone County, the county winner in both the art and writing received a \$25 check from the Kentucky Farm Bureau and a plaque from the Kentucky Division of Conservation. Six (6) schools participated in the contests this year with a total of 90 entries.

The Boone County Conservation District provided two (2) \$75 scholarships for the **Fifth District League of Kentucky Sportsmen** to assist in sending two students from Boone County to Camp Webb. The camp provides a week-long experience to fifth and sixth grade students in wildlife and outdoor recreation and sports.

The District supports the **NKU Environmental Education Alliance** and the **Environmental Education in No. Ky.**

Resource Guide is available through the District office.

Mary Kathryn Dickerson, Mark Jacobs and Ed Thompson assisted Kyle Comley, Boone County Extension Service Agent, with information and contacts for an Envirothon team he started at Cooper High School.

Programs for Students - Mary Kathryn Dickerson taught eight (8) classes for 138 students this year through the Sanitation District #1 *Waterific* program

Newsletters - The quarterly newsletter, *Landscapes*, reaches over 2,200 Boone County households.

Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson hosted 17 students and 1 instructor from **Northern Kentucky University Environmental Careers Class** on a site visit to learn about careers in conservation.

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

New Three County Web Site – www.nkcd.org

District Operations and Involvement

The **Kentucky Association of Conservation District's (KACD)** state convention was held in Lexington in July 2009. Due to budget constraints no board members or staff attended. Recognition at the state convention was given to Mary Kathryn Dickerson for 20 years of service, to Sally Aaron for 10 years of service and to Kristin Scott for five years of service. Mary Kathryn Dickerson also received the **Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees Shining Star** award.

Board members Tom Comte, Rick Soper and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson, Mark Jacobs and Kristin Scott attended the **Kentucky Association of Conservation District's Area 5 meeting** at the General Butler State Park Convention Center in Carroll County.

Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees Educational Roundtable Workshop – Staff Sally Aaron attended this roundtable to exchange ideas on educational programs with the other 120 county conservation districts in Kentucky.

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)/District Conference Calls are scheduled three times a year. This is a unique opportunity for district leadership to communicate directly with Local, State and National leadership about any issue or concern that their district might have on any conservation issue.

At the monthly district board meetings the board supervisors and staff participate in **10-Minutes Supervisor Training** sponsored by the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission. This training includes supervisors and staff duties and responsibilities to the conservation district.

Legislative Action – Jim Walton serves as the district's legislative liaison.

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Standing Committee– Debra Messer serves as the district's representative to the Research Committee.

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC) The annual meeting was held at the OKI offices in Cincinnati in March. *Environmental Protection & Restoration: How do we measure up?* was the featured topic. Staff Mark Jacobs attended. A conservation tour is hosted each year by a member of the OKI-RCC in October. Warren County, Ohio hosted the 2009 tour. No supervisors or staff attended due to budget constraints. **Boone County** will host the 2010 Annual Conservation Tour in September 2010.

Eagle Resource Conservation & Development (Eagle RC&D) An application has been submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for approval to join the Eagle RC&D to help provide conservation improvements for our environment, economic development activities and upgrading the standard of living for all Boone County citizens.

The Boone, Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts hosted a **Joint Agency meeting** to discuss ways our agencies can better serve clients in our three counties. Representatives from Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry attended. The Division of Fish and Wildlife was unable to attend.

Staff **Mark Jacobs** attended the Division of Water's Construction Stormwater Permitting training.

Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended training on conservation easements, monitoring easements, and baseline documentation.

Staff Mark Jacobs attended pesticides training at the Boone County Extension Center in January.

Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Mark Jacobs attended the first statewide **Invasive Species Conference** in Lexington.

Security and Privacy Act Training – All District staff completed USDA training in basic Security and Privacy Act compliance.

Cooperative agreements with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Kenton and Campbell Conservation Districts were reviewed.

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 shared-employee matters. The district boards worked together this year to complete review of the board hiring and employee policies, making changes as needed.

Land Use and Resources Committee: Jim Walton, Rose Bungler, Rick Soper, Tom Comte, RMonty Taylor. The district is contacted for assistance in the event a landowner is cited for violations under the Bad Actor clause of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (AWQA).

Conservation Education and Public Information Committee: Jim Walton, Debra W. Messer, and Rob Hall.

District Funding - The District received a grant from the Ky. Division of Conservation that included some funding for employees. Other revenue is provided to the District through the Boone County Fiscal Court and the Kentucky Division of Conservation. The District met with Boone County Fiscal Court several times throughout the year to discuss the District budget and items of concern. The District is working on ways to meet the needs of the citizens of Boone County in light of their budget. A complete financial report is available at the District office.