

The Fence Post



Winter 2007

180 Beasley Road
Versailles KY 40383



President's Comments

What a conference! What a wonderful time of year when the SouthEast Conservation District Employee's family gets together. This was a time for the three "R"s, rejoicing, renewing and revitalizing. I hope everyone came to the conference with excitement and left with great anticipation for next year's conference.



It was a wonderful feeling to see all the "first timers" that participated in the SECDEA conference. I challenge every one of you to bring a district employee, supervisor/commissioner with you next year. Start **NOW** making your plans to attend and for your state to take home the *Attendance Award*. Always remember this is **your** conference and the SECDEA board needs your help to make this meeting a success for everyone.

I am truly proud to say that the Benevolence monetary goal was set at \$1,000 and we are 75% of the way to reaching that goal. Anyone can make a donation by sending a check made out to the SECDEA to your new treasurer, Deborah Widner in Alabama.

Barbara Gill and the conference committee did a great job. They were in charge of decorations, registration and putting out fries behind the scenes that no one knew about. Thanks Barb, Megan Dalton, and Vickie Goggins.

South Carolina, thank you for doing a superb job on the "Grazing Table" most commonly known as the break tables. Glenda Lewis, Annette Davis, Diane Curlee and Mary Jane Henderson to you I say "Job well done". Being from South Carolina I had no doubt you women would shine.

Ruan Jones and the Tennessee DEA presented everyone with a well-filled "Goody Bag". Your hard work and dedication was so evident when we explored the bags.

This was election year and SECDEA has a new slate of officers. Treasurer, Debora Widner; Secretary, Martha Newby; President Elect, Mamie Cason and President, yours truly, Ann Spake. I look forward to working with every board member to make SECDEA the best it can be. I welcome the chance to hear your views and ideas you have for your association. Please

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do not hesitate to call or email me with your suggestions, concerns and etc. I am here to serve and represent you, district employees of the leading region. It is our goal to continue to be the leading region and to set the bar higher every time we can. Together we can accomplish mighty and great things.

Past President, Tommy Brooks took us on a three-year journey that led us down the road paved with history. Tommy you challenged us by supporting the largest budget SECDEA has ever had, a closer working relationship with the SE NACD board, creating a job description for board members, wonderful PR and representation excellent to none. I will not try to fill your shoes but I will try to leave my footprints on the SECDEA road of history because I had the best mentor anyone could have. You are not finished yet Mr. Past President. You have three more good years to serve. Tommy, I know how proud you must feel after NCCDEA presented and hosted a wonderful President's Reception for you. They did a great job and congratulations.

I plan to send out a quarterly report to the SECDEA board members so that all of us can stay in the loop. I hope State Presidents will forward my report to all members in their state.

*Ann Spake
President*

Great News and Greater News

Employee Choice Awards

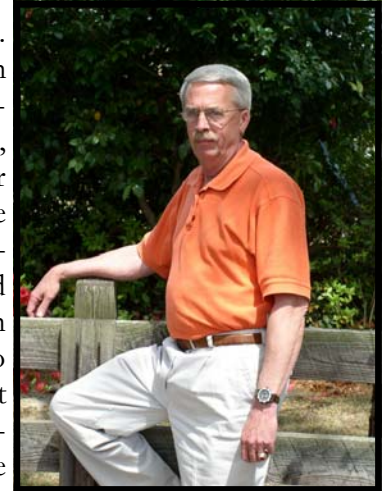
Every year the National Conservation District Employees Association sponsors the Employee Choice Awards program. This program recognizes both a SWCD Employee and Official for their outstanding dedication, service and professionalism to the nation's conservation district programs. State winners are submitted to the regions for regional competition and the regional winners are submitted to NCDEA for national competition.

Now for the great news. The Southeast Region Employee Choice Award winners for 2006 are Martha Newby, District Operations Manager with the Woodford County Conservation District in Versailles, Kentucky and Andy Jackson, District Supervisor with the Suwannee County Soil and Water Conservation District in Live Oak, Florida. Martha and Andy were recognized in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee in November at the SECDEA training conference.

Now for the greater news. **Martha and Andy have also been selected as the national Employee Choice Award winners.** Never before has the SE Region had both national winners in the same year. Both Martha and Andy will receive their awards at the employee luncheon in Los Angeles during the NACD annual meeting. Congratulations to our Southeast and national winners. You have done much to earn this prestigious recognition! Your friends and counterparts across the country, and particularly the Southeast, are extremely proud of you.

Tommy Brooks

Where did the time go? It hardly seems like three years have come and gone. Sure, there were times when I prayed for November 2006 to get here. Like when RC&D budget cuts were looming, SECDEA Treasurer's were resigning due to accepting new jobs, a new state DEA President was elected that I didn't know about, when deadlines were just around the corner and I didn't have my report ready for NCDEA. Like when I was asked to attend and speak at multiple inaugural state DEA workshops and I was as anxious as the state DEA leadership about how successful the workshops would be. Like when I attended my first NCDEA Board meeting as SECDEA Representative and didn't have a clue! Like when I have been asked for advice by some of you and there didn't seem to be a clear cut yes or no answer. Like when our SECDEA logo was unveiled and I wasn't sure how well it would be received or when Maaatha was emailing me asking for my newsletter article and I hadn't finished it—or maybe hadn't even started it yet!! Like when we went to by-law h%\$\$\$. Like the first time I stood behind the podium and addressed you as SECDEA President and was so thankful the podium prevented you from seeing my legs shaking. Like when the next speaker on the program at our Pigeon Forge meeting hasn't arrived 20 minutes prior to being on the program. Like the days at my office when I did SECDEA business all day and my j-o-b was put on hold!!



But there are so many things that have made the past three years seem so short. Like the many friends I have met and lasting friendships that were developed. Like how you never ceased to amaze me at your willingness to accept any task or challenge put in front of you. And produce greater than needed or anticipated results!! Like when you asked me to speak at your state DEA conferences and welcomed and treated me as if I was from your state. Like when I have been telling our counterparts from other regions what we are doing in the South-East and it sounds like I am bragging because we are accomplishing so much-(and maybe I was bragging just a little)! Like your willingness to accept new ideas from the SECDEA Board. Like the enthusiasm you have for and your desire to grow SECDEA. Like the professionalism you display every day. Like the passion you have for conservation and natural resource protection. Like being present at your inaugural DEA training conferences and at the conclusion being able to share along with you the satisfaction of putting on a successful workshop. Like introducing myself to national partner leaders as not just a regional DEA President but the **SECDEA President**. Like being present when a state DEA is organized and being asked to install it's first Board and Officer Team. Like being able to share with you in your joys and your sorrows. Like being asked to bring the mid-year meeting to another state and upon leaving feeling like I was taking away far more than I left behind!

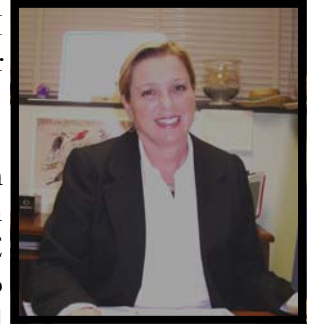
You have made it so easy to represent you. You are the reason SECDEA is looked at as a leader in District Employee involvement and development. You are the reason national partner leaders are so willing to attend our conference and speak to us. **You are the reason the last three years have past by so quickly.** What has been accomplished has been a collective effort. No one person could have done it alone. Continue doing great things and keep the passion!

Thank you for trusting and believing in me. Serving you has been the greatest honor I have ever experienced. I'm not going away, I'm just not going to be making as much noise!! May you all continue to be blessed and I will see you at the next meeting!! Thanks so much for the privilege of serving you.

Deepest respect.....Tommy

Welcome New Officers

I would like to thank you all for your support in the election at Pigeon Forge. I promise to do my best in serving each and everyone in the Southeast Region as your President Elect. This is truly an honor to have the opportunity to represent you all.



For those of you that I haven't had the opportunity to meet here is a bit of information on myself. I work for the Brunswick Soil and Water Conservation District in North Carolina. I have been a district employee for 19 years. I am a charter member of NC DEA. In 1996 I was elected as 2nd Vice President of NC. During that year I also served as Membership Chairperson. In 1997 I was elected to 1st Vice President and served as Chairperson of the Professional District Employee Program. In 1998 I was elected as President and continued on as Past President in 1999.

I remember my first meeting in Pigeon Forge. It was a small group of about a dozen or so folks. WOW has things changed over the past few years. There was over one hundred in attendance this year. The meeting was great!! I really enjoyed seeing everyone and learning from the speakers as well as other District Employees about how we can do a better job when we return to our districts. I always enjoy listening to the "Queen of the Doublewide Trailer". Her accomplishments are an inspiration to all of us. Thank you to everyone that shared with such enthusiasm on how we can accomplish great things if we are determined. I hope that those of you who could not be there this year can start planning to attend next year. I truly feel that if you can make it to one, you will be back!

I look forward to helping this organization with its continued success. I will be listening a lot as I try to get a handle on how I can best serve each of you. Always know that I am only an e-mail, phone call, or letter away from listening to your concerns and wishes.

Mamie Caison

Deborah Widner, Cullman County Soil & Water Conservation District's Administrative Coordinator, has been selected Treasurer for the Southeast Conservation District Employees Association at the Annual Conference in Pigeon Forge Tennessee. Deborah has been active in the SECDEA since her first meeting in 2003.



Deborah is also active in the Alabama Conservation District Employees Association (ACDEA), where she serves as Area 1 Representative and is on several committees. She helped in designing the new ACDEA logo and coordinated the new ACDEA line of merchandise. Deborah also helps in coordinating ACDEA meetings and is the chairperson over the ACDEA Directory.

Deborah was born and raised in Cullman County, Alabama. Deborah met her husband in 1970 and they were married in 1971 and have 3 sons. Deborah's husband operates a 1200 acre row crop farming operation with their middle son. Deborah helped her husband in the farming operation until 1998 when she was hired full time for the Cullman County SWCD. Deborah worked part time for NRCS in 1989 through 1998. Deborah has always been active in conservation in her home life as well as in her work.

Thanks, Deb

Special Projects News

The Southeast Conservation Districts Employee Association Special Projects Committee raised \$1550.00 at the Southeast Regional Association of Conservation Districts Conference, August 27-29, 2006, in Asheville, NC. During this meeting, SECDEA Special Projects Committee was able to hold a live auction at the Land of Sky Bar-B-Que.

Leaving Asheville, NC the Special Projects Committee moved on to Pigeon Forge, TN, November 7-8, 2006, for the SECDEA Annual Conference. While at this conference the Committee held a silent and live auction along with other SECDEA merchandise sales. The Special Projects Committee Members are pleased to announce a grand total of \$2,906.00.

At each auction there is one item selected from the auction items and the money raised from this one item is given to the SECDEA Benevolence Fund.

We want to give special thanks to all the persons who purchased an item at the auction and to each state and organizations that donated an item. A special thanks goes to Phylis Vandevere for allowing the Special Projects Committee the opportunity to have an auction in Asheville to increase the SECDEA funds and the Benevolence fund. Also we want to give a big thank you to the District Employee Associations and Special Project Committee, for making our auctions a success.

Mendel Wade, Special Projects Committee Chair
Crockett County Soil Conservation District Tech
344 South Bells Street
Alamo, TN 38001

731-696-5537 ext. 121 - Phone; 731-696-5784 - Fax; mendel.wade@tn.nacdnet.net

SECDEA Board



Seated L-R: Tommy Brooks, Past President; Ann Spake, President; Mamie Caison, President-Elect; Martha Newby, Secretary; Deborah Widner, Treasurer (not pictured). Standing L-R: Ruan Jones, Tennessee; Annette Davis, South Carolina; Brenda Wigginton, Alabama; Linda Smith, Kentucky; Pam Hawkins, North Carolina; Marianna Lea, Mississippi; Barbara Gill, Florida; and Megen Dalton, Virginia.

Ann Spake, President
Mamie Caison, President-Elect
Martha Newby, Secretary
Deborah Widner, Treasurer
Tommy Brooks, Past President
David Cash, Chaplain
Bryan Evans, Web Editor
Brenda Wigginton, Alabama President
Barbara Gill, Florida President
Linda Smith, Kentucky President
Marianna Lea, Mississippi President
Pam Hawkins, North Carolina President
Annette Davis, South Carolina President
Ruan Jones, Tennessee President
Megen Dalton, Virginia President

Website News

Bryan report that he has most of the files he needs from John Stevenson and to please send all website questions to Bryan (bryan.evans@nc.nacdnet.net). The directories are getting updated and please make sure they are editable. He prefers pdf and/or word format. Bryan also wants you to know that if you see something one day and not the next, John still has access and sometimes files don't synchronize -- this should become less of an issue as all questions and updates are sent to Bryan. Please send updates from your states.

Bryan Evans

A few sights and sounds from SECDEA Conference



Getting ready for the flag ceremony to officially start the conference.

Stephanie Young taught a Water Quality Workshop



Checking out the goody table!!

Meetings Across The SouthEast and Beyond

February 3-7 - NACD Meeting - Los Angeles California

February 25-27 - Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts plus District Employees Association

April 30-May 2 - Alabama State District Employees Workshop - Auburn Alabama

TBA - SECDEA Mid Year Meeting

July 15-16 - Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention - Louisville Kentucky

August 21-23 - North Carolina DEA Workshop - Atlantic Beach North Carolina

August 26-28 - Southeast NACD Meeting - Colonial Williamsburg Virginia

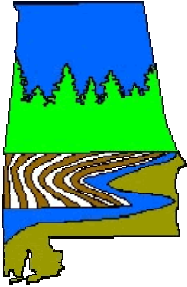
TBA - Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees Annual Convention - Williamsburg Virginia

September 18-20 - Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees Annual Convention - Jabez KY

November 5 - SECDEA Board Meeting - Pigeon Forge Tennessee

November 6-8 - SECDEA Annual Conference - Pigeon Forge Tennessee

News Across the SouthEast



Alabama

Brenda Wigginton, President

It has been a fast and furious year for the District Employees of Alabama. We have accomplished some of our goals and continue to strive to accomplish others. Alabama has 76 District Employees and we had a good year for membership with 69 District Employees, 48 Districts, and 51 Associate Members.

Meetings

The second Alabama Conservation District Employees Association Training Conference was held September 25th and 26th in Guntersville Alabama with 40 District employees attending. Our theme was "Sailing to Perfection" and training included Identify Theft by John Young, Cost Share Program, by Beverly Riker, State Awards Program, by Phyllis McGuire, and CAFO Program by James McAfee. We had representation from all our Conservation Partners. We were very honored to have with us this year Lynn Sprague and Tommy Brooks from North Carolina and they both did an excellent job with their part of the Program. It's always good to have Phylis Vandevere, NACD SE Regional Rep, with us and we appreciate everyone that came and helped make our Conference a huge success. The Conference was ended with a Tour of Cathedral Caverns and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. During our Conference, the concern that some District employees were having a difficult time obtaining enough funds to attend both the ACDEA Conference and the District Employees Workshop put on by the State Committee, was discussed. Therefore, we are planning a joint ACDEA Meeting and DE Workshop April 29th – May 3rd, 2007 in Auburn, AL. We are looking forward to working together to plan a worthwhile workshop for all involved.

Fundraising Activities

Although we had to overcome many obstacles, Alabama DEA is very proud to finally have our Quilt Project completed. The finished product is beautiful and has all 67 Counties of Alabama represented and every District was responsible for getting their square completed. We are now in the process of selling tickets for \$5.00 a piece or 5 for \$20.00 and the Quilt will be raffled off at our AACD meeting on November 15th, 2006. Krysta Harden, CEO for NACD, will be the guest speaker and will be asked to draw the lucky ticket.

Scholarships

ACDEA is very proud to have achieved a goal that we made when we first set up our Scholarship Fund. We now are able to give six \$500.00 Scholarships, one for each Area of the State. This is just one example of what we are able to accomplish when everyone works towards a common goal. We do have the challenge of coming up with successful Special Projects that will make it possible for us to continue giving these Scholarships.

Logo

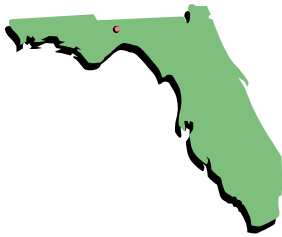
District Employees of Alabama are very proud of our very own logo created by some of our talented folks. Each attendee of our Conference in Guntersville received a nice tote bag, thermal mug and ink pen with our new Logo proudly displayed. We also have buttons, shirts, caps and visors for sale. This is another goal that we were able to achieve this year.

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Awards

This year we had four nominations for our Distinguished Service Award as follows: Area I – Sammy Harris; Area II – Cheryl Hall; Area V – Tamara Dunn; Area VI – Bridget Cain. Sammy Harris was presented a plaque at the ACDEA Conference for the Distinguished Service Award for 2006. The Distinguished Service and Special Recognition Committee have been working on a Judging form for this award as well as a new “Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award” to be incorporated into our Awards Program.



Florida

Barbara Gill, President

The FCDEA held its First Annual Meeting August 12, 2006, in conjunction with the AFCD's 2-day Annual Meeting in Orlando. We had 14 DE's registered (5 last year) and nine DE's attended the one and a half hour working lunch.

The AFCD had several break out sessions that were very informative and all ran over time because of interest & questions from the DE's and Supervisors. The sessions were regarding Supervisor training, sunshine law, how to network with your legislators and the web site.

The DE's conducted the poster contest and the speech contest at this annual meeting. All six of our geographic Areas had a speech contestant.

The DE's conducted our first silent auction – raising \$1,187!

During the working lunch we were glad to spend some time getting to know one another & put a face to the voice we have been talking with and emailing. We had 2 Officers resign and two volunteer for those positions! We decided to schedule DE trainings in the six Areas.

We continue to develop our committees while working on a Directory, cook book fundraiser and focus our Education Committee at the state level for Land Judging and the Envirothon.

We are very excited that David Cummings (a part time DE) will volunteer his expertise on the AFCD website for a drop down menu for the FCDEA (check us out at <http://afcd.us/fcdea.shtml>).

Kentucky

Linda Smith, President

November 1, 2005-October 31, 2006 Annual Report

“Kentucky Shines”



Greetings to everyone from Kentucky! We have had a wonderful and busy year. I am always so surprised and it always warms my heart to see how dedicated the members of KACDE are each time I ask them to help in a project. You each have become a part of my family. When you hurt, I hurt. When you grieve, I grieve. When you are excited, I am excited. I will always be so honored that KACDE has put their trust in me to be their President. I will try daily to live up to that trust. I love you all!!! Can't wait to work with you next year!

KACDE has a record number of members this year. We have seventy three members, five associate members, eight group members – 7 people in each group, and five life-time honorary members. It is great to see us grow each year. There are two hundred fifteen district employees so we still have lots of work to do.

Here are a few of our accomplishments this year:

KACDE 2nd Annual Convention

We had our second annual state convention in Jabez KY in September. Due to budget cuts with sister agencies we had to find new ways of funding this event. We created a brochure and spent letters to all the Conservation Districts and asked them to sponsor us. We had several to step up to the plate and help us out. NRCS assisted us by helping provide trainers for some of the workshops. Danny Blevins, Boyd County Supervisor donated his time to help train us on Parliamentary Procedures.

We had a full schedule with several workshops to accommodate all district employee needs. We had sessions in QuickBooks, Quicken, Watershed Watch, Conservation Planning, Ag in the Classroom, Website Development, and PowerPoint. We had sessions on Soil Art, “Get Moving Ky”, Parliamentary Procedures and Stress Management. We had several guest speakers including Phylis Vandevere, SE NACD Representative, Tommy Brooks, SECDEA President, Steve Coleman, director for the Division of Conservation, Mark Waggoner, acting State Conservationist for NRCS, and Rayette Boone, Department of Ag. Our special speaker this year was Glen Sprague, Chief of District Programs, North Carolina. We had a health fair. I think this made everyone aware of the fact that we need to be more concern with our health. I know the President had to go for a physical after she went home. We have several additional after-hours activities to keep everyone excited. We had 63 in attendance.



KACD Convention Activities

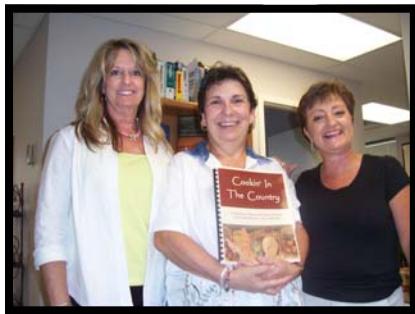
We met in Owensboro KY this year. We were very busy working a booth, set up with KACDE merchandise and materials about the association. We had two fundraisers. They were a basket-making class directed by Martha Newby and the other a tour of the Botanical Gardens. It was a very hot day for

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the tour, but everyone enjoyed the beautiful gardens and meal. For the first time ever, KACDE held a luncheon and the KACD Convention. We paid special tribute to employees for “years of service”, did an annual report by PowerPoint and held our business meeting during which we elected new officers. There were seventy five in attendance.

Fundraisers



Cookbooks - We are so proud to announce that we have completed our “Cookin’ in the Country” Cookbook. This has been a very trying project at times. We started, stopped, and started over. We wanted something we would be proud of and we are so enthusiastic about this cookbook. To save on cost, we made these cookbooks in house. I don’t think we could have had these books done by a printing company and the job be any more professional done. Thanks for all of your hard work!

Some of our other fundraisers were: **Fuzzy Flip Flops** - Everyone went crazy over Stephanie’s flip-flops; **silent auction** at Jabez with many items to pick from to bid on; we designed and made **bracelets, necklaces and jean jewelry** to name a few; KACDE items can be purchased at www.cafepress.com and shipped to your office; we sold **magnetic name tags**; sold **flower bulbs** this fall and will take orders for spring and KACDE has **calendars** that we have made with report due dates. Important events, district employee birthdays and other information that is very useful to each district.

Meetings/Travels

KACDE is excited to be able to say that some of the officers were speakers at two NRCS area meeting this year on behalf of the association. There were also speakers at several of the District’s area meetings.

Pigeon Forge – We went to Pigeon Forge last November 2005 and were very well represented. Kentucky won the attendance award. Martha Newby, Woodford Co. was reelected as SECDEA Secretary. Congratulations Martha. Linda Smith won costume contest award, the theme was Mardi Gras. Jessica Cornett, Fayette Co. not only the “Employee Choice Award” for Kentucky, she also won this award at the SECDEA level. We are so proud of her! Jessica has worked so hard for KACDE and we are so excited for her. Linda did a PowerPoint Presentation of Kentucky’s annual report and presented it at the SECDEA Conference.

Houston Texas - Three KACDE Officers attended the NACD Conference in Houston. Stephanie worked registration, while Linda and Martha worked the NCDEA fundraising booth. They also represented Kentucky at the annual NCDEA board meeting. They attended the NCDEA luncheon and several workshops. We took an outdoor classroom tour of San Jacinto Battleground and a Swamp Restoration. This was my first time to Texas and I did not know it could get so cold there!! Brrr.....

Vicksburg Mississippi - Linda, Stephanie and Martha attended the mid-year SECDEA meeting, it was combined with Mississippi’s annual workshop. We were hosted and welcomed by the best. The board had a very productive meeting and we attended the workshops presented by Mississippi. We brought back some great ideas to use not only for our DEA but also to our Districts. This was a great and very informative meeting and we made many friends.



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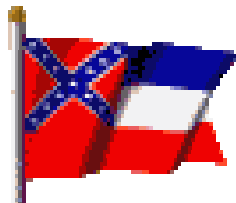
Southern Pine, North Carolina – Linda and Stephanie attended North Carolina’s annual workshop. Stephanie gave a presentation on “Alternate Funding.” She told about available Grants & funding for the educational projects. Linda assisted in the hands-on portion. Birdhouses were made by the participants.

Asheville, North Carolina - Linda, Stephanie and Martha attended the SE NACD at Grove Park Inn. This was a great opportunity to observe partner agencies working together. We helped in the hospitality room, attended meetings and toured the Biltmore. There was a live auction as a fundraiser for the SECDEA. Kentucky donated a quilt made by Linda Smith’s Aunt.

Media

KACDE has monthly business session for the Governing Board. We also have Conference calls the following Tuesday for the members that are not able to attend. We schedule several work days through the year. We also have a business session at the KACD Convention.

We have several ways that we try to keep everyone informed. We have a newsletter that we send out by email. We send emails to each area representative to send to the employees in their area. We have a website www.kacde.org that is kept current. Please check it out.



Mississippi

Marianna Lea, President

Mississippi Officers are: President – Marianna Lea; Vice-President – Sandy Mitchell; 2nd Vice-President – open until next meeting; Secretary – Edith Wallace; Treasurer – Hope Daley; and Past President – Jan Gray.

2006 MCDEA Membership

Back in January, MCDEA voted to change our by-laws and add affiliate members. We now have 75 affiliate members. We have 1 supporting member. To date, Mississippi has 107 district employees working in 82 districts across the state. 63 district employees are members of the MCDEA. This year, MCDEA gave Sammy Soil Video’s to all paying associate members.

Annual Training Conference

MCDEA held their annual district employees training conference on May 9-10 in Vicksburg, MS. The two day conference was in conjunction with the Southeast Conservation District Employees Association’s mid-year Board Meeting. 36 district employees from Mississippi attended this years training conference.

Some of the topics and training sessions were: presentation on Civil Rights; presenting your District to your Board of Supervisors; District Employees Professional Development Certification; how to design a website for your district; reviewed the annual financial report for new employees and for those who had questions; how to do a power point for your annual meeting; and creative ideas on a shoe-string budget.

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We held a “Share Fair” with SECDEA Board Members. This was a *great* opportunity for ALL district employees to come together and learn what other states are doing in their districts. Not only did we receive a lot of great ideas and information to take back to our districts, but we learned what we can do as members for our association and what we can gain from it. The MCDEA was not just about boring meetings. There were also fun things to do while we were in Vicksburg. We had lunch in the park, took a boat ride on the Mississippi River, ate dinner at Cedar Grove Mansion and toured historical homes in Vicksburg. This was a *great* training conference! Not only did we leave excited with new ideas and information; we left with new friendships made!

Fund-raising Accomplishments

We Sold cookbooks, MCDEA shirts, Thank you Cards, Membership Drive, Gun Raffle and Car Tags.

Educational Material Purchased for Districts

We have purchased different Coloring Books including: Sammy Soil; Wendy Water; Farmer Jim and the Three Little Tads; A Sammy Soil Christmas; Sammy Soil DVD/ Videos; MS District Employee Photo Directory. These are now available online for employees to print when needed.

*An update on Sammy Soil....Sammy Soil’s name has been changed and will be published as Sam E. Soil.

Training & Meetings

MCDEA Annual Conference held May 9-10, 2006 in Vicksburg, MS; MACD Annual Winter Meeting - held a District Employees Breakfast and a District Employees Luncheon with guest speakers and MCDEA had someone represent Mississippi at the NCDEA Annual Meeting this year.

Scholarships

MCDEA and the MACD Auxiliary gave one \$500.00 scholarship to a student of someone in our conservation family, who’s interested in enrolling in college in a natural resource field.

Mark Your Calendars NOW!!

November 5, 2007 - Board Meeting

November 6 - 7, 2007 - General Session

SECDEA 9th Annual Conference

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

More Information Coming Soon



North Carolina

Pam Hawkins, President

It's hard to believe that a year has gone by since our last conference here in Pigeon Forge!!!! It's always nice to come back and see old friends and have the chance to make new ones!!!

The NCCDEA has had a very successful year!! I'd like to thank Teresa Hice, our past president for all the hard work she did during her two year term. Our association has benefited greatly from her dedication!!!

We have 260 district employees in NC, of which 157 are members of our association. We also have 163 associate members, for a total of 320 members.

In January of this year our NCASWCD held its 62nd Annual Meeting titled "*A Road Map to Conservation*". This was a busy time for our employees' association. We held a luncheon where we recognized our Professional District Employee Program recipients and our District Employee and District Supervisor of the Year!!! Throughout the conference we took memberships for the new year and sold merchandise and raffle tickets. We also managed to snag a few reluctant people to take their picture for our new picture directory!!! We had an "After Hours" fundraiser where we had time to network with everyone in a more casual atmosphere. Besides all this, we assisted the NCASWCD with the conference registration and the eight standing committee meetings by providing resource people and recorders.

In May we held our Mid-year board meeting. Our agenda was packed full of business, but one of the most memorable moments was when we recognized John Stevenson for all the years that he dedicated to our association. John was there for his last meeting as a district employee. He is now going to school full time and planning to go into the ministry. John didn't stop with NC, he has been a valuable tool for the Southeast also and I am sure it's safe to say if you ever met him you consider him a friend for life.

In August we had our annual District Employees Workshop. The theme this year was "*Unlocking the Best Kept Secret*". We had sessions on Public Relations and Media Outreach, Alternative Funding and Outdoor Learning Centers, Power Point, Leadership Training, Environmental Education and the list goes on. By the way, Stephanie Young from Kentucky was our presenter for the Alternative Funding and Outdoor classrooms – thank you so much Stephanie, I am sure your enthusiasm for what you do rubbed off on some of us!!! The day before the workshop started we held our annual Golf Tournament to raise money for our Benevolence Fund. We had 7 teams and raised approximately \$600. Tommy Brooks was in charge of the tournament and did a great job, thanks Tommy! We also had the Silent & Live Auction which brought in \$1,252.00. And for the first and hopefully not the last time, we held a "District Idol" contest. We had 8 participants competing for the grand title of "District Idol". The performances ranged from singing, dancing, to joke telling!!! Or at least that's supposed to be what they were doing!!! Linda Hash, our new Fundraising Chair, did a great job getting this together!

North Carolina hosted the SENACD meeting in Asheville, on August 28th thru the 30th. This meeting was very well attended and received rave reviews. The conference was full of information and training on conservation issues in the Southeast. The NCCDEA helped the SECDEA with hosting a hospitality breakfast each morning. Even at 7:00 a.m. we had smiling faces serving coffee, sausage biscuits, pastries and fruit to all

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This year we awarded 3 Professional Growth Scholarships, each in the amount of \$500.00. We hope that these district employees take full advantage of this opportunity; we know that it will benefit us all in the future. We also recognized 6 district employees for reaching various certification levels in our Professional District Employee Program. This program was developed to create and enhance the District Employees' pride in their chosen profession and has been very successful in our state.

Also, with the proceeds from our joint Gator Raffle with the NCASWCD, for the first time ever we were able to offer 6, \$300.00 travel scholarships to DEA members to attend training conferences that they otherwise may not have been able to attend. We are very happy to be able to help our own and we know that the information and the experience that they come back with will be well worth it.

I'd like to thank Tommy Brooks for serving as President of the Southeast for the past 3 years. Tommy, we are proud to say you are from NC, thanks for all you have done for us and the Southeast!!!!



South Carolina

Annette Davis, President

There are 37 District Employees that are members and 94 supporting members in South Carolina.

The officers are: President, Annette Davis; Vice President, Alivia Gunter; Secretary Paula Rhodes; Treasurer Nina Warren; Past President Ann Spake; Regional Representative Annette Davis.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting was held at State Association Conference first week of January with 23 in attendance. The Speakers were: NRCS State Conservationist, SCDNR Chief Conservation Districts, NACD SE Region Rep., State Association President, SECDEA President, SE Region Chairperson

SCCDEA 2nd Annual Training Conferences were held in September. Locations are rotated through out the state in order to try to accommodate all SC District Employees. 25 Attended the 2006 Conference held in Bluffton SC.

Network Training Sessions

Quarterly network training sessions are held to help District Employees understand their duties and responsibilities. We also have the South Carolina State Ethics Training and Financial Workshops.

Fundraising Activities

Our fundraising projects are selling of candles, cookbooks, and donations from Conservation Partners.

Communications

Emails, letters, phone calls, bi-monthly board meetings.



Tennessee

Ruan Jones, President

The officers are: Ruan Jones, President; Bobbi Campbell, Vice-President; Christina Sanders, Treasurer, Cindy Plunk; Past President, Bernice Scalf. Coordinators are: Area I - Anna Moore; Area II - Daniel Horne; Area III - Renita Beaty; Area IV - Janice Gilispie; Area V - Rita Turner; Area VI - Vina Winstead; Area VII - Pat Glover; Area VIII - Susan Bates; and Area IX - Tammy James. There are 113 district employees in Tennessee with 93 paid DEA members. We have 95 counties in the state.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting is held each year starting the last Sunday in February and ends on Tuesday night with a Banquet. We have around 50 Conservation District employees to attend the Annual Meeting. We have an Executive Board Meeting at the Annual Meeting and a Business Session for all attending employees and we conduct the business at hand. We also have workshop at the Annual Meeting and we usually have a motivational speaker for this workshop.

Fundraising Activities

Sale of Cookbooks and Bulbs are the main fundraisers and we hold an auction in conjunction with TACD and the Ladies Auxiliary for our scholarships programs. We give 3 employee scholarships each year and we give 3 or 4 children or grandchildren of district employee scholarships each year.

Training and Professional Development

We have a Spring and Fall Workshop that is Funded by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture for training and information-education each year.

Communications

We have a MYFamily Website that we pay the fee to use for information purposes and we also use emails through our Area Coordinators.

Special Projects

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture gives each county that applies monies for Special Projects to put Best Management Practices on the ground.

Local Wildlife Team Ranks Third in the Nation

Idaho, South Carolina, Mississippi.....Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico TENNESSEE. Wow! We placed third in the NATION at the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program contest.



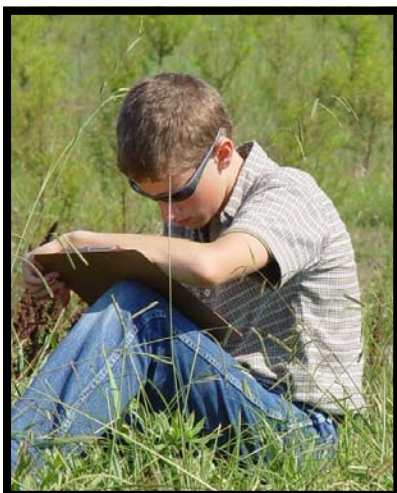
The 4-H Wildlife Judging team from Manchester, TN competed in the National Wildlife Habitat Judging contest that was held outside of Madison, Wisconsin. The team, consisting of Will Rhoads, Jeremy Mills, Jonathan Mills and Pierce Morrison tested their skills against the best in the United States.

After spending months of preparation, the team competed in evaluating a rural wildlife site and selecting appropriate management practices; writing a complete wildlife management plan; evaluating an urban wildlife site and writing a complete wildlife management plan and landscape sketch; interpreting aerial photographs for wildlife species and giving oral reasons; and identifying wildlife foods and the animals that eat those foods.

The team placed third overall in the contest, second in the nation with their Rural Wildlife Management Plan, and third with their Urban Wildlife Management Plan.



Jeremy Mills, ranked as the 4th highest individual in the nation in wildlife foods, 6th in wildlife management practices and ninth in the aerial photograph interpretation and oral reasons. Jonathan Mills ranked 7th in the nation in aerial photograph interpretation and oral reasons.



Barry Rhoads, adult volunteer leader and coach, and Sara Steelman, coach of the team, accompanied the team to the contest.

Sponsors making the trip possible were the Southern Middle TN Quail Unlimited & Dove Chapter # 696; Ducks Unlimited local chapter; the Coffee County Agricultural Extension Service – 4-H Clubs; Coffee County Soil Conservation District; Mike Thompson Ford-Mercury-Mazda; Aerospace Testing Alliance; Orville-Rhoads and Associates, and the State 4-H Office of Tennessee. The team would like to express their appreciation to these sponsors.



Virginia

Megen Dalton, President

Virginia's State District Employee Association is known as the (**VACDE**)-Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees. There are approximately 156 District Employees in State of Virginia. (Soon to be 36 more!). Currently there are 105 Employees Association Members - 100 of them are District Employees & 5 are Associate Members. 6-10 Employees on State Technical Committees.

Virginia's Officers- (Elected during the State's Annual Meeting in December 2005) - President- *Megen Dalton*; 1st Vice President- *Ann Marie Clark*; 2nd Vice President - *Kara Bates*; Secretary - *Shauna Russell*; Treasurer - *Ann Edmonds*; Past President - *Cynthia Hancock*. Both the President and the Vice President hold a term of office of 2 years. The Secretary and the Treasurer both hold office for 4 years.

In addition to a standard slate of executive officers, the VACDE has Area Representatives for each of the 6 areas that the state is broken into. Area Reps act as the liaisons between the Executive Committee and their Area's VACDE members/District Employees. In addition, they assist the Executive Board in carrying out the business of the Association. Area Representatives serve a 2 year term. Areas 1, 3, and 5 are elected in odd years and Areas 2, 4, 6 are elected in even years.

Annual Meeting

Our state Association's Annual Meeting is scheduled for December 3-5, 2006. During the Annual Meeting, the Virginia's Employee's Association will be hosting their annual luncheon. The luncheon is open to everyone, not just VACDE Members. One of our bi-annual business meetings is held during this luncheon. This year during our December business meeting Service Awards will be presented, area reports will be given, and elections for Area Representatives for areas 2, 4, and 6 will take place. (Service awards are given out to VACDE members in recognition of their years of service to Virginia's Conservation Districts.) Awards are given for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of service.) In addition to these activities at Virginia's Annual meeting, our Employees Association will again organize and conduct both a silent and a live auction benefiting Virginia's Conservation District's Education Foundation's Scholarship Fund. Last year's auction brought in over \$5,000.00. The Employees Association considers the State's Annual Meeting as the Employee Association's Annual Meeting as well.

Trainings and Professional Development

Our second bi-annual business meeting is held during our Annual Summer Employees training. This training is traditionally held at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, Virginia. This year's annual training was held August 28-30. There were over 65 employees in attendance. Training topics included Weed & Plant ID, Cameras and Scanning, Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Publisher and Basic Engineering Techniques. There were presenters and speakers from NRCS, the State Association Office, and various other state agencies.

The Executive Board recently completed the updating and revision of our By-Laws. The revised By-Laws were approved at our August Business Meeting.

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Virginia will be hosting the South East NACD Meeting this year. This meeting is scheduled for August 26-28, 2007 and will be held at the Colonial Williamsburg Lodge in Williamsburg, Virginia. Come celebrate Jamestown and America's 400th Anniversary. Keep a watch on the NACD webpage for more details on the meeting.

Virginia has had a considerable increase in the State's Cost-Share funding. This year's Cost-Share Program allocation was approximately \$16 Million. As a result of this flush of cost-share money, the State's General Assembly provided an additional \$2 Million to fund 36 new Conservation Technician Positions to help get the Cost-Share money spent and BMPs on the ground. There will soon be lots of new employees who will need a considerable amount of training.

Communications

We have a link from our State's Conservation District Association's Web Page to our Employee's Association Information. Check out more about Virginia's Association of Conservation District Employees by visiting: <http://www.vaswcd.org/vacde.htm>

We have developed a simple brochure used to promote the Employees Association. This brochure includes: a list of officers and area representatives, a message about who we are, what we do, our goals, and a membership form.

Awards

Our Association sponsors an award entitled the Outstanding Conservation District Professional Award. This award is presented annually to recognize professionalism and dedication of the people behind Virginia's conservation district programs. All nominees must have been employed for three (3) years and be a member of the Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees. Nominations may be submitted by conservation district employees, conservation district boards, state conservation agencies, NRCS, NACD, or other associated conservation professionals. The award is presented to the recipient at the State Association's Annual Meeting each December. The award winner will be presented with a plaque and a check for \$250 from the VACDE.

The Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees is very happy to report that things in the organization continue to improve and strengthen with time and that our membership is at an all time high!

Please feel free to contact any of the SECDEA Board anytime you have a question, suggestion, etc.

Ann Spake, President, ann.spake@sc.nacdnet.net

Mamie Caison, President-Elect, mamie.caison@nc.nacdnet.net

Martha Newby, Secretary/Newsletter Editor, martha.newby@ky.nacdnet.net

Deborah Widner, Treasurer, deborah.widner@al.nacdnet.net

Tommy Brooks, Past President, tommy.brooks@nc.nacdnet.net

David Cash, Chaplain, david.cash@ncmail.net

Bryan Evans, Website Editor, bryan.evans@nc.nacdnet.net

Mendell Wade, Special Projects Chair, mendel.wade@tn.nacdnet.net

Benevolence Committee Report

Brenda Wigginton, Chair

At the SECDEA Board meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, it was approved to establish a Benevolence Fund to aid any currently employed Soil and Water Conservation District employee as needed during times of financial hardships. Both full and part time employees and DEA members and non-DEA members are eligible. A committee was formed including Brenda Wigginton, AL chairperson, Celey Miller, MS and the Treasurer of the SECDEA, which is Deb Widner, AL.

A list of Policies and Procedures has been approved and was handed out at the SECDEA meeting in Pigeon Forge. If you do not have a copy of the Policies and Procedures, please email me at Brenda.wigginton@nacdn.net and I will be glad to send you a copy. The Benevolence Committee will be able to approve two payments for a total of \$500.00 per calendar year. The amount of these payments will be at the discretion of the Committee and an additional payment can be granted of no more than \$300.00 No recipient can receive more than three payments per calendar year. All payments will be kept strictly confidential.

Hardships may be but not limited to – illness, loss of child or spouse or district employee, accident, fire, unemployment of spouse or loss pay due to extreme circumstances. Both full and part time District employees are eligible and you do not have to be a DEA member.

As of now, we have a total of \$757.00 in the Benevolence Fund. At the SE NACD meeting in Asheville, it was decided to take the proceeds from one Auction item from that meeting and the SECDEA meeting in Pigeon Forge and put it in the Benevolence Fund.

Thanks to all who have contributed to our Benevolence Fund and if you would like to make a donation, please contact Deb Widner, SECDEA Treasurer, at 1-256-734-6471. If you have any questions or concerns about the Benevolence Committee, please contact Brenda Wigginton at 1-256-232-4025. Let's all work together to build our Benevolence Fund so we can come to the aid of any in our Conservation family that might be in need.