

## Kenton County Conservation District

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[www.kentoncounty.org](http://www.kentoncounty.org)

Board meets the first  
Wednesday of each month  
at the District office,  
5:00 p.m.

*The Kenton County Conservation District will encourage the protection and management of our county's natural resources, emphasizing the importance of our watersheds, natural environment and agricultural lands. In accordance with state statute, we will actively promote sound land use policies and practices through education and community involvement. (Revised March 2002)*

**District Board of Supervisors:**  
Marc Hult, Chair; James Kreissl,  
Vice Chair; John J. Heist,  
Secretary – Treasurer; Ed  
Bessler; Scott Kimberlin;  
Margaret "Peggy" Kelly; John  
Toebben.

**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 L. Thompson Jr., District  
Conservationist

**Kentucky Division 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.*

# Kenton County Conservation District Annual Report July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

## **Wolsing Park Project – Banklick Creek Grant**

The Conservation District secured a grant through the Kentucky Division of Conservation Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund for a tree planting and native grassland establishment project at Wolsing Park, a property owned and managed by the Kenton Conservancy. Funds will also be used to remove non-native invasive species from the property with the goal of reestablishing native riparian species to protect the water quality in Banklick Creek .

## **Farmland Protection Initiative**

The Kenton County Conservation District continues work on this project, originally funded by a grant from the Kentucky Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Corporation, to explore farmland preservation options for Kenton County.

## **Local Options for Protecting Farmland**

The Kenton, Campbell and Boone County Conservation Districts jointly sponsored a series of meetings in April on farmland protection through Kentucky's Agricultural District Law. The meetings featured information on the Kentucky Agricultural District Program and farmland protection efforts and issues. The meeting in Kenton County included a presentation by Mary Kathryn Dickerson about farmland protection and results of the Kenton County Agriculture and Farmland Futures project. Dan Allen, Kenton County Cooperative Extension Service Agent, led a discussion of county agricultural issues led by Dan Allen. District board chair Marc Hult assisted with the program, during which issues were discussed, including occupational license fees for farmers, bike path concerns, condemnation of land and annexation, the effect of splitting farms on the future of agricultural districts, and young farmer loans.

**Agricultural Districts** - There are six (6) agricultural districts involving 47 landowners with a total of 3,808 acres in Kenton County. This voluntary state program provides some protection for farmers who wish to keep their land in agricultural production.

## **Kenton County Planning and Zoning Commission**

District staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the Conservation District on a task force to develop components of the revised Model Zoning Ordinance. Work on the protection of streams through a riparian buffer zone system has been suspended and the group started studying hillside development issues.

**Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program** - One application was funded by the state in 2008 for a total of \$ 4,612.00 to help install Best Management Practices for improvement of water quality.

**Technical assistance** - Assistance is provided to Kenton County through Ed L. Thompson Jr., District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, our federal partner, and Kenton County Conservation District staff Mark Jacobs and Kristin Scott. Administrative and other support is provided by district staff Sally Aaron and Mary Kathryn Dickerson. In 2007 – 2008, they provided assistance to over 254 Kenton 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.

**Federal Farm Bill Programs** - The staff also currently provides ongoing assistance for three (3) landowners who have completed or are implementing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts initiated in 2002. Landowners are required to maintain the practices for up to ten years. EQIP, a program of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill), helped fund \$48,863 in conservation practices on 295 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.

Three landowners are currently involved in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), another program of the Farm Bill that will affect 96.9 acres of land and represents an investment of \$8,497.44. NRCS and District staff assist the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources with this program.

#### **Conservation Progress**

- *Conservation Plans Written* – 953 acres
- *Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality* – 201 acres
- *Land with conservation applied to improve water quality* – 550 acres
- *Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base* – 374 acres
- *Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality* – 54 acres
- *Certified Nutrient Management Plans written and applied* – 0

**County Agricultural Development Board** - The District is represented on this council by farmers Jeremy Cook and Joe Bergman. This council is responsible for administering funds for the Phase I Tobacco Settlement. The District administered the Forage Improvement program for the County Agricultural Development Board this year. For the 2007 program, ten (10) applications were received and all were funded. To date, five have completed their practices for a total of \$7,272 in Agriculture Development Funds, which must be matched by private funding. Five are pending completion by 30 Sept. The program is was started to assist farmers in diversifying their agricultural operations, rather than relying on tobacco as the main cash crop. Board members Marc Hult, and Scott Kimberlin are on the District's oversight committee.

**Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act** - A total of 312 active water quality plan certifications are on file with 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 Removal Assistance Program** - The District received a matching grant from the Kentucky Division of Conservation to assist landowners with proper disposal of fallen livestock. Since the program started in February 2001, 121 landowners have participated in the program. The grant is also made available to the county animal shelter to assist with direct costs for disposal of companion animal carcasses.

#### **Doe Run Lake and Dam**

- The District board and Natural Resources Conservation Service continue to monitor the maintenance of Doe Run Lake, a flood control structure.
- **Water Quality Monitoring** - The District has been collecting water quality data on Doe Run Lake since 1991 and the streams in Highland Cemetery since 1993. Testing continues at Doe Run Lake. The District also participated in the Great American Secchi Dip-In through Kent State University. This project measures the clarity of lakes across North America. Clarity of the lake has remained fairly constant at 2.5 – 3 feet for the past 11 years.

#### **Farm Dump Removal Grant**

The Conservation District applied for a grant through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program to assist farmers in cleaning up old dumps on their farms. The grant is pending with the Kentucky Soil and Water Commission.

#### **Projects and Partners**

- *Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Local Government*: In response to a request from Senator Damon Thayer, Mary Kathryn Dickerson represented the District before this committee to present the work of local conservation districts. She filled in for Kenton County Conservation District Chair Marc Hult, who was unable to attend. Other speakers were Ky. Division of Conservation Director Steve Coleman and Ward Wilson, chairman of the Jefferson County Conservation District.
- *Kentucky Wild Game Dinner*- The District participated 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 an address by Lieutenant Governor Daniel Mongiardo and displays and exhibits from participating agencies and conservation districts. Those attending were Marc Hult, and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Mark Jacobs.

- *Vision 2015 Regional Parks Initiative* – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the Conservation District on this committee, which is promoting a coordinated approach to open space and recreation planning for the three Northern Kentucky counties.
- Scott Kimberlin serves as the District’s representative to the **Kenton County Cooperative Extension County Committee**.
- Northern Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Council - **Mark Jacobs represents the District on this council**.
- *Reforest Northern Kentucky*: The Districts assisted with this project of the No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Council held in Campbell County. The Kenton County Conservation District furnished planting equipment, and staff assisted on-site with the tree planting and tree give-away to volunteers. Over 300 volunteers planted about 3,000 trees on land surrounding the Campbell County Environmental Education Center and Parkside Conservancy property.
- **Kenton Conservancy** – The District assists the Conservancy with land management issues, as requested.
- District Coordinator Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the board on the **No. Ky. Area Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee**.
- *Sanitation District #1 Watershed Council* – Marc Hult and Jim Kreissl represents the board on this council, formed to assist SD #1 in formulating policies and procedures to assess and implement practices to improve storm water quality.
- The District participated in the *Sanitation District #1 Stormwater Design Forum* at Holmes High School, at their invitation. Following the session, the district participated in interviews with EPA and SD #1 staff regarding issues of local importance to the Districts. Those included that regulations should protect, enhance and improve natural resources and that there is a disconnect with natural resources issues in current planning structures. Those attending were Marc Hult and staff Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson.
- *Sanitation District #1 Green Infrastructure Presentation*- The District Board and staff attended a special meeting to learn more about Sanitation District’s initiatives to use green infrastructure practices to help alleviate and prevent problems with storm water. Those attending were Marc Hult, Jim Kriessl, and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson, Kristin Scott, and Mark Jacobs.
- *Licking River Watershed Watch* - 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.

## Education and Outreach

**Big Bone Lick State Park Discovery Days** - The exhibit this year, “Would Lewis and Clark Find Me Here” that featured common plants of the area and invited visitors to identify them and learn about their history. 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.

**Writing and Art Contests - Kentucky’s Wildlife** was the topic for this school year’s Conservation Contests. The theme focused on Wildlife, Why We Care. The contest was designed to stimulate the thinking of students about the abundance of Kentucky wildlife and the need for conservation practice that will ensure continued abundance. In Kenton County, county and school winners received a certificate of achievement from Division of Conservation, and Golden Guide to Mammals or The Audubon Guide to Mammals book from the Conservation District. Teachers received a The Audubon Guide to Mammals book from the conservation district. Thirteen schools participated in the contests this year. This year there were 603 entries in the Art Contest and 327 entries in the Writing Contest.

**Programs for Students** - Mary Kathryn Dickerson taught classes for 285 students this year through the Sanitation District #1 *Waterific* program.

**Crescent Springs Celebration Exhibit** – The District participated in this celebration with a booth attended by board members Jim Kreissl and Peggy Kelly.

**Go Outside! (And Don’t Come Home “Til the Street Lights Come On!)** - This festival, designed to bring public attention to Doe Run Lake, was held at the Richwood Flea Market, due to slippage of the road leading to the lake.

The District participated with a display attended by board members Jim Kreissl and Peggy Kelly, and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson.

**Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools Program** – The Kentucky Environmental Education Council requested the Conservation Districts serve as the natural resources technical partner for schools in our counties participating in this program. Information and occasional school visit may be required. Kenton County currently has three Green and Healthy Schools, Beechwood, Caywood and Twenhofel. Mary Kathryn Dickerson is serving as the technical contact.

**Education Grants** - The Kenton County Conservation District has been awarding grants to county educational institutions since 1989. Grant applications are accepted from Oct. through Jan. This year, Lloyd High School received \$400 for “Last Farms of Kentucky”, Dixie Heights High School received \$300 for “Growing Plants, Growing Minds” and Ryland Heights Elementary School received \$300 for the Ryland/Toyota Nature Center.

The district supports the **NKU Environmental Education Alliance** and the **Environmental Education in No. Ky. Resource Guide** is available through the District office.

**Kenton County Community Education** - The Conservation District sponsored a hike at Doe Run Lake, led by Board member Peggy Kelly. Over 25 people participated in the program.

**Web Site** - The Conservation District web site is provided through the Kenton County Fiscal Court at [www.kentoncounty.org](http://www.kentoncounty.org).

**Newsletters** - The quarterly newsletter, *Landscapes*, reaches 1,472 Kenton County farmers and other cooperators.

## District Operations and Involvement

The **Ky. Association of Conservation District's (KACD)** state convention was held in Louisville in July 2007. Board Member Marc Hult and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended. Board member Marc Hult and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended the KACD Area 5 meeting in Henry County. Members of the board participated in several conference calls throughout the year to discuss conservation issues.

Marc Hult serves on a statewide KACD committee for Natural Resources, and serves as the Treasurer for the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council.

The Executive Committee of the Kenton County Conservation District meets regularly with those of the Boone and Campbell County Conservation Districts. The boards work together on conservation programs and shared-employee matters. The District Boards worked together this year to review the board hiring and employee policies, making updates and changes as needed.

The Kenton County Conservation District also participated in several joint meetings with the Boone and Campbell Conservation Districts to discuss planning for the future and joint projects and workshops.

### Training

- **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC)** The annual meeting was held at the Boone County Extension Service in March. Ohio River Happenings was the featured topic. Board members Marc Hult and Jim Kreissl attended along with staff Mark Jacobs. A conservation tour is hosted each year by a member of the **OKI-RCC**. Those attending the tour in Hamilton County Ohio, in October 2007 were board member Jack Heist attended along with staff Mark Jacobs.
- Peggy Kelly, Jim Kreissl, Mark Jacobs, Kristin Scott, and Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended a **watershed training** presented by Marc Hult, hydrologist, and Kenton County Conservation District chair. Members of the Boone and Campbell Conservation Districts joined for the training at the Crestview Hills City Building in April.
- District board member Jim Kreissl, along with staff Mark Jacobs and Mary Kathryn Dickerson, attended a **Livable Community Workshop**, sponsored in part by the Northern Kentucky District Health Dept. and Sanitation District #1 at Simon Kenton High School.
- *Conservation Planning Using A Green Infrastructure Approach* – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended this week-long training at the National Conservation Training Center. The course was designed for professionals working in the

fields of land conservation and restoration. She received financial assistance to attend the training from The Conservation Fund and Sanitation District #1.

- *Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees Training* – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended this training to bring back new programs and skills to local staff. Topics included trail building, the Envirothon competition, and programs from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture the Wild Turkey Federation.
- *Soil Quality Training* - District staff Mark Jacobs, Kristin Scott, and Mary Kathryn Dickerson, along with NRCS District Conservationist Ed Thompson, attended this NRCS-sponsored training to develop skills in promoting conservation practices to farmers and other landusers that will enhance soil quality.
- *Security and Privacy Act Training* – All District staff completed USDA training in basic Security and Privacy Act compliance.

**Legislative Action** - The board continues to work with the Kenton County Fiscal Court and their state Senators and Representatives on issues that affect land use and conservation. Marc Hult is the legislative liaison for the board.

**Standing Committees of the District are:**

**Land Use Committee** -Marc Hult, Jack Heist, Peggy Kelly, John Toebben, Scott Kimberlin, James Kreissl. John Toebben is the Agriculture Water Quality Act district contact in event landowner is cited for violations under the Bad Actor clause of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (AWQA).

**Conservation Education and Public Information Committee** - Peggy Kelly, Jack Heist, Ed Bessler, Marc Hult.

**Financial Report** - The District received a direct aid grant from the Kentucky Division of Conservation to help fund a part-time Conservation Technician position. Federal funds were received to assist with personnel costs for the Agriculture Conservation Technician position. Other revenue is provided to the District through the Kenton County Fiscal Court. The District board addressed the Kenton County Fiscal Court regarding budget issues. A complete financial report is available at the District office.