

## Kenton County Conservation District

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

[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; Margaret "Peggy" Kelly, Vice Chair; John J. Heist, Secretary – Treasurer; Ed Bessler; Scott Kimberlin; James Kreissl; John Toebben; Janet Scanlon (through Dec. 2006).

**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, 2006 - June 30, 2007

## Land Management Workshop

The Kenton County Conservation District sponsored a Land Management workshop in September at Middleton-Mills Park in Kenton County, which was attended by a variety of land managers, including those from golf courses, parks, and private recreational lands. The workshop included a tour of the riparian buffer planting above a lake in the park. Other topics for the workshop included resource inventory and planning, non-native invasive plant control, and the economics of conservation. Steve Trauger, noted, "*Parks and recreation play a vital role in creating active and healthy communities.... Parks and public lands also provide groundwater recharge areas, floodplain protection, natural sound barriers, storm water protection for wetlands, reductions in heat island effects, and carbon uptake from abundant trees and vegetation. Parks keep our living environment healthy.*" Speakers included: Ed Thompson, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Mark Jacobs, Kenton County Conservation District; Kristin Scott and Mary Kathryn Dickerson with the Boone, Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts; Katie Emme and Clay Smitson, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Gary Johnson, Kentucky Division of Forestry; and, Steve Trauger, Kenton County Parks and Recreation.

## Riparian Buffer Grant

Work continues on this project at Middleton-Mills Park. A grant through the Kentucky Division of Conservation Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund funded the installation of a demonstration project for riparian buffers. The buffer area was established along a small lake. With help from about twenty volunteers from the community 450 native trees and shrubs were planted at the site in April 2005, and some replanting was done in the fall of 2005. The Kenton County Fiscal Court signed a 10-year maintenance agreement for the area, and Steve Trauger from the Kenton County Parks and Recreation Department provided assistance with the project

## Farmland Protection Initiative

The Kenton County Conservation District continued 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. The district worked with the Kenton County Planning and Zoning Commission to have components of this study included in the Kenton County Comprehensive Plan update. References were given to the study; however, recommendations of the study were not incorporated into the plan.

## Kenton County Planning and Zoning Commission

The Conservation District participated in the update of the Kenton County Comprehensive Plan. The District worked with the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission Staff to have results of the Farmland Study included in the plan. They also worked again to have recommendations of the 2001 Residential Development Roundtables included. Those Roundtables, which included representatives from the planning, business, development, and conservation communities, identified nine practices that would help protect natural resources. To be included for consideration, the practices had to meet the groups' requirements of being allowable under current regulations, cost effective, and easy to accomplish. The recommendations were not included as a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Kenton County Planning and Zoning Commission (cont.)**

District staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the Conservation District on a task force to develop components of the revised Model Zoning Ordinance. Their first task was to work on protection of streams through a riparian buffer zone system. In the future, the group will be studying hillside development issues.

**Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program** - Four applications were funded by the state in 2007 for a total of \$ 26,334.00 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 2006 – 2007, they provided assistance to over 290 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 (3) landowners are currently involved in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), another program of the Farm Bill that will affect 42.2 acres of land and represent an investment of \$ 9,115.94. NRCS and District staff assists the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources with this program.

### **Conservation Progress**

- *Conservation Plans Written* – 1,409 acres
- *Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality* – 367 acres
- *Land with conservation applied to improve water quality* – 756 acres
- *Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to*

- *protect and improve the resource base* – 624 acres
- *Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality* – 47 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 a program for the County Agricultural Development Board, the Agricultural Diversification Program. For the 2006 program six (6) applications were received. All were funded for a total of \$ 13,030.97. The total project amount, including participant's share of the cost, was \$ 35,082.19. The program is intended to assist landowners to diversify their farming operations, rather than rely on tobacco as a main cash crop. Board members Peggy Kelly, Marc Hult, and Scott Kimberlin are on the district's oversight committee. District Administrative Secretary Sally Aaron attended an area-wide training meeting in Owenton in March.

**Agricultural Districts** - There are six (6) agricultural districts involving 48 landowners with a total of 2,860.4 acres in Kenton County. 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 310 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, 85 landowners have participated in the program. Landowners who used certified haulers to dispose of their fallen stock spent over \$1,500 on disposal costs and were reimbursed for \$ 1,038 of those expenses. The grant is also made available to the county animal shelter to assist with direct costs for disposal of companion animal carcasses; however, they did not participate in the program in 2006-2007.

**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 10 years.

**Northern Kentucky Horse Network** - In May 2006, the Kenton County Conservation District, along with the Boone and Campbell Conservation Districts and Cooperative Extension Services of Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties, started meeting with a group of horse farm owners about ways to better manage environmental issues, such as horse manure and over-grazing of pastures. The group identified a number of challenges and opportunities for horse owners and horse farm operators and decided to address them. The Northern Kentucky Horse Network was officially formed in November 2006 with the mission to help horse owners of all interests and ability levels keep up with current equine issues, share information, work to reduce horse mistreatment, promote agri-tourism, and encourage sound farm management.

#### **Projects and Partners**

- Scott Kimberlin was appointed by the District to serve as a member of the **Kenton County Extension Committee**.
- **Northern Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Council** - Mark Jacobs represents the District on this council.
- **Kenton Conservancy** – The District assists the Conservancy with land management issues and has applied for a grant to assist with land improvement at one of their holdings.
- Marc Hult represented the District on a Natural Resources Conservation Service **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** work group to select local practices for the program.
- **Banklick Watershed Council** - Marc Hult works with the Banklick Watershed Council, which issued its first plan this year to identify and solve problems in the watershed.
- District Coordinator Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the board on the **No. Ky. Area Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee**.

## **Education and Outreach**

**Your Place in a Growing Community** - The Boone, Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts jointly sponsored a series of workshops in January, February, March and April to look at resource planning on your property and why what you do on your land

can have a huge impact in the neighborhood. Sessions included Beyond Landscaping; rain barrels and rain gardens; managing invasive species; issues and trends; and the condition of local waterways and watersheds. The last session took participants to Camp Michaels and Boone Woods Park to walk their watersheds. Over 20 people participated in the series. Guest speakers included Heather Mayfield with ORSANCO, Matt Whooten with Sanitation District #1, and Conservation District staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Mark Jacobs.

**Big Bone Lick State Park Discovery Days** - “Would Lewis and Clark have found me here” was the theme for the exhibit this year which 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 Soil – It’s Worth Protecting** was the topic for this school year’s Conservation Contests. The theme focused on soil composition, its importance, and ways that all citizens can help protect, restore, and conserve Kentucky’s soil. In Kenton County, county and school winners received a certificate of achievement from The Courier Journal, and a Life in a Bucket of Soil book from the Conservation District. Teachers received a Life in a Bucket of Soil book from the Conservation District. Students and teachers also received educational materials about soils. These included: Amazing Soil Stories, Search for Soil, Soil Biology, and Conserving Soil. Seventeen schools participated in the contests this year. This year there were 417 entries in the Art Contest and 342 entries in the Writing Contest.

**The World Beneath Your Feet** - These workshops were held to promote the Writing and Art Contests and attracted over 20 teachers, parents and students to help them prepare for the contest. The workshops featured materials and activities about soils.

**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, St. Augustine School in Covington received \$200 to purchase science books for their school library, and Holy Cross Elementary School received \$200 for conservation materials and magazines for their school library.

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

**Programs for Students** - Mark Jacobs and Mary

Kathryn Dickerson taught classes for over 300 individuals this year through the Sanitation District #1 *Waterific* program and Dickerson assisted Beechwood High School teacher Suzy Wera with a field trip for her seventh grade students at **Highland Cemetery** where they studied water and forests.

**Kenton County Community Education** - The Conservation District sponsored two programs this year. Board member Peggy Kelly led a hike and program at Doe Run Lake and Mark Jacobs led a hike and program at Split Rock Conservation Park. Over 35 people participated in the programs.

**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 1,485 Kenton County households.

## District Operations and Involvement

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 employee policy.

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. They also attended a locally-sponsored joint training with the board members and staff of the Boone and Campbell Conservation Districts at the Crestview Hills City Building in January.

**Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC)** - Jack Heist served as Chairman for the organization until March 2007. Marc Hult was elected Treasurer during the annual meeting in March 2007. The annual meeting was held at the OKI Regional Council of Governments in March. Urban forests and watershed protection were the featured topics. Board members Marc Hult and Jack Heist attended along with staff Mark Jacobs. Marc Hult participated on the planning committee for the meeting. A conservation tour is hosted each year by a member of the **OKI-RCC**. Those attending the tour in Dearborn County, Indiana, in September 2006 were staff Kristin Scott and Sally Aaron.

**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.

The **Ky. Association of Conservation District's (KACD)** state convention was held in Owensboro in July 2006. Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended. Mark Jacobs attended the KACD Area 5 meeting in Mason County.

Marc Hult and 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.

### Standing Committees of the District are:

**Land Use Committee** - Marc Hult, Jack Heist, Peggy Kelly, Janet Scanlon (through Dec. 2006), 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.

**Board Elections** - In January 2007, the Kenton County Conservation District welcomed one new board member, James Kreissl of Villa Hills, as a result of the November election. Marc Hult, Covington, and John Heist, Erlanger, were re-elected to the Kenton County District board. Janet Scanlon did not seek re-election.

**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 Water Quality position. Other revenue is provided to the District through the Kenton County Fiscal Court. A complete financial report is available at the District office.