



Boone, Campbell, and Kenton Counties Conservation Districts
October - December 2008 ***VOL. XXIII, NO. 4***

Campbell County Farmland Protection

Equitable property taxes help improve economic viability of farms

Campbell County's 2009 property reassessment is close to being finished and Daniel Braun, Campbell County Property Valuation Administrator, is pleased with the results so far. Farmers, for the most part, are pleased with the effort. The reassessment may mean lowered taxes for some farmers. For over two years, members of the Campbell County Farmland Working Group have been meeting with Braun to help resolve several issues related to valuation of agricultural land and buildings.

Braun spoke to a group in April as a part of a farmland protection program sponsored by the Campbell County Conservation District to explain the reassessment process and obstacles his department faced. "I hope the landowners will continue to work with us and that they understand we are trying to do something good with this reassessment," Braun said. A mathematician and computer scientist by training, Braun added that the process needs to be as scientific as possible.

When agricultural land is assessed, the crop production land is assessed separately from the house. Normally one acre of land is assessed with the house and is generally valued between \$5,000 and \$10,000, depending on the location of the property. Earlier this year, Braun expected house values to remain constant and values on most land were expected to go down.

In February 2008, Property Valuation staff completed mapping of all agricultural parcels in the county. One problem encountered was that the property boundary lines didn't always match up with landowners' understanding of those lines. "In many cases, the land was never surveyed, property was transferred to the highway department, or information was missed somewhere," Braun said. His staff has been working to research and correct these discrepancies.

(Continued on page three.)



Ten Mile Road, Campbell County, Kentucky

Need help with a Farm Dump?

The Boone, Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts have received cost-share grants to provide assistance to landowners in cleaning up dumps on their farms. To participate in this program, the farm must be located in Boone, Campbell, or Kenton County, Kentucky. A farm is defined as 10 or more acres in agricultural or forestry production. This program is offered to help farmers clean up farm dumps in order to comply with the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act. A farm dump is defined by the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection as "any area on a farm used to dispose of household garbage, junk furniture, appliances, farm chemicals and anything else that is no longer useable."

By applying for help under this program, you are showing a good faith effort to clean up the dump.

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Landscapes

Landscapes is a publication of the Boone, Campbell, and Kenton Counties Conservation Districts, Kentucky - members of the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

BOONE CO. CONSERVATION DISTRICT

6028 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005
859-586-7903 (Phone) 859-586-7683 (Fax)
e-mail: sally.aaron@ky.nacdnet.net
<http://www.boonecountky.org/bccd/default.aspx>

James B. Walton, Chairman
Debra Franks, Vice Chairman
Monty Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer
Tom Comte * Rob Hall
Jan Garbett * Billy Rehkamp Jr.
Staff: Sally Aaron, Admin. Secretary
Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator
Mark Jacobs, Conservation Technician
Kristin Scott, Agriculture Conservation Technician

CAMPBELL CO. CONSERVATION DISTRICT

8351 East Main Street, Suite 104
Alexandria, KY 41001
859-635-9587 (Phone)
859-635-0496 (Fax)

e-mail: campbellcd@fuse.net
<http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd>
Dennis Walter, Chairman
Larry Varney, Vice Chairman
Alan Ahrman, Secretary/Treasurer
Gene Dobbs * Ken McCormick
Ron McCormick * Sanford Record
Staff: Linda Grizzell, Admin. Secretary
Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator
Kristin Scott, Agriculture Conservation Technician
Amanda "Mandy" Hils, Conservation Intern

KENTON CO. CONSERVATION DISTRICT

6028 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005
859-586-7903 (Phone) 859-586-7683 (Fax)
e-mail: sally.aaron@ky.nacdnet.net
www.kentoncounty.org
Marc Hult, Chairman
James Kreissl, Vice Chairman
John "Jack" Heist, Secretary/Treasurer
Ed Bessler * Scott Kimberlin
Margaret "Peggy" Kelly * John Toebben
Staff: Sally Aaron, Admin. Secretary
Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator
Mark Jacobs, Conservation Technician
Kristin Scott, Agriculture Conservation Technician

With Assistance From:

United States Department of Agriculture,
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Ed L. Thompson Jr., District Conservationist

Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet
Department for Natural Resources
Division of Conservation

Linda Hunter, Area 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.



Home Front

News from your Conservation District Office

Landscapes – Please let us know if you have a change of address, or if you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list, e-mail: mary.dickerson@ky.nacdnet.net, or call our offices. *Landscapes* is also available in color on our web sites. *Mary Kathryn Dickerson, Editor*

Conservation District Board meetings

Board meetings are open to the public and are held at the conservation district offices and follow this schedule unless otherwise announced.

Boone County – the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. When a Federal holiday falls on the third Monday of the month, the meeting is generally moved to the fourth Monday.

Campbell County – April - October, first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m., and November - March, first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Kenton County – first Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

Conservation District Office Hours

Boone and Kenton counties - 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Campbell County - 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday, Wednesday & Friday.

Campbell Web site back in service

Our apologies for any inconvenience caused by the Campbell County Conservation District web site being off-line for a few weeks. The entire web site was inadvertently deleted by our web-hosting service. District board member and webmaster Larry Varney has been working hard to restore the site and has many features up and running again. Always the optimist, Larry said that he will use this "opportunity" to improve the functionality of the web site. Your comments are always welcome, too!

Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Applications

The application period for the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program has not been announced. It is anticipated that applications will be taken in early 2009. If you think you may be interested in applying, please contact your conservation district office now to set an appointment to update or write your conservation and/or agricultural water quality plan. We will be better able to notify you when cost share opportunities open. Call now.

Take a walk with me!



Boone County Conservation District Vice Chair Debra Franks, right, invites Owen Pelzer, Max Theuerling, and Mindy Meissner, visitors to the Conservation District booth at the Big Bone Lick State Park Salt Festival to investigate the world around them. The display featured plants and animals commonly found in our area.

Photo by Mary Kathryn Dickerson

Property tax

(Continued from page one.)

Every four years the state publishes guidelines for property valuation. Agricultural land is valued according to a ten-year average for cash-rent value. These rental prices also reflect things like fencing, water and other amenities. The cash-rent values are estimated in geographic sectors and Campbell County is lumped in with neighboring Kenton, Boone, Bracken, Pendleton and Gallatin counties. Differences in terrain and crop production capability are not taken into account in this figure. To help with this inequity, agricultural land is further assessed according to its crop production capability. Now, using the U. S. Department of Agriculture soils maps from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Property Valuation staff is able to overlay parcels and soil types. Soil types are divided into capability groupings that define them according to various properties such as degree of slope, texture, structure, land-use capability, degree of erosion, or drainage. Using this information, land can be assessed at its production capability. The more productive soils are assessed at higher rates.

A remaining point of contention with farmers was the assessment of farm buildings. Alan Ahrman, a member of the Campbell County Conservation District Board, said that buildings presented a special challenge for assessors because they can't tell the actual use and condition of a building by just looking at the outside. Using the national guidelines that Property Valuation Administrators are given, the buildings always tend to come out on the high side. "The national guidelines work well for commercial property and newer construction, but not for older buildings," noted Braun.

Farm dump grants

(Continued from page one.)

To process your application, a representative of the conservation district will visit your farm. Your application will not be shared with any other agency or organization.

If funded, participants must pay up to 25% of the cost of cleaning up the dump. Grant funds are limited to \$1,875 and will be made available as a reimbursement once the work is completed. You will be asked to furnish receipts and/or documentation for any cleanup and restoration work on the site, and for fees for proper disposal or recycling of materials from the dump. Projects must be completed by December 31, 2009.

Funding for this program is supplied by a grant from the Kentucky Division of Conservation through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program. It is illegal to dispose of your own or other people's garbage on your own property. Burning dumps is also illegal. Both practices pollute the environment and can cause illness and injury. The only safe and legal way to dispose of garbage is

Farmland Work Group members Ahrman, Don Girton, Don Sorrell and Dennis Walter reached what they think will be a workable solution with Braun for now concerning the buildings. In March 2009, the Campbell County Property Valuation Administration will send out a line item assessment listing all of the buildings on a given parcel. The property owner will be able to address any issues they see with their assessment at this time. A regular notice will still go out in April that will list only the improvements and land value. This is will serve as a second reminder of the assessment of the property to ensure that everyone has ample time and foreknowledge to have issues addressed during the appeals period beginning Monday, May 4, 2009. Braun said that overall the most important thing was for everyone involved to be "satisfied that the process is accurate, fair, and consistent."

"The Farmland Work Group appreciates Daniel's willingness to work with us to achieve equitable assessments on farmland and facilities," said Dennis Walter, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District. "This is just one way that we can help improve the economic viability of Campbell County's farms."

For further information on property assessment, contact the Campbell County Property Valuation Administration, 330 York Street, Newport, Ky., phone 859-292-3871. For information on the Campbell County Farmland Work Group, contact the Campbell County Conservation District at 859-635-9587 or e-mail, campbellcd@fuse.net.

Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator

by hauling it to a permitted waste site. A person engaged in agricultural or forestry production who has failed or refused to comply with agriculture water quality planning and has been deemed a "bad actor" under KRS 224.71-130 shall lose eligibility for further cost share assistance. Therefore, this grant program is not available to landowners who are currently under any type of enforcement action.

Applications will be accepted until March 31, 2009 and will be evaluated as they are received. The program will be available until all grant funds are expended.

To apply, contact your conservation district for an application. Applications are also available on the districts' web sites. Complete the application and return it to your county conservation district office by 5 p.m. on March 31, 2009. If possible, include a photograph of the dump site with your application. Please contact our district staff if you have any questions or need any help with your application.

Apply now for Conservation and Natural Resources College Scholarships

Apply by Jan. 23 for education grants

Students in the fields of natural resource conservation, forestry, soil science, ecology, wildlife science or agriculture should consider applying for scholarships through their conservation district office. The Campbell County Conservation District will award up to three \$1,000 scholarships. Students must be Campbell County residents or a graduate of a Campbell County high school. High school students planning to enter college in the fall of 2009, as well as students currently attending college, are eligible to apply. Previous scholarship recipients are eligible to apply. Applications must be postmarked or returned to the district office by **Fri., Jan. 23, 2009**.

Due to funding restrictions, the Boone County Conservation District has suspended accepting applications for the W. Robert Ellis Conservation Scholarship for college students. The Scholarship has been offered since 1993, and 14 scholarships have been awarded through the program. Kenton County Conservation District does not offer a scholarship.

Several other scholarship opportunities are available for students pursuing careers in agriculture and natural resources. Three \$1000 statewide scholarships are offered by the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Auxiliary. The Conservation

of Natural Resources Scholarship is for students currently enrolled in college; the George Crafton Memorial Scholarship is for high school seniors entering college the next fall; and another is for non-traditional students. The deadline for applications is **Mar. 1, 2009**.

The Bluegrass Soil and Water Conservation Society offers two \$1000 scholarships to students from the Bluegrass region (east and central Kentucky) who are enrolled in a college or university in the same region. The deadline for applications varies.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture is offering scholarships intended to increase the number of students studying agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or other related disciplines at one of the eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions. This program is limited to students starting their first year of college for a bachelor's degree. The deadline for applications is **Feb. 1, 2009**.

For information, contact the Campbell County Conservation District. In Boone and Kenton counties, contact Sally Aaron. Contact information is printed on page two of this newsletter. Information is also available on the districts' web sites.

The Campbell County Conservation District is offering grants to assist schools in fostering learning about conservation and our environment. The district anticipates funding several grants, from \$200 to \$1,000 each.

Grant funds may be used for a variety of projects and materials including:

- materials to enhance an outdoor learning area;
- trees, perennial plants, and seeds when directly related to a program of conservation study (native plants preferred);
- developing trails and trail guidebooks;
- conservation-related library materials;
- reference books;
- water monitoring equipment;
- soils testing equipment.

Applications must be postmarked or delivered to the conservation district office no later than **Fri., Jan. 23, 2009**. The conservation district offers technical assistance as well as financial help. Since the education grant program began in 1989, over sixty grant applications have been funded. For information or grant forms, contact Linda Grizzell at the Campbell County Conservation District or visit <http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd>.

Boone and Kenton suspend education grants

Due to financial constraints, the Boone and Kenton Conservation Districts will not be offering conservation education grants this year for schools and other educational institutions. Both Conservation Districts receive the majority of their funding from the county fiscal courts through county general funds. The Boone County education grant program began in 1993 and has funded 49 projects. In Kenton County, the education grant program began in 1989 and 37 projects have been funded.



Chaplin awarded state-wide conservation scholarship

Ryan Chaplin, Butler, received the Conservation of Natural Resources Scholarship from Mrs. Libby Grimes, Vice President of Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts' Auxiliary during the 2008 Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) convention in Lexington. Ryan is a junior at the University of Kentucky - College of Agriculture pursuing a degree in Agricultural Education. The KACD Auxiliary offers three \$1,000 scholarships each year, which are funded by donations, auctions, and other activities.

Landslide inventory in progress



The Campbell County Conservation District was recently called on to assist landowners in Bellevue with property damage resulting from landslides. The District contacted the Kentucky Geological Survey and Natural Resources Conservation Service for assistance. They visited the sites with the landowners and city officials to investigate causes and look for possible solutions.

Photo by Mary Kathryn Dickerson

A landslide inventory for Kentucky is in progress that will link to the US Geological Survey Landslide Inventory Project with the goal of providing a comprehensive database for landslides. The Kentucky Geological Survey (KGS) recently launched a new landslides web page at <http://www.uky.edu/KGS/geologic Hazards/landslide.htm>. In the future you will be able to visit this site to report landslides as well as research available information. You can also contact the Kentucky Geological Survey in Lexington at 859-257-5500.

According to the KGS, landslides pose a hazard to hundreds of thousands of people in the United States every year. Since the early 1970's, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Kentucky Transportation Center have received reports of approximately 3,000 landslides and over \$2 million is spent each year on repair of these slides. The KGS also notes that there are thousands of slides that aren't related to transportation and probably many more that go unreported. Landslides can cause damage to homes, sewer and water pipes, and other infrastructure and property. Landslides in Kentucky occur most often in the Ohio River Valley, the Knobs, the Outer Bluegrass, and the Eastern Kentucky Coal Field.

Also available is Geologic Maps and Geologic Issues in Kentucky: A Citizen's Guide. This publication explains how geologic maps can be used to address common problems such as landslides, sinkholes, flooding, and the supply and quality of groundwater. The guide is available for \$5 from the KGS Public Information Center and can be ordered by calling (toll free) 1-877-778-7827. It can be downloaded from the KGS Web site, www.uky.edu/KGS/pubs/lop.htm



Testing the Waters

Boone County Conservation District staff Mark Jacobs and Kristin Scott conduct stream habitat assessments on sites monitored by Conservation District board members and staff. Chemical tests include pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, conductivity, and coliform bacteria. Working as a part of the Licking River Watershed Watch, 12 sites around the county are monitored three times each year to establish baseline information for future work.

Grant promotes conservation of public lands

The Campbell County Conservation District invites cities and non-profit community organizations in Campbell County to apply for the Campbell County Conservation Grant for Tree Planting and Urban Forestry Enhancement. The deadline for applications is **Fri., Jan. 23, 2009**. The maximum award through this grant can be up to \$ 3,000, which must be matched with cash or in-kind services or donations. The project must be carried out on publicly owned or controlled land.

The district is offering this grant to help cities and communities establish programs or develop projects to protect and conserve our natural resources while enhancing the aesthetic value of the natural environment. Proposals will be accepted for projects that:

- promote conservation of soil and water resources
- improve and protect open space
- enhance the aesthetic quality of the land
- protect and improve water quality
- provide storm water benefits
- provide wildlife habitat benefits
- promote the use of native plant species
- eradicate exotic, invasive species
- promote urban agricultural initiatives (community gardens, etc.)

The conservation district offers technical assistance as well as financial help. Please contact our staff with any questions you may have.

For information or grant forms, contact Linda Grizzell at the Campbell County Conservation District, or visit <http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd>. Additional contact information is printed on page two.

Campbell County dedicates first natural area

Bright October skies and cool breezes greeted 60 people gathered on October 3, 2008, for the dedication of Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area. The Campbell County Conservation District, the Campbell Conservancy and the Campbell County Fiscal Court joined to present Campbell County's first natural area to the citizens of the county. The 140-acre property, named Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area, is located on Licking Pike near Alexandria.

Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area was recently acquired through the combined efforts of the Campbell County Conservation District, the Campbell Conservancy and the Campbell County Fiscal Court. The property came to the attention of the Campbell Conservancy when it was listed for sale in 2006. The Conservancy pursued private funding to purchase the property, but ultimately turned to the Campbell County Conservation District for assistance. Being a governmental unit of the state, the Conservation District was eligible to apply for, and received, a grant through the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund. In August 2008, the Conservation District purchased 135 acres, and the Campbell Conservancy, with assistance from the Campbell County Fiscal Court, acquired an additional five acres.

According to Dennis Walter, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District, the acquisition was made possible only through the hard work and cooperation of many people. "We had been working closely with the Conservancy for several years when this opportunity arose," said Walter. "This partnership will continue into the future to see that the land is managed in accordance with the requirements of the Heritage Land Conservation Fund, for the benefit of future citizens." The property will be held by the Campbell County Conservation District in perpetuity and is protected by a conservation easement held by the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

"This property is unique in that it has beautiful frontage along the Licking River and two knolls that offer views that are unsurpassed in this area," noted David Peck, Chairman of the Campbell Conservancy. "There is also a wide variety of terrain that will permit a leisurely stroll or a challenging hike," said Peck. "We want people to come and enjoy this land and gain a greater appreciation for Campbell County's natural resources."

W. Horace Brown, a member of the Heritage Land Fund board noted that Heritage Land projects are funded through the sale of nature license plates, some state environmental fines and unmined mineral taxes. "Each nature license plate sold generates \$10 toward the fund," he said. "Purchased from willing sellers, these lands will be preserved in their natural state for present and future generations."

Others whose support was invaluable to the project included Senator Katie Stine, Representative Joe Fischer, Northern

Kentucky University Center for Applied Ecology, Sanitation District #1, Vision 2015, the late Ms. Virginia Macke, Campbell County Planning and Zoning, and citizens who purchase Kentucky Nature License plates. Many also assisted with the dedication including the Campbell County Road Department, Campbell County Community Media, Helen Fehr, Licking Valley Baptist Church - Pastor Stephen Fite and Deacon Dennis Bush, Northern Kentucky Water District, Taft, Stettinius & Hollister LLP, and Buck Seibert with the Campbell County Historical and Genealogical Society.

Fiscal Court Judge Executive Steve Penderly noted the importance of this property to the county. "We see our parks, our agricultural land, and all of our green infrastructure as a Campbell County trademark and a cornerstone of our community. Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area is an important step in enlarging our preservation of green space for future generations."

Walter said that, "Through the grant, and assistance from federal, state and local entities, we will be restoring habitat with tree and native grass plantings and eradication of invasive, exotic plant species." There are also several historically significant sites on the property, including a log cabin, that offer the opportunity for future restoration work. The property will be open in the future for public use, providing an access point for canoes and kayaks, as well as trails for hiking and nature study. He added, "It is our hope that this special place will foster in our citizens a new-found stewardship for the land and waters of our county."

For more information, see the article on page seven, and contact the Campbell County Conservation District and Campbell Conservancy at 859-635-9587.

Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator



From left are David Peck, Chairman of the Campbell Conservancy; W. Horace Brown, Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board member; Dennis Walter, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District; and Campbell County Judge Executive Steve Penderly.



Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area

Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area along Licking Pike in Campbell County is bordered by the Licking River and Ripple Creek, both of which give a unique character to the land. Two knolls, often disappearing in the morning mist, provide outstanding views of the river valley.

The name Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area was chosen to honor the history of this land. In earlier days, the shallow riffle in the Licking River near the community of Hawthorne allowed travelers an easy crossing into present-day Kenton County. The community of Hawthorne has since disappeared, although its name is still printed on county maps. The 1930 census lists a population of 26.

Although history is silent on the origin of the name, Hawthorne was once a thriving community with a school, businesses, and a post office. Records show that James H. Rusk was postmaster in 1880, followed by Thomas Jenkins in 1893, and Theodore Shanks in 1913. Service was discontinued in August 1914 and mail was sent to Alexandria.

Buck Seibert, a resident of Campbell County and member of the Campbell County Historical Society, has family ties to Hawthorne. His father was born in the house on the property and grew up in the community. He recalls family stories of his grandmother being taken to the midwife who lived in the log cabin on the hill when his father was born. Mr. Seibert's great-grandfather ran a blacksmith and wagon shop in the community.

An inn, believed to be known as Six-Mile House, was located just south of the property. Farmers would stay there on their way into Newport and other towns to sell their produce. An old toll gate was located in the community, lending its name to the present day Tollgate Road. We hope that neighbors and members of the community will help us fill in the missing pages in the history of Hawthorne.

Contact the Campbell County Conservation District and Campbell Conservancy at 859-635-9587.

License plate purchases help protect Kentucky's natural areas

The Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF) was established by the 1994 Kentucky Legislature and is administered by a 12-member board. The fund is supported by the state portion of the unmined minerals tax, environmental fines, the \$10 additional fee to purchase a Kentucky Nature License Plate, and interest on the fund's assets. The board's mission is to award funding for the purchase and preservation of selected natural areas in the Commonwealth, to protect rare and en-dangered species and migratory birds, to save threatened areas of natural importance, and to provide natural areas for public use, outdoor recreation and education. The Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board gives special consideration to funding agencies working together to meet these goals. Grants can be awarded to local governments, state colleges and universities, and specified state agencies to acquire and protect areas of natural significance. Land is acquired only from willing sellers.



The Heritage Land Conservation Fund concentrates on areas that are valuable as habitat for wildlife and native plants, especially species in greatest conservation need. Land purchased through the fund may be open to the public for recreation and education and are protected through a conservation easement held by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Since the first awards were made in October 1995, the Heritage Fund has helped protect 31,658 acres of land in 55 counties of the Commonwealth. Remember when you buy a Nature License Plate, the extra \$10 fee helps to protect Kentucky's natural heritage. To learn more about the KHLCF, visit <http://www.dnr.ky.gov/heritageland/>

Boone annual meeting features Acres of Solutions

Jim Walton, Chairman, opened the Boone County Conservation District annual meeting by thanking those attending for their support this past year. He encouraged the group to use the technical assistance and the variety of cost share and grant programs that the district makes available to residents of the county each year.

Thomas Perrin, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist, addressed the group of over 80 Boone County farmers, noting the importance of the district's work in delivering Federal services and conservation programs to the citizens of the county.



Dennis Walter, left, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District, and Jim Walton, right, Chairman of the Boone County Conservation District.

Photo by Mary Kathryn Dickerson

Dennis Walter, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District, presented findings of the Campbell County Farmland Study, focusing on accomplishments of the Farmland Work Group. "Through the study and work group, we have been able to tackle a number of issues affecting our

county's farms and farmers," said Walter. He said that the Work Group had been able to influence the Campbell County Comprehensive Plan update resulting in the inclusion of two goals and objectives aimed at supporting farmers:

- Support the continued economic viability of Campbell County's working farms and agricultural enterprises.
- Provide a viable and continuing strategy for preserving quality farmland.

Walter noted the Work Group's efforts on promotion of locally-produced food, agri-tourism, and changes in how farmland is assessed for property taxes. He closed by saying, "I would encourage you to pursue this for Boone County to help give a voice for the farmers in your county. It is important to have good hard facts to take to county leaders to show the importance of agriculture to the county's economy."

Tom Comte, Boone County Conservation District board member, presented highlights of the past year noting that the District provided technical assistance to over 700 landowners. Through a grant from the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program, a tree planter was purchased to use on projects in the county and rent to landowners. The district also secured grants to pursue land restoration projects at several county parks and the old mine site in Belleview that

is owned by the Boone Conservancy. The district received grants to continue their Dead Livestock Disposal Assistance Program, as well as a grant to implement a farm dump removal grant in 2009. A farmland protection initiative was partially funded by a grant and the district hopes to begin work on that in early 2009. The Gunpowder Creek initiative was launched in late 2008 to focus on improvement of water quality in the watershed. Comte noted that the district incurred a cut in funding from their primary funding source, the Fiscal Court, but truly appreciated the efforts of those who came to Fiscal Court budget hearings to speak on the district's behalf. "Our budget allotment was eventually cut 8 1/3 percent with the prospect of similar cuts coming in each of the next two years," said Comte. "The district is working on ways to meet the needs of the citizens of Boone County in light of these cuts. We need your continued support if we are to continue working on your behalf."

Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator



Perrin named new NRCS State Conservationist

Thomas Perrin, left, became Kentucky's new USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, effective August 31, 2008. With him are Boone, Campbell, Grant and Kenton County NRCS District Conservationist Ed L. Thompson Jr., middle, and David Stipes, right, NRCS Kentucky Area 2 Conservationist, right. Mr. Perrin comes to Kentucky from Ohio where he most recently served as the Assistant State Conservationist for Programs. His career with NRCS spans 30 years in a variety of assignments. He served in the U. S. Naval Reserve - Seabees, and owned a small beef cattle herd. Perrin includes hunting, fishing and shooting sports as his hobbies. He and his wife, Angela, have three children and two grand children. He replaces Mike Hubbs who was named the new Director of Ecological Sciences Division in Washington, D.C. in June. Hubbs held the position of state conservationist for 18 months and had previously, as National Agronomist, served as staff member on the Ecological Sciences Division.

Photo by Mary Kathryn Dickerson

Annual Reports show progress

Complete Annual Reports for the Boone, Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts are available on the districts' web sites or you can request a copy by mail by contacting your conservation district office.

Contact information and web sites are listed on page two. While our reports document progress this past year, our natural resources require continuing stewardship to keep them productive for future generations. These are just a few highlights of our work the past fiscal year, July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008.

While conservation district programs vary from county to county to better meet the needs of local citizens, the mission is the same - to work for the improvement and conservation of the soil, water, and related natural resources.

Conservation Progress	Boone	Campbell	Kenton
Conservation Plans Written (acres)	1,448	636	953
Agriculture Water Quality Certifications on file (number)	672	548	312
Agricultural Districts (number of districts, number of acres)	15 7,769	14 11,792	6 3,808
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality (acres)	131	187	201
Land with conservation applied to improve water quality (acres)	494	957	550
Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base (acres)	434	795	374
Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality (acres)	115	59	54
Federal cost share funds applied by landowners since 2002 (program contracts minimum of five years) (\$)	\$ 439,636.94	\$ 450,435.60	\$ 57,360.44
State cost share funds secured for landowners 2007 - 2008 (\$)	\$ 28,887	\$35,426.14	\$ 4,612.00
Grant funds secured for conservation projects 2006 - 2009 (most projects run several years) (\$)	\$ 33,500	\$ 875,173.70	\$ 22,500
Technical assistance for landowners - number of requests fulfilled	719	276	254

Conservation Calendar

(Continued from back page)

2009 Kentucky Environmental Education Nonformal Certification Program. Enrollment now in progress. Registration fee is \$50. Classes will be held at McConnell Springs in Lexington and meals are included in the registration fee. Contact the Kentucky Environmental Education Council at 800-882-5271 or Michelle.Nevels@ky.gov or visit <http://www.keec.ky.gov/certification.htm>

Land Fertility Management, Tues., Feb. 10, 7:00 p.m. Topics include Efficient use of Commercial Fertilizers and Using Livestock Manures as a Fertilizer Source. Campbell County Environmental Education Center, A. J. Jolly Park. Contact the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Center, 859-572-2600 for information.

Licking River Watershed Watch Annual Meeting. Fri. Feb. 20, 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. and Sat., Feb. 21, 9 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park. Topics and speakers include a summary of 2008 sampling results; What's Shakin in the Basin with Barry Tinning, Tetra Tech

& Lajuanda Haight Maybriar, Licking River Basin Coordinator; Conductivity training - new and two-year recertification; History of the Licking River - Touched by a River, Jim Thaxton; and Strodes Creek Watershed Project, Shanda Pace Cecil, Strodes Creek Conservancy. Registration is free, lunch included. Register online at http://www.lickingriver.org/registration_form.

Pasture Renovation and Fertility Management, Tues., Feb. 24, 7:00 p.m. Campbell County Environmental Education Center, A. J. Jolly Park. Contact the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Center, 859-572-2600 for information.

Ky. Association of Conservation Districts Scholarships. Deadline for applications, Mar. 1. See article on page four.

Land and Water Conservation Fund grant applications deadline March 1. Program provides federal National Park Service funds to acquire land for outdoor recreation, develop or renovate public outdoor recreation facilities (campgrounds, picnic areas, sports & playfields, etc.) Cities, counties, state and federal agencies are eligible to apply. Visit www.gold.ky.gov/grants/federal/ or call 1-800-346-5606.

Kenton innovation showcased during conservation tour

Energy, waste, and agricultural diversification were combined in a tour in September hosted by the Kenton County Conservation District. Conservation District officials from Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio attended the tour as a part of the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana Regional Conservation Council. The tour included three sites that showcases innovative conservation projects in the county.

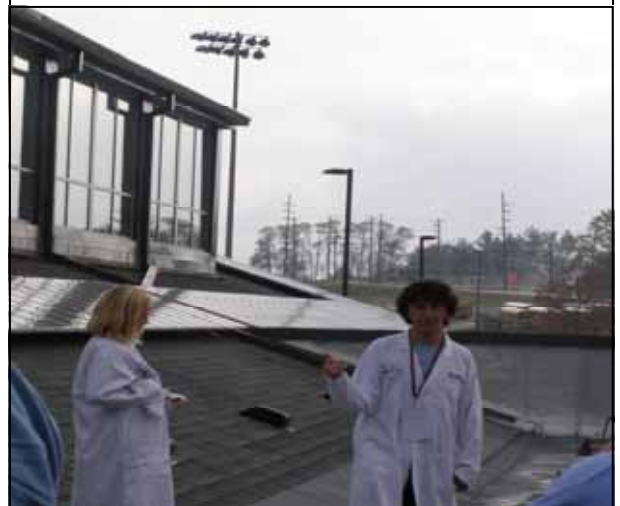
Eddie Gibson operates one of the three remaining dairies in Kenton County. Eddie has about 45 dairy cows on his 130-acre farm near Nicholson. He built the dairy from the ground up, installing a state-of-the-art waste management system, below, that complements his traditional milking parlor, right. Eddie designed the waste management system that uses sand as bedding material for the cows. The process flushes the sand and waste into a separation system where the sand is recovered to use again. Waste products are also recovered to spread on fields. Eddie, a past Conservation District Cooperator of the Year, shared his experiences in building the dairy and living in a community transitioning from agricultural to other land uses.



Atwood Hill Winery & Vineyard is a sixth-generation Kenton County family farm near Independence. After decades of growing tobacco, vines were planted in 2005 and Atwood Hill is now producing and selling over 10 wines. We toured the vineyard with owner Julie Clinkenbeard and David Koester, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (UKCES), below. Dan Allen, UKCES agent, discussed the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board program (Tobacco Settlement) that helped establish the vineyard. The Kenton County Conservation District administered this Agricultural Diversification Program for the County Agriculture Development Council.



Chris Baker, Energy Systems Coordinator for the Kenton County School District, and students in the Energy WISE (Wisdom is Saving Energy) program, led a tour of Twenhofel Middle School. Twenhofel is an Energy Wise School and was a pilot for the Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools Program. The school district's Environmental Excellence Initiative is designed to improve energy efficiency, positively impact the environment, and enhance the rigor and relevance of daily instruction for students. The District's Sustainable Energy Plan resulted in avoiding over \$250,000 in energy costs in 2007- 2008. Solar panels, below, are part of the energy-saving strategy at Twenhofel.



Laws of the Land

News about legislation and programs that may affect you.

Farm Bill Programs accepting applications while rules finalized

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) was signed into law earlier this year. The Conservation title of the Farm Bill reauthorizes/extends all 2002 Farm Bill programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Farm and Ranch_Lands Protection Program (FRPP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). It establishes a new Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) and allows for the continuation of contracts entered under the Conservation Security Program (CSP). Natural Resources Conservation Service is waiting on interim final rules before they can announce program ranking periods and enter into new obligations with landowners, but has been authorized to solicit and accept applications. There are several pending changes to each program and fact sheets outlining major program changes can be found on the NRCS national web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov. Click on the Farm Bill link and select "overviews of 2008 NRCS Farm Bill Conservation Programs" under the "At a Glance" header. Contact your local NRCS office for more information, 859-586-7903.

Ky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) announces changes for tobacco fund programs

Revisions to tobacco fund programs are being discussed to better address the changing needs of Kentucky farm families and rural communities. The KADB approved a new project application timeline and enacted a county model program/menu "Blackout" period that begins January 5, 2009 and ends March 20, 2009. The KADB and the Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy staff will consult with county agricultural development council members, administrators, extension agents, agricultural leaders, legislators, and others in gathering feedback and suggestions to be used in a final proposal of changes for the 2009 programs. During the "blackout" period input will be sought for the following policy concepts:

- Offer all programs in a menu fashion ("County Agriculture Investment Program") with no individual "model programs" being offered. Model Programs would be renamed as "investment areas".
- Revise the term limit on legal agreements for a County Agriculture Investment Program to be 12-months, regardless of investment area;
- Provide producers the opportunity to apply for funds in any of the investment areas that the County Agriculture Investment Program encompasses (a particular investment area may not be excluded);
- Revise the cost-share limit for 2009 to \$7,500 per producer; however, county councils will have the ability to reduce the maximum cost-share limit to a level that will be the same for all investment areas;
- Redefine "tobacco dependency" as follows: "A producer applicant who has received a Phase II check, a buyout check, or who grew and marketed tobacco during the previous growing/marketing season", maintaining the policy that the sons and/or daughters of these individuals are tobacco dependent;
- Eliminate lifetime limits with the adoption of annual cost-share limits and the new producer definition;
- Only one program administrator in a county for the County Agriculture Investment Program;
- Standardize the producer application and scoring system, so that the same criteria and scoring will be used across the Commonwealth.

To access the detailed document of policy concepts visit <http://agpolicy.ky.gov> and click on the link "Policy Concepts". Please submit any comments or suggestions no later than **January 31, 2009** to govkyagpolicy.ky.gov. When providing comments reference the concept number located on the policy concept document. For more information, phone. 502-564-4627.

EPA seeks comments on proposed guidelines construction pollutants discharge

EPA is accepting comments on its proposed guidelines to control the discharge of pollutants from construction sites. The proposal would require all construction sites to implement erosion and sediment control best management practices to reduce pollutants in stormwater discharges. In addition, for certain large sites located in areas of the country with high rainfall intensity and soils with a high clay content, stormwater discharges from the construction site would be required to meet a numeric limit on the allowable level of turbidity, which is a measure of sediment in the water. In order to meet the proposed numeric turbidity limit, many sites would need to treat and filter their stormwater discharges. Construction activities such as clearing, excavating and grading significantly disturb the land. The disturbed soil, if not managed properly, can easily be washed off the construction site during storms and enter streams, lakes, and other waters. Sediment is one of the leading causes of water quality impairment nationwide, including reducing water depth in small streams, lakes and reservoirs. For information on the proposal visit <http://www.epa.gov/ost/guide/construction/>

**Boone, Campbell & Kenton Counties
Conservation Districts
6028 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005**



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Conservation Calendar

Leopold Education Project, Sat., Jan. 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Northern Kentucky University Center for Environmental Education. The Leopold Education Project (LEP) is an innovative, interdisciplinary, critical thinking, conservation and environmental education curriculum based on the classic writings of the renowned conservationist, Aldo Leopold. Registration required. No fees, free parking and lunch is provided. To register, E-mail Cecilia Baker at Bakerc6@nku.edu. Include your full name, school/organization, grade level, phone, email, and address to receive a confirmation email! Space is limited.

National No-Tillage Conference, Wed. - Sat., Jan. 14 - 17. Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Topics include improving soil biology, no-till drill planter refinements, precision agriculture technologies, residue management tips, cover-cropping systems, and alternative fertilizer sources. For information call 886-839-8455 or visit www.notillconference.com

Deadline for applications, Fri., Jan. 23, 4:00 p.m. Campbell County Conservation District Grant for Tree Planting and Urban Forestry Enhancement; Campbell County Conservation District Education Grant; and Campbell County Conservation District Scholarship. See articles on pages four and five.

Private Applicators Pesticide Certification Training, Tues., Jan. 27, 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Campbell County Environmental Education Center, A. J. Jolly Park. Contact the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Center, 859-572-2600 for information.

Developing Beef Niche Markets, Wed., Jan. 28, 7:00 p.m. Campbell County Environmental Education Center, A. J. Jolly Park. Contact the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Center, 859-572-2600 for information.

Commercial Arborist, Landscaper, & Nursery Workshop, Fri., Jan. 30, 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Boone County Cooperative Extension Center, Burlington. Topics include woody invasives, planting for survival, construction injury and disease diagnosis. Registration free. Lunch included if you register by Jan. 26. Register by calling 859- 586-6101, or online at www.ca.uky.edu/boone.

Recreational Trails Program grant applications deadline Feb. 1. Federal Highway Administration fund grants can be used to acquire easements, develop and maintain recreational trails and trailhead facilities for motorized and non-motorized use. Eligible applicants are city and county governments, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. Visit www.gold.ky.gov/grants/federal/ or call 1-800-346-5606.

(Continued on page nine.)