



Alternative Enterprises

In spite of the cold, snowy day, over 45 participants made their way to the “Are Alternative Agricultural Enterprises For You?” workshop held on February 26, in Columbus, Indiana. The workshop, co-sponsored by the Rural Issues Committee, the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, and the Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D, focused on introducing farm families to possibilities of diversifying and supplementing farm income.

The program featured Julia Wickard, Environment and Natural Resources Director with the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Dr. Tim Woods, Agricultural Economist from the University of Kentucky; along with a panel discussion about marketing, business planning, sources of technical help, Small Business Association assistance, zoning, and liability. Breakout sessions were held with a number of successful agricultural entrepreneurs who talked about how they developed their enterprises.

Although the term, “Alternative Enterprises may be new to you, farmers and rural communities have been developing agri-tourism, recreation and alternative enterprises to economically sustain themselves throughout history. Street markets in small rural villages were probably the first enterprises followed by

deliveries in towns and cities. Many farmers are entering bed and breakfasts, farm dinners, craft making/sales, value-added products, and other on farm experiences. The multiple use of the natural and other farm resources have always economically sustained farmers and rural communities. According to the 1996 Farm Bill many farmers have broken from the “tradition” of selling only livestock, crops, and timber to increasing their profits by selling a service, adventure experience, or value added ag products.

As a follow up to this workshop Hoosier Heartland RC&D has decided to apply for a USDA Block Grant on Specialty Crops and Promotion of Agriculture to develop a self-paced, readily accessible, multimedia training and support program for those who are considering changing their current farming operation to an alternative enterprise. The funding would provide the tools and the knowledge to help farmers evaluate whether diversification, alternatives, etc. would work for them and their families. If funded the grant would pay for a coordinator for three years, a web-based tutorial, a video library, handout materials, and the establishment of a networking group of entrepreneurs.

Alternative enterprises can take many forms. They produce new or unique crops or

livestock, or add value to traditional agricultural products. They produce fun, recreation, nature-based, or educational services. They can rely on traditional farm practices or use alternative methods such as organic systems. They can be labor or resource intensive or require few inputs. They can operate seasonally or year round. But they all rely on the natural and other resources available on their land to keep their family on their farm and the farm in their family.

Studies and experience show that the public is looking for adventure, culture, rural settings, hands-on-experience, fresh food, getting back to the farm, and in some cases getting to know a farmer that they refer to as “my farmer.” Alternative enterprise farming has the potential to satisfy these public needs and at the same time it can preserve and sustain family farms, rural communities, and conserve natural resources. It is also an excellent tool for educating the public about agricultural stewardship, rural values and life styles, and building relationships between agriculture and supporting industries.

The Rural Issues Committee is hoping to help make a difference for farmers who want to stay on their farm, or return to the farm, or those who are for the first time buying a farm. Come join us!

Inside Echoes

JUNE 2002
VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

Community Forestry Field Day 2

Computer Workshops .. 3

Riparian Area Cost-Share 3

Clean Water Indiana 3

Backyard Tree Farm 4

Calendar 4

**HOOSIER HEARTLAND
RC&D COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

BOONE

Kevin Kouns, SWCD
Al Mohler (Alternate)
Charles Rohrer, Extension
John Ulmer, Commissioner

BROWN

Kathy Kirk, SWCD (Secretary)
Al Weber (Alternate)
Keith Kirk, Extension
Cathy Donaldson (Alternate)
Cathy Paradise, Commissioner

HAMILTON

Mike Seeman, SWCD
Jim Riggs (Alternate)
Kathryn Mascaro, Extension
Charles Kiphart, Commissioner
Al Patterson (Alternate)

HANCOCK

Junior Burton, SWCD
Jim Cherry (Alternate)
Tom Roney, Extension (Treasurer)
Roger Wilson (Alternate)
Jack Heiden, Commissioner
Susan Bodkin (Alternate)

HENDRICKS

Mike Warner, SWCD
Paul Miner (Alternate)
John Granath (Alternate)
Jeff Stout, Extension
Cathy Grindstaff, Commissioner

JOHNSON

Bob Weaver, SWCD (Vice-President)
Charlie Canary (Alternate)
Tom Bechman, Extension
Mahlon Byerly (Alternate)
Beth McNabb, Commissioner
Joseph DeHart (Alternate)

MARION

Paula Baldwin, SWCD (President)
Marvin Brethauer (Alternate)
Duane Miller, Extension
Natalie German (Alternate)
Bob Eddleman, Commissioner
William Dowden (Alternate)

MONROE

Keith McConnell, SWCD
Todd Litten (Alternate)
Martha Crouch, Extension
Todd Stevenson, Commissioner

MORGAN

Joe Rode, SWCD
Emma Alkire (Alternate)
Janice Bacon, Extension
John Zupancic (Alternate)
Janice Bacon (Commissioner)

SHELBY

Bryan Mohr, SWCD
Chris Everhart, (Alternate)
Mark Nigh, Extension
Marilyn Graham (Alternate)
David Mohr, Jr., Commissioner
Bruce Knecht (Alternate)

STAFF

Becky Fletcher, RC&D Coordinator
Cathy Deal, RC&D Assistant
Bonni Browning, RC&D Assistant



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Community Forestry Field Day

Winter was determined to give us one more frigid

blast on the morning of the Community Forestry Field Day held at Independence Park in Greenwood on Saturday, March 16th. But the cold winds were no match for the forestry committee, the Johnson County SWCD and Conservation Youth Board, and Bruce Oldham with

Johnson County Parks and Recreation—this group was ready for anything. Under the enthusiastic direction of Jennifer Boyle, new SWCD District Director at Johnson County, the committee assembled early that morning to put up tarps, unload trees, make coffee, set up exhibits, and lay out tree planting information.

Smokey Bear showed up to give the official welcome and was joined by “Sprig”, the Treeture Creature. Dan Ernst and Lee Huss were first on the program with a discussion about how a tree grows; tree selection; site selection; and the advantages/disadvantages of planting seedlings, containerized or ball and burlap trees. The group then moved out into the park for actual demonstrations about proper tree planting techniques for seedlings, containerized trees, and ball/burlap trees.

The morning was wrapped up



with tips on chainsaw safety and more demonstrations on proper pruning methods, mulching, and disease control. IDNR provided information about soils and watersheds for those that were interested. Over 25 trees were planted in the park that day by the Johnson County Conservation Youth Board and IDNR personnel. Although only a few kids showed up that day, the committee was ready with a most impressive youth program that included hands-on activities featuring Smokey Bear, Treeture Creatures, Project Learning Tree, and the Enviroscape Watershed model. Participants were provided with free seedlings (Gray Dogwood or White Pine) and instructions on how and where to plant.

This workshop was extremely

well organized by the committee and was financially made possible by an IDNR Forestry Challenge Grant and the Johnson County SWCD. The RC&D would like to say a special thanks to Johnson County Parks and Recreation, the supervisors of Johnson County SWCD, the Johnson County SWCD Conservation Youth Board, and to Lisa Andrews, Jennifer Boyle, Jerod Chew, Dan Ernst, Jim Farr, Lee Huss, Matt Lake, Bruce Oldham, Lisa Ritter, Donna Rogler, Laura Schneckler, Beverly Stout, Chuck Ratts, Harold Thompson and Mike Warner.

For more information about future forestry field days, contact the Hoosier Heartland RC&D office at 317/290-3250.

Computer Workshops

This year, the education committee is expanding their computer workshops to include intermediate courses in Microsoft software, including courses in Word, Publisher, Access, and Excel. The education committee contracted with New Horizons, a computer company based out of Carmel, to host these workshops.

New Horizons has been in business for 20 years and has over 290 training centers in 46 countries. For the intermediate classes, they will provide MS-certified trainers and will conduct the affordable training sessions at their facilities. As a post-class support they will provide participants access to their eLearning resources website.

All computer workshops are available to anyone affiliated with the RC&D, including, SWCDs, Extension Service, federal, state and local government employees, council members, and others. See the Calendar of Events for a schedule of upcoming workshops.

The education committee will also continue their basic Microsoft classes in Access, Excel, Outlook, and Power Point and will add a Quik Books workshop this year. These classes are taught by Computer Tutor in Indianapolis.

To receive a copy of the workshop agendas and registration forms, contact the Hoosier Heartland office at 317/290-3250.

Support Clean Water Indiana

Two Hoosier Heartland RC&D Council Committees are working with Indiana Farm Bureau, Baxter Communications, Indiana Wine and Grape Council, and several Soil and Water Conservation Districts to help raise funds for the Clean Water Indiana Education Fund. You can support this important effort by attending the following event:

Join us for an evening of fine wine, food and music at Oliver Winery in Bloomington on Friday, August 23 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tickets for the "Clean Water Makes Fine Wine" event are \$50/person, which includes dinner, a tour of the winery, two complimentary beverage tickets (wine or non-alcoholic beverage).

A silent auction will be held featuring Indiana artists and business (call Brown, Johnson, Monroe, Shelby, or Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District to donate items). Reservations are required. All proceeds are going back into the Clean Water Education fund.

For more information, contact Christa Jones, Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, at 317/692-7374.



Riparian Area Tree Planting Cost-Share Program

The forestry committee of the Hoosier Heartland RC&D is sponsoring a two-year grant project to provide cost-share funds to landowners who wish to establish forested buffer plantings along streams, ponds, lakes, and wetlands in the Upper White River Watershed. The project, designed for rural and urban areas not covered by existing government programs, will reimburse landowners for up to 75 percent of the costs required to establish the tree plantings.

Randy Jones, the RC&D's buffer coordinator says, "The purpose of the project is to improve water quality through the establishment of buffers."

The buffers help to create shade to lower water temperature thereby improving habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. They also provide a source of detritus and large woody debris for cover and forage components of aquatic habitat, as well as providing corridors to link isolated areas of wildlife habitat.

From a water quality standpoint, forested buffers help to reduce excess amounts of sediment, organic material, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants in surface runoff in shallow groundwater flow.

The first 50 percent of the cost share funds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The second 50 percent will be allocated first toward priority areas within the Upper White River Basin. For funding eligibility criteria and application materials, visit the worldwide web at www.hhrcd.org/riparian_buffer.htm, or contact Randy Jones, Project Coordinator at 317/933-4169 or rcjones@franklinisp.net.

Tree Farm

Over the past year, Kathryn Mascaro, Cathy Myers, Bob Eddleman, and others have worked hard to revise the Backyard Tree Farm Program. Major changes include:

- 1) making the resource guide and workshops more focused on trees and their care rather than on landscaping;
- 2) dropping the membership requirement;
- 3) selling the revised resource guide and other products separately;
- 4) offering the newsletter free for the first year and;
- 5) establishing a stronger relationship with Master Gardeners, Tree Stewards and other like minded groups.

Major activities include:

- Planting trees and shrubs
- Establishing wildlife food and shelter areas
- Building small ponds or other water sources
- Planting and managing Christmas Trees
- Harvesting firewood or other useful materials
- Managing woodlots, maintaining trails

For more information about the Backyard Tree Farm Program, Contact Kathryn Mascaro at 317/290-3250.

You can access *Echoes* through the Hoosier Heartland RC&D website located at www.hhrcd.org.

Calendar of Events

July 2002

- 11* Urban Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 14-17 2002 SWCS Internatioonal Annual Conference
Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN (Registration Required)
- 23* Rural Issues Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
- 24* Education Committee Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 25* Backyard Trees Committee Meeting, 1:00 p.m.
Executive Committee Meeting, time/location TBA

August 2002

- 1* Urban Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 13* Forestry Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 14* Education Committee Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 22 Executive Committee Meeting, time/location TBA
- 23 Indiana Clean Water Fundraiser/Oliver Winery,
Bloomington, IN (tickets required/see article for details)
- 27* Rural Issues Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
- 27-28 MS Access Level Computer Workshop
New Horizons Computer Learning Center
Carmel, IN (registration required)

September 2002

- 9 HHRC&D Quarterly Council Meeting, 6:00 p.m.
location TBA **Mark you calendars!**

**Contact the council office for meeting location and further details*

Deadlines for submitting copy for *Echoes* are as follows:
5/1/02, 8/1/02, and 11/1/02. To contribute an article, contact
Cathy Deal at 317/290-3250.

