

Spring 2006

Mountain Profiles

A newsletter of the West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists

A Message from The President...

Spring is here, summer is close behind, and all soil scientists are thinking about or beginning the field season. We are lucky in West Virginia to have all four seasons. But to me, the prettiest may be spring. The vegetation seems to be so bright and green this time of year. Beautiful blossoms can be seen on our hillsides and along our roads. Song birds have returned. It really is a wonderful time of the year.



This time of the year is a time of renewal. Several new things have happened or are about to happen that will affect WVAPSS. Some of those items are included in this newsletter. Please take the time to read it. You will see a list of new members. Please welcome these members to our society. You will find information about the WVU Soil Judging Team. It did something new this year that has never before been done by a WVU Soil Judging Team. You will find some information about our annual meeting in June. Mike Jones has done a great job putting everything together for this meeting and field trip. Be sure you thank him. Please plan to attend and renew old friendships and maybe make some new ones. I hope to see all of you there. And last, but not least, there is a ballot included in this newsletter for you to vote for new officers. Your vote is important, so please do it.

As I leave the office of President of WVAPSS this year, it seems that I really should say something philosophical. But, I am not a very philosophical person. I simply want to thank the Executive Council members for working so well together, and I look forward to many good times as a member of WVAPSS.

- John Sencindiver, President

WVU Soils Team Won the National Contest

The WVU Soils Team coached by Dr. Jim Thompson took first place in the National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest March 23-24, 2006 at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. They defeated 21 other teams from across the United States, including defending national champion, Virginia Tech, which finished second, University of Georgia (third), University of Illinois (fourth), and Ohio State University (fifth). There are seven collegiate soil judging regions in the United States. Teams compete in their region, and the top teams qualify for the national contest. WVU qualified for nationals by placing fifth at the Southeast Regional Contest in October 2005.

Corry Calderone, a senior agronomy major from Finleyville, Pennsylvania, placed first in the individual competition, besting 82 other students. Teammates Jared Wilmoth, a senior agronomy major from Philippi, and Kim Godbey, a senior animal and veterinary sciences major from Kenna, ranked 13th and 17th, respectively. Other teammates included Kent Smith, a junior pre-agriculture, forestry and consumer sciences major from Philippi, Justin Barnes, a sophomore forest resources management major from Charlottesville, Virginia, Adam Boner, a senior animal and veterinary sciences major from Jane Lew, and Randy Riddle, an agronomy major from Bethany Beach, Delaware.

The students and coach are already looking ahead to defending their championship next year.

New Members

Please welcome the following individuals who have become WVAPSS members during the last year.

Neil Martin – Neil has a B.S. degree in agronomy from Cornell University and is currently the MLRA Project Office Leader with the Ohio DNR-Division of Soil and Water in Marietta, Ohio. He has held former positions of Soil Survey Project Leader and Soil Resource Specialist with the same agency.

Katherine O’Neill – Katherine is currently a Research Ecologist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Beaver, WV. She has held earlier positions of Research Soil Scientist with the USDA Forest Service in St. Paul, MN, and Geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, CA. She has a B.S. degree in Geology/Environmental Science from the College of William and Mary, and a Ph.D. in Biogeochemistry (with a Forest Soils concentration) from Duke University.

Athena D. Van Lear – Athena attended Southern Seminary Junior College for Women where she majored in animal science, and she has a bachelor’s degree with a major in geology from Mary Washington College. She has taken graduate courses at Dabney Lancaster Community College and at Virginia Tech. Currently she is a soil scientist with USDA-NRCS in Philippi, WV. Formerly she held positions as Spectroscopist & Laboratory Specialist in the Virginia Tech Soil Testing Lab and was an Earth Team Volunteer with USDA-NRCS in Hot Springs, VA.



WVAPSS Annual Meeting 2006

This year's annual meeting and field trip are scheduled for Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10, 2006 in Pt. Pleasant, WV.

Events will begin on Friday morning, June 9, with a demonstration of sampling techniques used to extract a soil monolith. The soil to be sampled will be Huntington. Those interested in participating in the monolith extraction are ask to meet at the Pt. Pleasant NRCS Service Center (224-C First Street) before 11:00 am. Please dress for field work and bring your own lunch.

The business meeting is being held at the West Virginia State Farm Museum, just north of Point Pleasant. See <http://www.ezwv.com/~wvsfm/map.html> for exact location. Dinner will be served at 6:00 pm with the meeting to follow in the dining hall. We will be choosing our own menu. Dinner should be less than \$10 but is dependent upon our menu. Suggestions for menu will be accepted until May 19, 2006. **Please RSVP Mike Jones at Michael.jones@wv.usda.gov or by phone 304-284-7588 by May 19 or Wendy Noll at wendy.noll@wv.usda.gov or by phone at 304 284-7582 by May 25th so that we can give the menu to the kitchen staff.**

On Saturday morning we will meet at Tu-endi-wei State Park at 9:00 am. (See www.tu-endi-weistatepark.com for directions to the park.) Saturday's field trip will highlight the Ohio and Kanawha river terraces. The soils we will see include Lakin and Duncannon which are derived from wind blown sediment. Conotton, a low terrace with outwash gravel and Shircliff, found in slack water sediment on low terraces. If time allows, we could travel away from this area to some upland terraces of Omulga and Gallia.

Lodging: 15 rooms reserved at the Super 8 Motel in Gallipolis (\$60.30 for a single or double plus tax). Unclaimed rooms are released on May 26th. When making reservations, ask for WV Assoc. Prof. Soil Scientists. The phone number for the Super 8 is (740-446-8080) and the web address is: <http://www.super8.com>.

Camping is available at Krodel Park. Simple grassy area, RV hook-ups, and restroom facilities. Call and save a spot, as I, did at **304 675-1068**

Other Activities in the Area: Point Pleasant is full of history and attractions. The Pt. Pleasants River Museum, WV State Farm Museum, it is home to the Mothman, and the Tu-endi-wei State Park. The confluence of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers is here at the Tu-endi-wei- State Park. The Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774 occurred between the Shawnee and the Settlers.

2006 – 2007 Executive Council Elections

Voting for the 2006 – 2007 Executive council has begun. The positions up for election this year are; Vice-President and executive council member. The Executive council position will also be the Chair of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee.

Listed below are brief biographies for each of the candidates running for office. After reading about their qualifications, please turn to the Official Ballot in the next page and vote for the candidate(s) of your choice.

Just a few reminders about voting;

- All members in good standing are permitted (and expected) to vote.
- Ballots can be cast in one of three ways;
 1. By e-mail
 2. By regular mail –or–
 3. In person, at the Annual meeting before the beginning of the business meeting.

**Please send your e- ballot to Wendy Noll, at Wendy.Noll@wv.usda.gov.
The mailing address to snail mail the ballot is Wendy Noll, C/O WVAPSS, P.O.
Box 1643, Morgantown, WV 26507**

NOTE: At the 2004 annual meeting held in Canaan Valley, an amendment to the constitution was passed allowing votes for executive council election to be cast via email.

For the Office of Vice President:

David Kingsbury is currently USDA-NRCS Soil Data Quality Specialist in Morgantown, West Virginia. He received his Bachelors' and Masters' degrees in Soil Science from West Virginia University. Before joining the MO-13 staff, Dave worked as a soil and environmental consultant, a project member, project leader and Area Soil Scientist for USDA-SCS and NRCS in New Jersey. Dave, his wife, Diana and sons Matt and Tim reside in Morgantown.

Robert Pate is the NRCS Area Resource Soil Scientist for the Southern area in West Virginia, stationed in Beckley, WV. Rob received his Bachelors' degree in Agronomy-Soils and Geology from the University of Maryland at College Park. Rob is actively involved with 4-H and FFA land judging completions, as well as outreach education programs working with young people in agriculture. During a past stint as WVAPSS President, Rob was part of the group that spear headed efforts to pass WV Senate Concurrent Resolution #5 in April 1997 declaring Monongahela Silt Loam the official state soil of West Virginia.

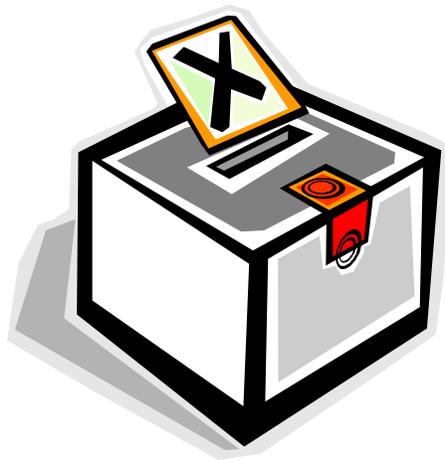
For the Office of Secretary / Treasurer:

Dr. Mary Beth Adams is the Project Leader and Soil Scientist of watershed research at the Forest Service's Fernow Experimental Forest, in Parsons, WV. She received her BS and MS in Forestry from Purdue University and her Ph.D. in Soil Science and Forestry from North Carolina State. She completed her Post-doctoral research at the Oak Ridge National Lab in Tennessee. Mary Beth resides in Elkins, WV.

For the Executive Council Seat:

Jared Beard is a Morgantown native and 1997 graduate of WVU. He is the Area Resource Soil Scientist stationed in Moorefield, West Virginia and the WV NRCS WV representative for the Mid-Atlantic Hydric Soils Committee. Before assuming his current duties, Jared had been an NRCS Soil Scientist since 1999, working in Frederick, Maryland and Martinsburg, WV. He currently serves as WVAPSS Executive Council Member Chair for the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, and

Katherine "Katy" McBride is currently employed as a Soil Conservationist in the USDA-NRCS Lewisburg Field Office. She received her Bachelors' in Agriculture – Environmental Protection from West Virginia University. Katy has previously worked as a research technician with an environmental consulting firm, as well as a field soil scientist for the West Virginia Conservation Agency with the Logan – Mingo Soil Survey and as a Soil Conservationist in the Huntington Field Office. Katy and husband, Alan, live in Daniels, WV



WVAPSS Executive Council Election

Official Ballot for 2006 – 2007

Vice – President (Choose 1)

_____ - **Dave Kingsbury**

_____ - **Rob Pate**

_____ - **(Write In)** _____

Secretary / Treasurer

_____ - **Dr. Mary Beth Adams**

_____ - **(Write In)** _____

Board Member (Choose 1)

_____ - **Jared Beard**

_____ - **Katy McBride**

_____ - **(Write In)** _____

Please send your e- ballot to Wendy.Noll@wv.usda.gov. The mailing address to snail mail the ballot is West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists, P.O. Box 1643, Morgantown, WV 26507

West Virginia Conservation Partnership Conference

The planning committee is hard at work on the agenda for 2006 West Virginia Conservation Partnership Conference. The Conference will be held at the Marriott Charleston Town Center on October 24-26, 2006. As in previous years, The WVPSS fall business meeting is scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

Some of the speakers and topics planned for this year's Conference include the following;

Bill Wilson, NACD President – Keynote Speaker

Steve Carpenter, NRCS State Soil Scientist – Web Soil Survey

Randy Dye, State Forester / Director of the WV Division of Forestry – Forestry and Water

Dr. Mary Beth Adams, Project Leader and Soil Scientist, U.S. Forest Service – Water Quality Related to Natural Resource Management

Jon Hempel, Co-Director, NRCS National Geospatial Development Center – Technology Development at the NGDC

Other topics of interest include “How to Select an Engineer or Architectural Firm for Your Project” and a discussion of Resource Conservation and Development issues.

A complete agenda will be available on the web as the conference draws closer. Please mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

Golden Auger Award

Since 1999, the Golden Auger Award has been given to a person who has made major contributions to soil science during the past year. This award is presented annually at the WVPSS business meeting held in association with the West Virginia Conservation Partnership Conference.

At the Partnership Conference meeting in November 2005, WVPSS recognized Wendy Noll as the Golden Auger Award winner. Wendy was recognized for her diligent work that often went above and beyond her regular duties as a WVPSS officer in planning, promoting, and supporting various activities to generate funding for the Smithsonian soil exhibit. It was because of her leadership that WVPSS was able to raise more than \$11,000 for this project. Congratulations Wendy and thank you.

T-shirts for sale

There is still a nice selection of the new style WVPSS t-shirts left. These shirts are high quality 100 % cotton and have the WVPSS logo over the left breast. Short sleeve T's are \$10.00 and are available in medium, large and x-large. Long sleeve T's are \$12.00 and available in medium, large and x-large. Colors available are white, gray, navy and hunter green. You can place an order for these items by contacting Mary Beth Adams at

(304-284-7562 or mabadams@fs.fed.us). Shirts will also be available at the annual meeting in June.

Have you paid your 2005 – 2006 Dues ?

Just a quick reminder, there is still time to pay your 2005-2006 dues. As in the past, dues are \$15.00 for the year and can be sent to Mary Beth Adams, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 404, Parsons, WV 26287

West Virginia Soil Survey Staff Work to Confirm Forest Soil Fertility Differences

For the tenth year, field soil scientists in WV met to tackle a big job. This year, they sampled forest soils on unstudied areas in MLRA-127. During the week they were able to sample six benchmark soils in Fayette, Nicholas, Raleigh, and Webster Counties in MLRA-127. MLRA-127, which encompasses several million acres in West Virginia includes some of the best hardwood forest in the world. They also held their quarterly staff meeting and offered evening seminars as training topics.

The forest products industry is vital to West Virginia's and the Appalachian Region's economy. Since 1995, NRCS soil scientists in West Virginia have been sampling some of the most extensive forest soil types as they occur by parent materials. The samples are then evaluated using total elemental analysis which allows the staff to examine relationships of soil nutrient content to the forest type and growth rates. WV soil scientists have found that there are marked fertility differences among forest soils as they are mapped and that they coincide with differences in dominant forest types growing on those soils.

According to Steve Carpenter, state soil scientist, "this is not a big surprise because we



know that differences in forest site quality exist and these differences are related to soils but we lacked the data to incorporate facts into the soil survey report. We hope now that forest managers will pay more attention to our information. We needed more data to add to the reliability of our data and we got it this week. We know that the development of this data will be a significant improvement to the soil information available to managers in the forest products industry.

In the photo above, Soil Survey Staff members prepare a sample of the Laidig series, an important forest soil in the region for laboratory analysis

On the lighter side...

Nuggets from the Past

Some of us have reached the age where we can retire and make a choice. Either we will continue to grow and learn, or else sit back, complain, and tell how things used to be to anybody willing to listen. I choose the latter.

Only a short time seemed to pass between the days when I was a beginning soil scientist with SCS and the latter days of employment with NRCS. However, in those seemingly few days, the job changed by light years. The career started with a repetitive routine of mapping soils; we had only occasional diversity, such as preparation of huge handwritten tables using pencil, legal pads, and scotch tape. We progressed thru the swiftly passing years with a heavy workload of soil investigations using hand tools followed by use of power probe trucks. Toward the end, we were providing information using computer generated maps and reports.

My thoughts on life's rapid changes were instigated by a recent comment on the TV. A young talk show host remarked how he could not conceive of washing a diaper. This comment from one of the pamper generation caused me to reflect. It was not that many decades ago when my mom claimed that washing diapers would build character. In fact, she felt so strongly about this that she made me wash my own. Tools for building character were limited then. I had only one diaper.

Each day, I would wake up and crawl down to the creek to build some character. As I beat that dirty diaper on the wet rocks, I could picture Mom's glowing face as she developed all this character in her bare-bottomed son. My progress was slowed only slightly during winter months, as I took time to break the ice from the surface of the creek. I would then beat the half-frozen character builder into the freshly exposed water, replace my only diaper, and proudly crawl uphill to the house. I knew already that I was becoming a better man.

Today, I worry about the new generations. Without the past tools to build character, how will they develop? I'm afraid that we may never again see characters like we have known in our past. Isn't it amazing how the course of civilization has changed by the passing of the diaper.

Thanks for listening.

Ron Estep

PS. Some of you old timers may suspect that parts of this story could be exaggerated. To redeem my reputation, I am going to admit that we sometimes had to work without access to those afore-mentioned legal pads.