

Hoosier Headlines

Issue 83

October 2020



Frank Bender, SW area landowner, participates in the #Harvest2020 photo/video campaign

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Heart to Heart with RAYNOR

The upcoming Leadership Development Program (LDP) will look a bit different than it has in the past. This year, we are joining forces with four surrounding states to expand this opportunity. The primary goal of the LDP is to build potential leaders for the agency in order to help meet NRCS' future challenges in conservation. Participants will be exposed to and practice leadership and management skills such as visionary thinking, positively influencing others, partnering with other agencies and organizations, and handling public and political issues. Keep your eyes open for the announcement which we expect to come out in early November.



Jerry Raynor,
Indiana State Conservationist

I'd like to welcome Francisco Orsini as the new Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM). Francisco was born and raised in Puerto Rico, where he attended college at the University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus. During the last six years Francisco worked in both the private and public sector. His public service started with Ameri-Corps VISTA (Volunteers in service to America), then U.S. Fish and Wildlife. He has been with NRCS since 2016 and is currently working as a soil conservationist on the Albion Tech Team. Francisco's short-term goal is to bring together a list of Spanish speaking employees that will help support NRCS outreach efforts. In the long-term, he would like to build a solid network with state Hispanic organizations and promote NRCS services. Please help me welcome Francisco as the newest member of our Civil Rights committee.

I also wanted to send a reminder about the current status of the payroll tax withholding deferral. In order to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Presidential Memorandum was issued to temporarily defer employees' Social Security or OASDI (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) tax withholdings. This change became effective in September and will extend through the end of the 2020 calendar year and only applies to your OASDI tax withholding. You are not eligible to opt-out of the deferral if your OASDI wages fall within the stated limits. Per current IRS guidance, collection of the deferred taxes will be taken from your wages between January 1 and April 30, 2021. If you have any questions regarding this deferral program, please visit: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/deferral-of-employment-tax-deposits-and-payments-through-December-31-2020>.

Since our next issue of Hoosier Headlines will be distributed after Thanksgiving, I want to finish by taking the time to say THANKS. One of the things I'm most thankful for is having the opportunity to be your State Conservationist. I'm looking forward to another great year of getting conservation on the ground and it's because of you, our dedicated employees and partners who make this happen. Make sure to take time for some socially distanced fun and relaxation with your friends and family. Enjoy the holidays!



Employee Spotlight

Julius White, State Office Management Analyst

Q: As the one of the newest NRCS employees, please help us get to know you better. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

My name is Julius White. My mother named me after Julius Caesar because my birthday is on Independence Day, July 4. However, my father told me that I was named after the former NBA player Julius Erving known as Dr. J. I was born in Jacksonville, NC but raised in Pensacola, FL since the age of two. I have also lived in various places such as Oxnard, CA, Okinawa, Japan, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Virginia Beach, VA, Strongsville, OH and now McCordsville, IN. I am a retired Navy Veteran with over 20 years of experience as a logistic specialist. During my military career, I obtained a bachelor's degree in Workforce Education Training and Development from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and a master's degree in Business Administration from Saint Leo University. I also had the pleasure of completing several certifications such as Six Sigma Black and Green Belt, Simplified Acquisitions Procedures, Hazardous Material Control and Management, and Safety Programs Afloat.



Julius White, Management Analyst

Q: How did your past work experience prepare you for your current position with NRCS?

My past work experiences have prepared me specifically for my current position with NRCS. While, serving in the military as a logistic specialist I had the opportunity to work in various positions such as supply chain instructor/trainer, process improvement specialist, purchasing agent/contractor, inventory management specialist, control equipment coordinator, and shipping and receiving management. Collectively, my past work experience and educational background has provided me with a strong foundation suited for my current position.

Q: What are you looking forward to most in your position?

I'm looking forward to learning all that there is to know about the position, agency and my coworkers. I honestly believe that knowledge is power. I have always been the type of person that is excited and interested in learning as much information as possible.

Q: What did you do before coming to Indiana NRCS?

After retiring from the military in 2013, I started a management and consulting business called Solomon Zollie Management & Consulting Group LLC, specializing in Logistics, Training & Development, Business Administration and Process Improvement. My first client was my cousin, who was drafted in the 2013 NFL Draft to the Cleveland Browns. I moved to the Cleveland, Ohio area and began working as a business manager, personal assistant and life coach for my cousin and a few other athletes. In October 2015, my cousin got traded to the Indianapolis Colts. We moved to the Indianapolis area and I continued to work with him for another two years. I currently still own and operate my business but added another provided service. My business partner and I now offer home renovation and design, specializing in wood flooring, decks, pergolas, gazebos and fencing. In August 2017, I decided to follow the call into ministry. I enrolled as a full-time student at Indiana Wesleyan University Seminary. I recently graduated with a master's degree in Practical Theology. I'm an active member of Light of the World Christian Church serving as a Minister, Deacon and Under Shepard to music Ministry.

Q: When you aren't working for NRCS, what do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy doing various types of things such as home renovations, cooking, movies, biking, walking, basketball, golf, bowling, playing various games, church, singing/listening to music and spending time with family and friends.

Q: Do you have any professional or personal goals for 2021?

My goals are to grow in wisdom, knowledge and understanding in various areas of my life. I would like to build and develop healthy relationships with my new NRCS family. I would like to continue to pour into those relationships that I have already established personally and professionally. I would like to increase my physical fitness regimen to enhance my overall health and wellness. I would like to increase my daily devotionals in efforts of building a stronger relationship with God.

Welcome Julius!

#INFridaysontheFarm Campaign

By now, you should be aware that every Friday FPAC sends out a *Fridays on the Farm* story highlighting farmers across the country and the great things they are doing. While Indiana has already had a few highlights, we know our farmers deserve more recognition.

The newest member of the public affairs staff, Brandon O'Connor, has taken on the grand task of developing an Indiana specific *Fridays on the Farm* campaign through Indiana NRCS' Twitter account. Each Friday, we will highlight different farmers, forestland owners and wetland easement landowners, showcasing their land, a quote and leading the public to more information about NRCS financial and/or technical assistance.

If you have a farmer you think should be highlighted in the #INFridaysontheFarm campaign, please email Brandon O'Connor (brandon.oconnor@usda.gov) with the name of the landowner, a quote and a photo.

To see the farmers who have already been highlighted across Indiana, visit our Twitter account at @IndianaNRCS.



Retiree Roundup

Submitted by Jane Hardisty, SCS/NRCS Retirees State Representative

Happy Fall Season to everyone. I have gotten more involved with the farm this year and helping our tenant with the fall harvest. As I stepped up into his big, fairly new tractor, and sat down in the chair, it was more comfortable than my recliner in my living room. Plus I thought I had gotten away from computers but looked at all the push buttons and two computer screens and knew I was in trouble. Farming has definitely passed me by with technology. But I love this time of year and we have all our crops harvested.

There is not a lot of retiree news due to us still being careful and concerned with COVID-19. We did not have an annual meeting like we usually do in October.

The only recent retirement I am aware of is Frank Hodges, Engineering Technician from the Salem CTT. Frank kept things lively with the tech team and loved being out in the field working with land owners. We wish him the best in his retirement.

The really sad news is the passing of Bill Reichenbach on October 17. The last month, Bill had dealt with pneumonia, sepsis and cancer. Probably all the retirees in Indiana and several employees remember Bill. We remember his off the wall comments, his direct conversation and colorful words, his smelly cigars, his love for the North Vernon theater, his hunting trips to West Virginia and most of all his love for conservation and the land owners. During one of

his trips to the doctor he said, "I was born with polio and will die of cancer but I had one heck of a great life in between." We will miss this great conservation leader, this great man and this great friend.



William Herbert "Bill" Reichenbach
November 18, 1929 ~ October 17, 2020

Kudos to...

Kelly Baze, Management Analyst, for his work with FPAC Property Management leadership in the continued development of the Vehicle Management Tool (VMT). He has been a key national "tester" of new features as they are built prior to full release and has involved other Indiana employees into the "testing" phases. - Submitted by Roger Kult, ASTC for M&S

2020 Northeast Fall Engineering Tour

Submitted by Mike Cox, State Conservation Engineer

The northeast area held its annual Fall engineering tour Friday, October 2 in Ft. Wayne and surrounding Allen County. The first stop was on the trip was the Fox Island county park on the edge of Ft. Wayne. Natalie Haley, park manager, led the group on a walking tour to highlight the unique geology of the park due to glaciation with landforms ranging from wetlands to wooded sand dunes. One of the highlights was viewing the geo garden of stones found nearby which had traveled from Canada during the time of the glaciers.

The next stop on the tour was Eagle Marsh to view a recently installed blind inlet which is helping with drainage through the berm. The berm was designed to keep floodwater from the two basins (Mississippi and Great Lakes) from mixing and allowing the Asian carp access to the Lake Erie watershed. Andrew Pursifull, NE area engineer, talked about the design and recent construction of the blind inlet. Betsy Yankowiak, Director of Preserves/Programs, led the group on the tour of the site.

After lunch, the final stop was Wayne Trace Farms in rural Allen County where Jamie and Traci Bultemeier are the owner/operators. The Bultemeiers took the group on a tour of the farm which included grazing and watering practices, cover crops inter seeded in standing corn, a recently completed two-stage ditch and timber stand improvement. Wayne Trace Farm have incorporated grazing, no-till, cover crops and woodland management on some highly

erodible fields and are improving the soil health daily. All of the practices were accomplished with the technical and financial assistance of NRCS.

It was a great day to see the engineering work of the NRCS and conservation partnership on the landscape in northeast Indiana. Thanks to NE area engineer, Andrew Pursifull for organizing the fall tour and to all who attended for wearing masks and practicing social distancing to allow the outdoor tour to be held.

Both the Fox Island county park (<http://allencountyparks.org/parks/fox-island/>) and Eagle Marsh (<https://www.lrwp.org/eaglemarsh>) are great places to visit so I would encourage anyone in the Ft. Wayne area to check them out.



Natalie Haley, Fox Island county park manager, explains the geology of Fox Island.

Partnership Websites

IN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Bi-Weekly Updates: <http://iaswcd.org/news/newsletter/>

IN Conservation Partnership: <http://icp.iaswcd.org>

IN Dept. of Environmental Management: www.in.gov/idem

IN Dept. of Natural Resources: www.in.gov/dnr

IN State Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation: <http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/>

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service: <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/>

USDA Farm Service Agency: www.in.fsa.usda.gov

Personnel Updates

SELECTIONS FROM VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trevor Winston, Ag Engineer at Greensburg Conservation Delivery Team; effective 8-30-20.

Jason McKittrick, Area Engineer at North Vernon Area Office; effective 8-16-20.

Wes Krug, District Conservationist at Goshen; effective 8-30-20.

Nicholas Burlage, Engineering Technician at Huntington Conservation Delivery Team; effective 10-25-20.

Tatiana Gill, District Conservationist, at Valparaiso, effective 10-25-20.

Kristopher Green, District Conservationist at New Castle, effective 9-27-20.

Billy Sipes, Engineering Technician at Salem Conservation Delivery Team; effective 9-13-20.

PATHWAY CONVERSIONS

Ryan Scully, Soil Conservationist, Pathway Conversion; effective 8-2-20.

Capri Charleston, Soil Conservationist, Pathway Conversion; effective 8-16-20.

RETIREMENTS

Frank Hodges, Engineering Technician, Salem Conservation Delivery Team



Indiana NRCS Picture of the Issue

Indiana NRCS southwest staff are finding new, fun and safe ways to meet face to face during the COVID-19 pandemic. They recently had a post EQIP 20 planning team meeting at a park in Petersburg, Indiana where they were able to get work done while maintaining their social distance.

Mark Your Calenders

NOVEMBER

- 4: SAC/FAC Meeting
- 11: Offices Closed
- 17: Area Conservationist Meeting
- 18: Leadership Team Meeting
- 26: Offices Closed

DECEMBER

- 2: SAC/FAC Meeting
- 15: Area Conservationist Meeting
- 16: Leadership Team Meeting
- 25: Offices Closed

JANUARY

- 1: Offices Closed
- 6: SAC/FAC Meeting
- 11-12: IASWCD Annual Conference
- 19: Area Conservationist Meeting
- 20: Leadership Team Meeting
- 20-22: Indiana HORT Conference and Expo

Happy Holidays!!