

Showcasing Earth Team Volunteers and Activities in Missouri

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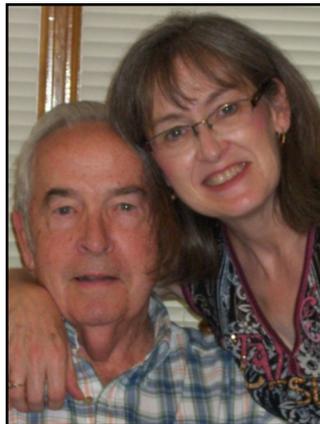


Earth Team Corner

State Coordinator's Corner by Mary Giles

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Mary Giles, State Earth Team Coordinator, and father, Eugene V. Schuler Sr.

When I was a little girl I looked forward to Sunday afternoon drives in the country with my mom and dad. We would meander through country roads and stop frequently to pick up pretty or unusual rocks that we'd collect in the floor of the car and take home. The rocks with sparkles were my favorites, but I never remember asking what we were going to do with them. One

day my dad sectioned off a place in the center of the backyard and began mixing mortar and laying rocks. Although a plumber by trade, my dad was quite an artisan and in time we had the most beautiful circular flower bed and fountain bird-bath. The flower bed and bird bath became a draw for birds of all types, and I developed a love for watching and feeding them.

Last weekend I was sitting at my kitchen table watching the assortment of birds that were eating at a birdfeeder in my backyard, and couldn't help but think that birds, like people, come in different sizes, shapes, and abilities. The world is enhanced by the beauty and ability of each one. **The same can be said about volunteers.**

As I watched, flocks of birds would converge on my feeder and take turns eating or waiting in a nearby tree. Birds know that when they travel together they get more done with less energy. **The same can be said about volunteers.**

Birds don't give up easily. They will return to the same spot over and over if they think they can get something they need or want, such as a worm or a string. **The same can be said about volunteers.**

I believe there is a lesson to be learned from our feathered friends related to our agency's challenge to use more volunteers to accomplish workload.

If you want to begin using and recruiting more volunteers in your office, spread your wings and fly! Start by recruiting family members. Volunteers can be anyone 14 years of age or older. I have personally recruited my husband, an engineer, and our three daughters, an accountant, an attorney, and a photographer. All have served as Earth Team volunteers this past year and used their unique skills to help with agency projects.

My dad is 85 years old and still enjoys watching birds. He knows birds soar if given the opportunity. **The same can be said about volunteers.**

Missouri Earth Team Coordinator's Contact Information

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A Message from the Acting Missouri State Conservationist Karen Brinkman

First Quarter Earth Team Update



Karen Brinkman, Acting Missouri State Conservationist

Greetings Conservationists!

I want to express my appreciation for your assistance in promoting the Earth Team program in Missouri during the first quarter of FY13. I'm pleased to announce that collectively Missouri offices tripled the number of volunteers and volunteer

hours that accrued over the same quarter last year. This is a significant increase and indicates your commitment to placing a high priority on involving volunteers in meeting agency workload requirements. I commend you on your participation!

In reviewing the quarterly report, it appears many of our offices have now established Friends of Conservation groups. Friends of Conservation groups are a great way to capture landowner assistance. Landowners frequently provide assistance to agency and partner employees during conservation planning or implementation visits on their land. Unfortunately, their contributions in the past have not been formally reported as volunteer service. Keeping Friends of Conservation forms in every government vehicle would be a good practice for each office to implement. With this practice in place, employees could easily record this type of service right after it occurs. Forms can be collected and sent every quarter to Area Earth

Team coordinators.

Missouri has set two important goals again this year: 100 percent office participation and 100 percent of offices conducting needs assessments. The deadline for both is June 30. Missouri met these goals last year by the deadline and I expect we will do the same this year. At the end of last year's first quarter, 54 offices reported no participation. This year only 18 offices reported no activity. I challenge these offices to help us meet our goal early, and be at 100 percent by the end of March.

Remember, volunteers come from all walks of life including retirees; students; the unemployed; conservationists and environmentalists; civic-minded groups or individuals; professionals seeking change of pace; NRCS and district staff; and NRCS family members. Be vigilant and active in recruiting these individuals to help us "help people help the land."

*"Missouri has two important goals this year: 100 percent office participation, and 100 percent of offices conduct needs assessments. The deadline for both is June 30."
Karen Brinkman*

University of Missouri Engineering Students Volunteer at Plant Materials Center in Elsberry

Group leader, Troy Chockley, Environmental Engineer, NRCS State Office, Columbia



Five University of Missouri Department of Engineering students signed up as an Earth Team volunteer recurring group to evaluate the seed handling and dust collecting system at the Elsberry Plant Materials Center. The seed cleaning and storage areas are to be expanded and improved based on the Center's long range development plan. The semester-long project, part of a Capstone class, included research into a more efficient and effective use of the facilities and was completed by the Earth Team group.



Area 1

Buchanan County SWCD Hosts Conservation Kids Day

Group leader, Cara Hanway, District Manager, Buchanan County SWCD

“This is a one-time group, with different students helping each year with the event.”

*Mary Beth Jungk,
Area 1 Earth Team
Coordinator*



Students from Bishop LeBlond High School assisted with the SWCD Outdoor Conservation Education event for 4th grade students on October 1-2, 2012. The volunteers led groups of 4th grade students to the different education stations throughout the day to learn about soils, plants, water and wildlife.

Area 2

12th Annual 4th Grade Field Day at Kurrelmeyer Farm

Recurring volunteers assist with event in Gasconade County



Volunteers Debbie Raaf and Kate Gerlemann share the importance of farm animals and how they provide food and clothing during the field day in Gasconade County on October 3-4, 2012. Approximately 209 students attended from 4 schools. Volunteers provided 222 hours of service.

Area 3

Volunteer Assists in Alton Field Office

Individual volunteer assists weekly in Oregon County



Joey Johnson, a sophomore at Alton High School, assists with copying and filing in the Alton Field Office about two to four hours a week. In addition, Johnson assists with special projects, such as preparation for grazing schools and other educational events.

“Joey was recruited by his mother, Freda Johnson, the Oregon County SALT Technician”

Sarah Stubbs, SWCD District Manager, Oregon County

Area 4

Past SWCD Employee, Now Volunteer Assists at Front Desk

Individual volunteer has wealth of experience



Ann Thiesen, former Dallas County SWCD Info/Education employee, volunteers in the Buffalo Field Office quite frequently and assists with a variety of office tasks. Thiesen recently provided needed assistance at the front desk when an employee was on leave. “It is wonderful to have a volunteer who is so competent and can step in and fill a need when necessary,” said Adam Coulter, Dallas and Polk County Earth Team Field Coordinator.



Earth Team Volunteer Tip of the Month



Earth Team Volunteer Security Procedures Required Documents

“The first thing you should do when enrolling a volunteer is determine if the person will have access to PII. Once that is determined, use this guide to complete requirements.”

*Mary Giles,
State Earth Team
Coordinator*

In order to bring an Earth Team Volunteer on staff as quickly and efficiently as possible, the following security determinations have been put in place. Please select from the following options and complete the necessary requirements.

If you have questions regarding security procedures or forms, please contact Missouri State Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Mary Giles at 417-581-2719 extension 130 or by email at mary.giles@mo.usda.gov.

If a volunteer will perform...

Field Work Only

OF-301A (Earth Team Volunteer Form)

Should it be determined that the volunteer will have access or come into contact with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) it is the responsibility of the assigned supervisor to require the volunteer to complete the:

- Annual Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior Training Course (AAC)
- Certification of Natural Resources Conservation Service Acknowledgment of Section 1619 Compliance Form -read/sign/submit. (FVC or AVC)

Field Work and Office Work

- OF-301A (Earth Team Volunteer Form) (FVC or AVC)
- Certification of Natural Resources Conservation Service Acknowledgment of Section 1619 Compliance Form -read/sign/submit. (FVC or AVC)
- IRM-3 (Information System Security Request for User Access to ITS Resources (AAC) (AVC in Area 4)
- Annual Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior Training course (AAC)
- #OF-612 -Optional Application for Federal Employment or Resume (AAC)
- #OF-306 - Declaration for Federal Employment (AAC)
- #SF-85 - Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions (AAC)
- #FD 258-Fingerprint Cards x2 (AAC)
- E-QIP Invitation Sheet -Starts background investigation. Must have working email address. Will be generated by the State Office after other paperwork is submitted.

#Volunteers with previous government security clearance may not be required to complete these forms.

International volunteers must also complete the NRCS-PER-002 -Volunteer Interest & Placement Summary (FVC or AVC) and be approved by the International Program Division (contact SVC for information)

AAC-Area Administrative Coordinator
AVC-Area Volunteer Coordinator

SVC-State Volunteer Coordinator
FVC-Field Volunteer Coordinator

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