

Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District recognizes Earth Team volunteers.

On April 9, 2008, the staff of Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) showed their appreciation for the hard work the Earth Team volunteers are doing. Volunteers are a vital part of the HSWCD team and we depend on them greatly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) need people who are willing to commit their time and talent to conserving and protecting soil, water and wildlife for our community and everyone in it. Our six volunteers have stepped up to the plate and are doing just that.

Earth Team is the voluntary arm of NRCS, the federal branch of HSWCD. Our team consists of Eric Manor, Carl and Anna Fette, Gary Pendrak, Gerald Hibbs and Ed Cunningham. Their purpose is to expand the services that HSWCD offers by donating their time, talent and energy to meet the agency's needs. Their specific goal is to provide over 50 home composting units for the May 8 workshop. So far, they have donated over 130 hours to achieve this goal.

To show our deep appreciation for all of their effort, staff held an appreciation luncheon. Attended by all six volunteers, Commissioner Don Bates, Commissioner Andrew Jackson, Community Services Director June Fisher, HSWCD Supervisor Ida Jackson, Florida Department of Agriculture's Linda Crane and Earl Thomas, spouses and district staff, the luncheon was a wonderful opportunity to thank our Earth Team members.

HSWCD provided hamburgers, grilled by Erin McCarta, Lakes Management Assistant and everyone brought a covered dish. The food was delicious and everyone seemed to have a good time. It was a great opportunity for all to exchange ideas and get to know one another a little bit better.

All six volunteers plan to attend the upcoming workshop on May 8th and share their experiences and knowledge with attendees. This is a good opportunity for future composters to see what their local Soil and Water Conservation District is doing and obtain excellent information on turning garbage into a useful soil amendment.

Everyone who serves on the Earth Team plays an important role in keeping NRCS' long-standing commitment to working with people to protect and conserve natural resources. Across the country, Earth Team has recruited in over 3,000 locations. A variety of people with a variety of skills and talents are part of the team.

Since the early days of this great country, volunteerism has been a tradition that has contributed greatly to communities and organizations. Our community and everyone in it depend on healthy natural resources. Volunteers are a wonderful way to accomplish tasks and goals that would otherwise be difficult because of time and staff restraints.

Our Earth Team volunteers are hard working, creative, imaginative folks with a can-do, get it done attitude. Once again, all the NRCS, HSWCD and Highlands County staff express their gratitude to our wonderful volunteers! We couldn't do it without you.

We are fortunate to have such a great group of Earth Team members. Now as in the past, the Earth Team is continually looking for volunteers who want to help conserve, protect and maintain our natural resources. If you want more information or if you're ready to be part of the team, please call us at (863) 402-6545 and we'll be happy to talk to you about it.