



LA VOZ

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

December 2008 Newsletter

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President's Message

By Luis Hernández



NOPHNRCSE President

Dear NPHNRCSE Friends,

¡Saludos! Let me take this opportunity to wish you a very happy new year. This New Year will bring challenges and opportunities to NPHNRCSE and its members.

Many of us were fully engaged in the NRCS open obligations audit. It was completed in a timely manner thank to your efforts and commitment to NRCS.

A few months ago, the NRCS Civil Rights Division announced the selection of Ms. Jacqueline Padrón as the new NRCS National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager. In this edition of "La Voz" you will find an article that summarizes her professional background. Please help me welcome Jacqueline to the NRCS and the NPHNRCSE family.

I thank the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) for inviting NPHNRCSE to their annual training conference. It was held the week of December 8 – 12, 2008, in Atlanta, GA. I congratulate The Organization for putting together an outstanding conference program. Mr. Kalven Trice, Arkansas State Conservationist, was elected new President of NOPBNRCSE.

The 2009 NOPHNRCSE conference planning committee is fully engaged in this year conference arrangements. The conference will be held the week of August 3 – 7, 2009 in Philadelphia, PA. The contract with Radisson Hotel has been completed. Hotel website is: [http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g60795-d96737-Reviews-Radisson Plaza Warwick Hotel Philadelphia-Philadelphia Pennsylvania.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g60795-d96737-Reviews-Radisson_Plaza_Warwick_Hotel_Philadelphia-Philadelphia_Pennsylvania.html). Keep you eyes open for a “Save a Day” post card. Contact Amanda Hasemeier, (Amanda.Hasemeier@pa.usda.gov) or Irma Hernandez (Irma.Hernández@wdc.usda.gov) if you have any questions about this year annual training conference.

We will start the year releasing the following products:

- 2008 Training Conference Proceedings CD ROM – The CD-ROM contains the majority of presentations of the 2008 conference program.
- "A Day in the Life" Workshop CD-ROM - The CD-ROM contains videos of three NRCS employees with different careers (Soil Conservationist, Soil Scientist and Engineer). The videos focus on what they do and associate it to one or more of the core competencies.
- 2008 NOPHNRCSE Farmer of the Year Conservation Award CD-ROM – The CD-ROM contains a video of Mr. Jesus Castillo, from Santa Maria, CA, recipient of the 2008 award. It also contains all nominated videos for this prestigious award.

Send an email to NOPHNRCSE@hotmail.com to request a copy of these products. Include recipient name and business address in the email. My appreciation goes to Carmen Ortiz (CA), Febe Ortiz (NHQ), Astrid Martinez (WY), Tanya Riehl (ND) and Luis Gamboa (CO) for their efforts compiling the content and creating the CD-ROM's.

"Muchas Gracias" for your continuous support to NOPHNRCSE. I am looking forward for a very productive and successful year. Do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the National Council if you have any questions or would like to make suggestions.

2009 Scholarship Announcement

Gilbert Guerrero, Scholarship and Endowment Fund Committee

The National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPHNRCSE) provides scholarships to deserving Hispanic students that wish to pursue or are pursuing a Bachelors degree in a natural resources or a natural resources conservation-related field of study at an accredited four-year institution.

At least four scholarships of \$1,000 each will be awarded to graduating high school students accepted to an accredited college or university or registered students in their first through third years in an accredited college or university.

Additionally, there will be three specific scholarships that will be awarded: The Martha Guerra-Arteaga Scholarship will be awarded to one female student majoring in public affairs, communications or a natural resources conservation-related field of study; the Coronado-Remides Scholarship will be awarded to an individual that is from the southwest majoring in the Natural Resources related field and; the Ray T. Margo Scholarship which will be awarded to an individual that is majoring in Range Management and is an Upperclassman.

Following are the application form for 2009 and guidelines for completing and submitting the application. The applicant must apply annually. Due date for consideration is February 27th 2009.

Lastly, there will be five additional TRAVEL ONLY scholarships awarded to students to attend the annual conference. This is an excellent opportunity to network and build relationships with NRCS employees in different states and work areas.

For More Information:

Web Site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/>

Email: gilbert.guerrero@ok.usda.gov

Natural Resources Committee Update

Heydsha R. Cordero, Natural Resources Committee

Accept the challenge and be part of this wonderful experience! Submit an abstract for technical poster or oral presentation for our annual training conference. It will be an excellent opportunity to present and let everyone know the latest innovations and information about conservation. Share your personal experience, work, and knowledge in conservation! The friendly audience in Philadelphia, PA, will be eager to listen to you and ask questions in a friendly environment.

For poster presentation each person should carry or mail a frame to display the poster. For oral presentations consider converting your PowerPoint presentation to Flash software.

The first call for poster and paper abstracts will be soon!

Topics for posters and oral presentations are the following:

- Experiences in providing effective and equitable service to customers with the multilingual and multicultural needs.

- Communication methods and materials that reach minority, historically underserved, and nontraditional groups.
- Experiences in cooperative approaches (building partnerships, networking, etc.) for the conservation and protection of natural resources.
- Experiences in locally led, watershed-based approaches for attaining effective resource management.
- Uses of market-based approaches to achieve sound resource management and conservation.
- Development and application of Information Systems that allow more effective conservation services. For example: Use of GIS for more efficient management of resources information and use of GIS in conservation planning.
- Development and transfer of up-to-date technology (tools, techniques, standards) for resource assessment, conservation planning and implementation.
- Instruments or tools like remote sensing, satellite imaging for resource assessment, conservation planning and implementation
- NRCS is responsible for administering “Emergency Watershed Protection Program” (EWP). Emergencies created by a natural disaster, the type of NRCS assistance showing EWP work: debris removal from stream channels, road culverts and bridge abutments; reshaping and protection of eroding banks; repair of levees and structures, and reseeded of damaged areas.

Success stories in any of the following:

A project or conservation practices installed or completed or close to completion that is making a positive contribution to local air quality, water quantity/quality or another local resource concern.

Farm experiences in maximizing fuel efficiency (i.e. program to do conservation tillage or no-tillage, which also improves soil quality and air quality). NRCS support of projects using solar power in farm operations or other renewable energy sources like wind turbines or methane produced by dairy lagoon digesters, which can produce electrical power.

Our new Natural Resources Committee Members 2008 are:

Chair: Tony Resendez, RC&D Coordinator, Brady, TX

Co-chair: Heydsha R. Cordero, Soil Conservationist, Great Falls, MT

Members: Edwin Martinez, District Conservationist; Mario Rodríguez, Agronomist, Mott, ND; Ruben Torres, Soil Conservationist, Steele, ND; Omar Vega, GIS Specialist, Brooklyn Center, MN; Bianca Soto, Soil Conservationist, Skowhegan, ME

Share and forward this announcement to students, NRCS professionals and everyone interested! This will be the greatest opportunity to share and gain experience, knowledge and "Professional Networking" in Philadelphia.

For more information about the technical oral presentations and posters contact:

Tony Resendez (325)-597-4666 or Heydsha R. Cordero (406) 727-7580 x 122.

Membership Dues for Nominations

Rocemi Morales, Membership Committee Chairperson

The planning of the 17th Annual Training Conference in Philadelphia, Penn., is already in progress. Of course it's the end of the year too and by April 25th membership dues will need to be taken care of by those interested in being nominated for positions in the National Council. It is important that we pay our annual dues to our organization whether we are interested in being part of the leadership or enjoying the conference offerings. These dues help us to subsidize the cost of our conferences and other important activities carried out by NOPHNRCSE. By paying your dues you will be able to participate in the decision making process of the organization. By being a member in good standing you can participate in the election and be eligible to hold any position in the National Council. It is very important to be an active member if we want our organization to be a success. Our success depends on each one of us.

There are two ways you can submit your annual dues payment:

- Submitting a check payable to NOPHNRCSE for the amount of the membership you chose along with a completed membership form to: Rocemi Morales, P.O. Box 466, Ashland OH 44805.
- By payroll deduction. Fill out the form AD-1054 "Request for Payroll Deduction", which you can get from your HR personnel and it is also available along with the membership form at the NOPHNRCSE website. If you decide to go with this option, please remember that I still need a completed membership form and a copy of the AD 1054. Please mail a copy at the address above. The original copy of the AD 1054 will go to your HR personnel.

If you are already in payroll deduction, please fill the membership form and mail it to me. In this case, you don't need to fill the AD 1054; this is a continuous deduction and will not stop unless you request it.

**I also want to clarify that if you have not used payroll deduction before you must be aware of the following. If you start the payroll deduction in January of 2009 the deduction will be applied toward the 2010 dues. This means you will have to pay the 2009 dues by mailing a check to my attention.

Please fill and return the form with the payment by April 25, 2009.

NRCS Federal Women's Program News

Sharyn Alvarez, National FWP Manager, Civil Rights Division, Beltsville, Maryland

National FWP Webpage

I am updating my webpage and it will feature a "Professional Development" section that will house .pdf versions of two documents. One will be the "Writing Effective KSAs" book that I have been giving out to employees in my workshop on writing effective KSAs for the past two years. The other is a new item "Preparing for Your Job Interview." So take a few moments to review the webpage and down load these items for your use. Check out the website from time to time, I plan to provide new information that will assist you in moving ahead in your career.

2009 Women's History Month Poster Contest

I am pleased to announce the annual poster contest honoring Women's History Month. The theme for Women's History Month 2009, is "Women: Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet," which will honor "women who have shown leadership in preserving the natural environment and reversing ecological destruction. Women who are scientists, engineers, business leaders, writers, filmmakers, conservationists, teachers, community organizers, religious or workplace leaders, or others whose lives show exceptional vision and leadership to save our planet."

The contest is open to all NRCS employees. This is your chance to demonstrate your creative talents. The employee of the winning poster will receive a \$300 spot award. All submissions will be judged by the poster selections committee. Each of the following requirements for the poster entry must be met:

1. One poster entry per NRCS employee;
2. Poster must be created in an electronic format; i.e. Power point or Microsoft Word;
3. Page set up 11 inches x 17 inches;
4. Theme related;
5. Diversity displayed including women of all races and women with disabilities;
6. Women's History Month and the year 2009 stated;
7. NRCS logo displayed;
8. Short version of the non-discrimination statement present;
9. All entries must be received by the deadline; and
10. All entries must be sent by e-mail.

Entries must be received no later than January 12, 2009. Entries received after that date will not be considered. The final selection will be made by February 13, 2009.

Contact: Send your entry and inquires to Sharyn Alvarez, National Federal Women's Program Manager, via email: Sharyn.Alvarez@wdc.usda.gov.

Recruitment Efforts

Gilbert Guerrero, ASTCFO, Oklahoma and Former National HEPM

On October 6, NRCS sent a team to Texas A&M in Kingsville (TAMUK) for the fall career fair. Gilbert Guerrero, assistant state conservationist for field operations in Oklahoma was the lead for that event. As the National HEPM, Gilbert established ties with several professors and organizations. He is also the interim chair for the Student Endowment and Travel committees of NOPHNRCSE. Utilizing this recruitment effort, Gilbert partnered with the students of Minorities for Agriculture and Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) at a hot dog social to introduce them to NOPHNRCSE and NRCS. He provided a brief overview of the organization and spoke about the scholarship program.

The social drew quite a crowd and interest in NRCS and NOPHNRCSE. Students asked questions about the role of the organization within NRCS and how it benefited the students. Some of the students talked about others that have been given this opportunity to attend the annual conference and also work for NRCS. It was a positive experience for both the students and organizations. NRCS recruitment team was able to visit with nine classrooms, more than 250 students and interview 33 students. Several went away with an understanding about NRCS and NOPHNRCSE. Gilbert offered two female and one male student summer positions with NRCS in Oklahoma, one soil conservationist, range conservationist and civil engineer. All will be placed in Oklahoma for the summer of 2009.

Meet Jacqueline Padrón, Newly Selected NRCS National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager

Luis Hernández, NOPHNRCSE President

It is my pleasure to introduce Jacqueline Padrón, the newly selected NRCS National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager.

Ms. Padrón began her 20-year federal career with the U.S. Postal Service in South Florida. She held various positions in postal operations and Human Resources in the South Florida District, Southeast Area, and Las Vegas District. In 2002, Padrón relocated to the Washington, DC area to manage the Postal Service's National Hispanic Program. She was responsible for developing national strategies that promoted equal employment opportunities for Hispanics in the Postal Service. She was also responsible for outreach within the Hispanic community, providing information regarding employment opportunities and educating the Hispanic community about postal products and services.

In 2007, Padrón was promoted to the Diversity Development Specialist, Team Lead position, where she oversaw the work of several Special Emphasis Program Managers, including the Hispanic Program Manager. She was also the lead on the USPS Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Directive 715 (MD-715) EEO Program Status Report and other diversity-related initiatives.

Padrón is of Cuban descent and a native of Miami. She earned a Bachelors degree in Business Administration from Florida International University and a Master of Social Work degree from Barry University in Florida. She is licensed in the State of Florida and Virginia as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Ms. Padrón is part of NRCS Civil Rights Division staff and she can be reached at 301-504-2336 or jacqueline.padron@wdc.usda.gov.

Please join me in welcoming Ms. Padrón to NCRS and the NOPHNRCSE family.