

Student Completes Internship as Earth Team Volunteer

By Christy Robinson
District Conservationist, Corinth, MS

Jessica Crittenden and her fiancé, Skip Glidewell, were visiting the Booneville USDA Service Center one day last fall getting a newly-acquired farm put into their name. While there, she was introduced to the staff -- Phil Purvis, district conservationist; Stephanie Douglas, soil conservationist; and L. C. Taylor, soil conservation technician.

At that time, Jessica was finishing her Master's Degree in Agribusiness Management at Mississippi State University and needed a place to serve an internship. She had already earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science.

Originally from Kiln, Mississippi, on the Gulf Coast in Hancock County, Jessica thought she may need to move back home or to the Starkville area to complete her internship, but she was new to Prentiss County and wanted to work in the area and meet the people. Stephanie Douglas told her she could intern in the Booneville office if she would sign up as an Earth Team Volunteer. Stephanie had been an Earth Team Volunteer prior to her employment with NRCS. She explained to Jessica the ways that she could assist the office while obtaining the information she needed for her course work.



Jessica visits with a Tishomingo County landowner. She assisted with checking tree planting completed on his EQIP contract.



Jessica is presented the Area 1 Earth Team Volunteer Individual Award by Tom Heard, Area Conservationist.

Jessica began her Earth Team Volunteer experience in January 2007. While learning the history of NRCS, she assisted in a variety of tasks -- assembling folders for EQIP participants; going on inspections of forestland where forestry practices had been completed; surveying ponds and grade stabilization structures; monitoring water quality on Bear Creek in Tishomingo County; and checking soils for a pond site. Jessica learned to operate ARC-GIS, a mapping system used in the NRCS office. She also braved the sleet to assist landowners during the Arbor Day tree sale!

Using the knowledge that she had acquired, Jessica prepared a PowerPoint presentation for her dissertation and presented it to six advisors who would give a grade of pass or fail. She passed with flying colors!

Another interesting fact about Jessica is that during this time, she was also planning a wedding. She married Skip Glidewell on May 19, 2007. They enjoy working together on their cattle farm and in their garden. They canned or froze all the peas, beans, tomatoes, and corn that they harvested.

Jessica is now employed with Farm Service Agency in their mapping section. She credits her time as an Earth Team Volunteer for helping her attain this position. The FSA director said that not many people who apply have an agriculture background, much less experience with NRCS.

Thanks Jessica, for a great experience and we wish you much success in your new job!