

Newton County Conservation Appreciation Day

Over 100 people braved the heat and humidity to attend the Newton County Conservation Appreciation Day on Thursday, July 19, 2001. The event was held at the Newton County Conservation District (NCCD) building and sponsored by both the NCCD and the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). The theme of the event was "Conservation and Your Watershed". Representatives from a wide variety of public and private organizations were on hand to discuss natural resource and conservation related issues with the public in an informal setting. There were ten public and private organizations that set up booths and had representatives available to discuss or answer questions. In addition to the booths and posters, a formal presentation was given on Pasture Management by John Jennings, a Cooperative Extension Livestock Specialist - Foragist, and was well attended.



Casual atmosphere among the displays



**Keeping Cool In
The July Heat**

Dinner was provided to all attendees by the Arkansas Pork Producers Association, Tyson Foods, Midwest Dairy Association and the ADEQ. The menu included pork loin, barbequed chicken, potato salad, baked beans and ice cream. Following dinner, folks continued to view the booths or visited with others until late in the evening.



The following is a brief description of the booths and posters that were on display:

Newton County Conservation District Activities. This booth provided information on the function of the Conservation District and the services it provides to farmers and land owners including; equipment rental, Newton County Buffalo River Watershed Cost Share Project, Stream Bank Stabilization Project and the Piney Creeks Watershed Assessment Project.

Local A.D.E.Q. Conservation Projects. Information was provided on three agriculture related Environmental Preservation Division projects involved in working with local farmers to reduce nutrient loss from manure handling and application to streams. Posters were presented on the Buffalo River Swine Project, the Buffalo River Dairy Project and Pasture Renovation to Reduce Nutrient Loss from Fields Fertilized with Animal Manure. In addition, information on watershed management was presented including posters on “Where Do You Live In Your Watershed” and “Project W.E.T”. Interactive displays introduced the watershed concept to people through large, detailed maps of the Buffalo River Basin in which people could locate where they lived in the watershed. In addition, the use of aquatic macro-invertebrates as indicators of water quality was depicted through a booth where participants matched pictures of the larval stage of aquatic insects with pictures of the adult stage. Prizes were presented for correct matches.



One of the 10 Booths and Posters

Soil Testing & Forage Analysis. The local Cooperative Extension Service representative provided information on and was available to discuss soil testing, soil fertility and nutrient management for optimum agronomic results.

Forestry Best Management Practices. The Arkansas Forestry Commission representatives presented information on ways to reduce logging impacts to surface water. In addition, information was provided on the Red Oak Borer damage to timber, and Oak decline within the hardwood forest of the area.

Private Lands Wildlife Enhancement. The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission was represented by their private lands wildlife biologist. He provided an abundance of literature on the plants and animals of Arkansas as well as advice on how to manage land for wildlife.

Conservation Programs for Landowners and 319 Programs in Arkansas. The Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission representatives presented information on conservation programs targeted at land owners and 319 projects currently under way in the state.

Non Insured Crop Assistance Program. The Farm USDA Service Agency provided information on their recently initiated disaster relief program for farmers.

Nature Conservancy Programs in Arkansas. The Nature Conservancy of Arkansas representative provided information on their organization as well as conservation easements. Of particular interest was their recent acquisition of two large tracts of land on the Strawberry River in Sharp County and their plans to rehabilitate the riparian corridor and develop a model cattle operation where farmers can visit and see BMP's being implemented to reduce the environmental impact of raising beef cattle.

Newton County Farm Bureau. The county office of the farm Bureau provided a broad range of information on farm and agriculture related topics.

Equipment Demonstration. The NCCD and ADEQ had several farm implements on display which are available to local farmers for rent through the Conservation District. Equipment included no-till-drills, pasture renovator, bermuda grass sprigger and agricultural chemical sprayers.