

Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District

Fannin, Rabun, Towns, and Union Counties, Georgia

2013 Annual Report

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We are your LOCAL Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors

The **Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District**, including Fannin, Rabun, Towns and Union Counties, is a legal subdivision of State Government. *Since October 19, 1951* the District has provided an organization which can legally make the most effective use of technical assistance, funds appropriated and contributions made for the conservation of our natural resources. Program activities are directed by a Board of Supervisors. Each County is represented by two District Supervisors. One Supervisor is elected and one Supervisor is appointed by the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Each Supervisor serves without pay. The District is providing leadership in programs that are designed to meet the needs of our land and water resources for the benefit of everyone. A number of agencies are assisting in carrying out the District's Plan of Work. These cooperating agencies include:

- Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA, Farm Service Agency
- UGA Cooperative Extension
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- Georgia Department Of Natural Resources
- Georgia Department Of Transportation
- Limestone Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) -- Fannin
- Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D -- Rabun, Towns & Union

Districts were formed to provide a way that federal government technical assistance to Georgia's citizens could be provided under local direction and priorities. This grassroots approach seems a lot more productive and realistic than trying to solve local soil erosion and flood prevention problems from Washington. We are pleased we made this program work in Georgia and the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District. We work hand in hand with the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service in trying to achieve one simple objective: to treat each acre of land in accordance its needs and use each acre in accordance with capabilities. Since our beginning, SWCD Supervisors have managed to protect soil and water resources to some degree on two-thirds of Georgia's 37 million acres.

The District board continues its leadership role in conservation education. As always, the District's most important educational activity is sponsoring students to the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop. The Board solicits sponsors for students and provided bus transportation to and from the Workshop. The Board also feels it is important that lawmakers be shown Conservation Practices and that a discussion of conservation issues be held. Conservation Tours and discussions with federal and state lawmakers are held to further advance the goals of the District and conservation. Many programs are held in local schools and at colleges. Several programs are given at civic, social and church functions. An area of education of great importance to the District is of self education. Training at the Group II meeting as Supervisor Training sessions enhance understanding and cooperation with agencies.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The District Supervisors work in coordination with local, state and federal agencies, and other organizations to educate the public at field days and tours. These not only educate in new methodologies, but create a greater awareness of our environment.
- Sponsored tours and demonstrations in conservation, and conservation practices including EQIP and other NRCS programs, and 319 Water Quality Projects.
- Promote conservation farming in an effort to reduce erosion on cropland within the District.
- Assisted in the implementation of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Certification Program and encourage county commissioners to enforce their ordinances.
- Continue to encourage watershed sponsors to perform O&M inspections and carry out needed maintenance on all completed flood control structures.
- Urged landowners to join in a partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Inform cooperators of assistance available through NRCS and GA Forestry Commission.
- Promote improvement of water quality by working with counties to stabilize road banks, standardizing proper seeding procedures, and working with major utilities to notify of violations of good conservation practices on their rights-of-way.
- Distributed educational material, Soil & Water Stewardship material throughout the District.
- Work with curriculum directors and teachers to see that beneficial material is incorporated in the schools for a good Conservation Program.
- Produced news articles through NRCS field office and GSWCC Regional Office.
- The Plan Of Work Report is reviewed at least quarterly, to address additional activities that need to be carried out.
- Funded a District Resource Conservation Technician employee, getting additional funding from the local Issuing Authorities.
- District works with community clubs, other government agencies, organizations, churches, schools, etc., to promote the sound conservation of our natural resources.
- The District budget reflects funds established to support all the activities that the District supervisors support.
- The Supervisors support Regional Competition for the Georgia Envirothon.
- The District Annual Report followed the District Supervisors Plan Of Work for 2013.
- Students were sponsored to the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop by the District at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.
- Videos of "All Things Are Connected" were distributed.
- Supervisors paid the District dues to GACDS.
- Supported local teams in the Georgia Envirothon.
- Promoted and sponsored E&SC programs to encourage local communities to enforce their ordinances. Held workshops to educate in the E&S rules and regulations.
- Sponsored a Conservation Tour in July featuring the diversity of agriculture in Towns County.

