



A Word From the Director

As you visit with others you often hear statements like, "When will things return to normal?"

I guess we all individually have our own definition of "normal". I have come to accept that CHANGE is the only thing normal for the age we live in. The rate of change seems to increase each year, along with the speed of life.

As conscientious people, we are off to the next event or problem to solve before we have time to concentrate on the matter at hand. I'm not sure all of this busyness is a good thing, but it is a part of the society in which we live.

At the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission we have been busy at the task of becoming ever more efficient and refocusing on our mission. As budgets decrease in state and federal government, it is incumbent upon us to re-focus and find ways to continue to deliver quality conservation products to Georgia's citizenry. As you read this newsletter, I think you will find evidence of the activities that we are focusing on to meet the natural resource challenges across this state. I am proud of the efforts of the GSWCC staff and the cooperative efforts of our partners.

As we embark on the journey of 2011, I hope you take time to celebrate the success of each day and focus on both small and large accomplishments. I'm certainly going to give it my best effort!

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[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Website Updates

Stay tuned as GSWCC goes public with new interactive GIS maps!

Calendar of Events

Annual Tree Giveaway

Henry and Clayton County

February 18

Contact Region III for more information
(770) 761-3020

Upper Ochlockonee River Basin

319 Field Day

March 10

Contact Coordinator Jonathan Hall for more information (912) 384-4811 ext.3

Georgia Organics

March 11-12

14th Annual Conference & Expo

National Ag Day

March 15

Visit www.agday.org for event ideas, fun facts, & media kits

Georgia Ag Awareness Day at the Capitol



March 22

www.gaaged.org/agawareness

Georgia Florida Tobacco Tour

June 13-15

www.georgiatobacco.com

GAC Appoints New President

Congratulations to Bryan R. Tolar,
President of the Georgia Agribusiness Council.

Regional Office News



John Brazeal

Region I The West Georgia SWCD recognized John Brazeal as their 2010 Conservationist of the Year. The district congratulated John and his wife Janet on their accomplishments and continued stewardship of the land. The Brazeals were honored for installing conservation practices to help protect soil and water resources on their property. John uses a poultry litter compost and stackhouse on his poultry operation, as well as heavy-use-area protection on his cattle watering areas to control animal waste runoff and protect the water quality on his farm.

Region II The Broad River SWCD recognized Ron and Charlotte Ward as the 2010 Conservation Farm Family of the Year. Ron and Charlotte Ward own and operate a 107-acre beef cattle operation in the Rock Branch community of Elbert County. The Wards purchased the farm approximately five years ago after selling their farm in the southern part of Elbert County. The acreage consists of woodland, pastureland, and small fields of hayland. Originally the main goal of the operation was to create an adequate/safe working operation and hay storage facility to provide a better herd management program and to optimize farm production. To accomplish these goals, the Wards are in the process of installing additional fencing to optimize their rotational grazing system.



*NRCS DC, Forrest Ferguson
and award recipient, Ron Ward*

Region III The Henry and Clayton County Soil and Water Conservation Districts' celebrate Arbor Day on the third Friday in February each year. For over a decade these districts have sponsored an Annual Tree Giveaway in an effort to provide the community with tree seedlings and public information about the environmental, social and health benefits of trees. For the upcoming February 2011 giveaway, Henry County will be giving away six varieties



of tree seedlings, including: common pear, crepe myrtle, dogwood, redbud, red maple and white oak. The giveaway will distribute a total of 2,500 trees at three locations in Henry County and an additional 500 common pear and apple trees at the Clayton County extension office.

Volunteers distribute trees at the 2010 Tree Giveaway.



Visitors tour D&A Farm

Region IV The Bentoski family, along with the GSWCC Region 4 office, hosted farm visitors to their working organic operation. D&A Farm is a first generation, small family farm in Zebulon, Georgia operated by Amy, Alan, and Dave Bentoski. While showing visitors around D&A Farm, Dave Bentoski spoke about the importance of crop rotation, cover crops such as oats, rye and legumes that help build nutrients in the soil. Bentoski established drip irrigation on his fields and installed plastic to help retain soil moisture. He applies organic fertilizers to the plants through the drip

irrigation system.

Region VI For seventeen years, the Coastal Resources Division of Georgia DNR has hosted Georgia's largest celebration of our coastal natural resources through CoastFest. This free event provides environmental, educational, and natural resource organizations with an opportunity to provide the public with informative materials concerning the environment and resource conservation. Supervisors from the Coastal and Satilla River Soil and Water Conservation Districts, along with NRCS, RC&D and GSWCC Region 6 staff participated in this year's event that drew over 7,000 attendees.



Region VI staff provide teachers with conservation themed education packets

Outreach Initiative Grant

GSWCC recently received funding to improve Natural Resources Conservation Service program delivery through a targeted outreach grant to help serve Georgia's underserved producers by offering awareness programs, field days, tours and exhibits. GSWCC will partner with Georgia's soil and water conservation districts by coordinating programs that encourage enrollment in state and federal ag conservation programs in underrepresented sectors of the public. Through outreach and education opportunities, GSWCC plans to work with Georgia Young Farmer organizations, as well as the Farm Bureau, Georgia Organics and others, to encourage growth in underserved areas of the state.

If you would like the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission to speak to a group in your area about federal and state conservation program opportunities, please contact Loren Moore at lhebert@gaswcc.org.

Rural Water Resources Program - 319 Water Quality Projects



Heavy-use-area limits soil erosion around watering trough

Under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) awards a Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant each year to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) to fund eligible projects that help support the implementation of Georgia's Nonpoint Source Management Program. Nonpoint source programs manage water quality in Georgia and work to control sources of pollution, including erosion & sedimentation and nutrient sources associated with agricultural operations. Section 319(h) grant funds are awarded for the purpose of implementing projects designed to prevent,

control and/or abate non point source pollution. Over time, the state of Georgia has been awarded more than \$65 million to restore and protect water quality through Section 319 funding. These grant awards are competitively awarded to public agencies and are supplemented by a 40 percent funding match from the state.

The Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission actively competes for federal water quality funding in order to continue offering cost-share programs to private landowners throughout the state. These funding opportunities help Georgia's citizens build sustainable agriculture by voluntarily implementing conservation practices on their lands.

319 Water Quality Programs

Section 319(h) water quality projects help Georgia landowners develop farm-specific nutrient management plans. GSWCC staff work with NRCS and the UGA Extension Service to conduct soil testing and determine crop nutrient needs on landowner operations. GSWCC and partner agencies are able to advise producers about optimal fertilizer use to improve crop productivity while limiting nutrient runoff into surface waters.

Section 319(h) Projects offered through GSWCC primarily promote the installation of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural operations located in GAEPD listed 305(b)/303(d) impaired watersheds. Projects traditionally offer 60 percent cost-share funding for participating landowners, with additional funding for increased buffer fencing along streams and ponds. BMPs improve surface water quality on a variety of



farming operations and may include: stackhouses, poultry incinerators & composters, heavy-use-area protection, watering facilities, winter feeders, and stream crossings. *Stackhouses prevent nutrient runoff from poultry litter during rain events by providing covered litter storage*

GSWCC depends on partnerships between state and federal agencies, as well as Georgia's soil and water conservation districts, to distribute 319 funding to landowners and protect natural resources statewide. Check out our website to learn about 319 water quality projects in your area.

[Download a PDF file of our Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture Manual here.](#)

Recent Projects

Upper Satilla River Basin TMDL Implementation Project - offered in portions of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Coffee, Irwin, Jeff Davis, and Ware counties, helped landowners to install \$789,630 in locally distributed BMP dollars over a five year period.

Upper Broad River Watershed TMDL Implementation Project - distributed in portions of Banks, Franklin, Habersham, Jackson, Madison and Stephens counties; producers installed \$322,863 in 319 funds over the last three years.

Upper Ochlockonee River Basin TMDL Implementation Project - serves areas of Colquitt, Grady, Mitchell, Thomas, and Worth counties and has distributed \$261,098 in 319 water quality funds during the past three years.

Georgia's Market Bulletin Needs Your Support

The *Market Bulletin* has been in production since 1917 and subscriptions are needed to cover production costs. Georgia residents can subscribe for \$10 per year, \$20 for out-of-state subscribers. Subscription information is available at www.thegamarketbulletin.com.

Act now if you want to keep the Georgia Department of Agriculture's *Market Bulletin* in production!

Flood Control Program - Watershed Updates



Marbury #22

The Natural Resource Conservation Service is the recipient of additional funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program (REHAB). The REHAB Program, which has been in place since 2000, allows NRCS to provide technical and financial assistance to watershed sponsors to rehabilitate aging dams. Most of the soil and water conservation district sponsored watershed dams were built in the 1950's-1970's and now, over 150 of these

dams are classified as Georgia Safe Dams high hazard structures. This classification requires that these dams be upgraded in order to meet state and federal safe dam requirements that are designed to protect the dams and existing structures in the breach zones. The construction phase of the REHAB program is now underway, with work currently in progress on four of the five selected dams.

Marbury Creek #22, Barrow County

Little Sandy Creek and Trail #1, Madison County

South River #4, Madison County

Sandy Creek #15, Jackson County

Sandy Creek #23, Jackson County



Marbury Creek #22 and Little Sandy #1 are both nearly complete, with only vegetation establishment remaining.

The concrete chute on Little Sandy Creek #1

Sandy Creek #15 is currently being built and

blasting to remove rock will begin shortly on South River #4.

GSWCC Staff News

January 2011

John Loughridge has been named the new Region I Regional Representative. John has been with GSWCC for six years, most recently as the interim Regional Representative.

GSWCC welcomes Mr. Ernie Babb, Information Technology Project Specialist in the Athens office, and Lance Wyant, Administrative Assistant for the Region V office, to the Commission staff.

GACDS Annual Meeting



Meeting attendees prepare to bid on items during the live auction

The Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors held their 67th annual meeting on January 21-23 at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah, Georgia. Thirty-two soil and water conservation districts were represented and a total of 86 district supervisors attended the event. Supervisors received reports from partner agencies and a keynote address from U.S. House of Representatives member, the Honorable Jack Kingston. Attendees learned about Farm Bill Programs and had the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions covering forestry resources assessments, honey bee pollinator habitat,

herbicide resistant weed control and erosion & sediment control. UGA professor Jon Calabria

displayed landscape designs of the planned Conservation Education Center that were created by UGA landscape architecture students. Donations, pledges and auction bids contributed a total of \$9,554 to the Conservation Education Center fund. The meeting concluded Saturday afternoon with tours of the Bethesda Home for Boys and a display of conservation practices on Coastal supervisor Pete Waller's Ottawa Farm.

GACDS Awards & Scholarships

Hall of Fame Inductees:

Bob Plemons (Catoosa SWCD)

James W. Dobson (Blue Ridge Mtn SWCD)

Poster Contest Winners:

(K-1st grade) Lucy Park

(2-3rd grade) Willow Hill

(4-6th grade) Sean McOsker

(7-9th grade) Andrea Doud

GACDS Scholarship: Jeff Belflower

Thompson Family Scholarships: Mary Rebecca

Estes & Andrew Ross

Auxiliary Scholarship: Cody Seagraves

Superior Professional Support: Gene Oliver (Coastal RC&D)

Supervisor of the Year: Pete Fulcher (Brier Creek SWCD)

District of the Year: Hall County

Congratulations to Willow Hill and Sean McOsker, 1st and 2nd prize winners of the national NACD Poster Contest!



Hall County supervisors pose for a photo with poster contest winners

Looking for more information? Contact your local GSWCC office!

Region I

Rome Office - John Loughridge

Region1@gaswcc.org - (706) 295-6131

Region II

Athens Office - Robert Amos

Region2@gaswcc.org - (706) 552-4479

Region III

Conyers Office - Russell Toning

Region3@gaswcc.org - (770) 761-3020

Region IV

Milledgeville Office - Keegan Malone

Region4@gaswcc.org - (478) 445-5766

Region V

Dawson Office - Luke Crosson

Region5@gaswcc.org - (229) 995-6001

Region VI

Statesboro Office - Rahn Milligan

Region6@gaswcc.org - (912) 681-5241

visit us on the web at www.gaswcc.georgia.gov

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