



A Word From the Director

As a conservation-based service agency, the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission has made significant operational changes during the past two fiscal years to meet an ever shrinking budget. These changes have challenged us to become more efficient and mission oriented, resulting in a more streamlined agency that addresses the conservation needs of Georgia's citizenry.

In the months ahead, we look forward to working jointly with the ten Regional Water Councils as they select practices to address water quality and quantity needs in each respective council area and finalize draft regional water plans as part of the State Water Planning process. GSWCC and Georgia Forestry Commission staff have begun the annual collection of water usage data from the 10,000+ agricultural water meters across the state which will provide current water use data for policy makers. Our Urban Erosion Control & Certification Program staff has begun making updates to program curriculum to address abandoned development sites and tertiary permittees. Following the recent completion of the engineering phase, the GSWCC Watershed Program will soon begin construction on five watershed structures to complete upgrades required under the Safe Dams Act.

As the fall harvest season is fully underway all across the state, it's the time of year for farmers to gather the fruits of their efforts during the growing season. Through the activities mentioned above and the many other activities detailed in this newsletter, GSWCC looks forward to partnering with you to harvest great accomplishments for conservation across Georgia.

In This Issue

- GSWCC Honors Recent Retirees
- Regional Office News
- Featured Program
- Featured Conservation District
- Rural Water Program Updates
- Targeted Outreach Grants Awarded

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Calendar of Events

**Warren County SWCD,
Conservationist of the Year
Banquet**

October 21, 7 p.m.
Warrenton Community Services
Building, *Region 4*

[Georgia National Fair](#)

October 7-17, Perry

[Sunbelt Ag Expo](#)

October 19-21, Moultrie

**Middle South Georgia SWCD
Conservationist of the Year
Banquet**

November 4, Georgia Agrirama,
Region V

**[Georgia Agritourism
Conference](#)**

November 3-5, Dillard

**[Georgia Farm Bureau Annual
Meeting](#)**

December 5-7
Jekyll Island Convention Center

**[Georgia Young Farmers Annual
Convention](#)**

January 28-29, 2011
Savannah Marriott Riverfront

**[Georgia Association of
Conservation District
Supervisors Annual Meeting](#)**

January 21-23, 2011

GSWCC Honors Recent Retirees

The Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission would like to honor several employees that retired in September 2010. Thank you for many years of commitment and service to our agency and the state of Georgia. We wish you the greatest happiness in your future endeavors.



Debbie Bray began her employment with the GSWCC in February 1996. During her time at the Commission, Debbie has held the title of Receptionist and Secretary in the state office in Athens. Enjoy your future adventures Debbie!

Wyukia

Coleman worked in the GSWCC Athens office for over 31 years! She has worn many hats during her employment with the Commission, most recently she served as Administrative Assistant for the Erosion & Sediment Control Program.



Keith Gilmer started working with GSWCC in May 1982. For the past 28 years Keith has successfully lead the Region One office as Regional Representative. Be sure to check out Region I news to read about Keith's special recognition by Union County, Georgia.

NRCW Turns 50!

June 2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Ga. Plans for a special celebration are already underway; any information alumni can provide about the impact the workshop had on their professional and personal lives would be greatly appreciated. All NRCW alumni are invited to attend. To share your stories, or simply attend this event, send your contact information and the year you attended to:

nrcw@abac.edu

Natural Resources

Conservation Workshop

ABAC 44, 2802 Moore

Highway



Hyatt Regency Savannah

Landowner's Guide to Conservation

The 4th edition of the Landowner's Guide to Conservation Incentives in Georgia is now available online.

[Download your copy here!](#)

GADCS Annual Meeting Reminder

We hope you are making plans to attend the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors 2011 Annual Meeting, Jan. 21-23 at the Hyatt Regency Savannah. This year the association has an exciting list of new events planned. Be looking for your registration packet in the mail! For more information email ccarrell@gacds.org.

NEW Breakout Sessions!

Forestry practices that aid
pollinator habitat
Herbicide resistant weed
control
Erosion control

Updates on Supervisor Duties & District Law

GACDS has invited the Office of the Attorney General and State Ethics Commission to share important updates on statutory requirements.

Conservation Education Center Planning

This is your chance to help!
*Come work with GACDS and
the UGA College of
Environment & Design to plan
the Conservation Education
Center development site.*

Regional Office News

Region I

Blue Ridge Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District supervisors hosted a Summer Conservation Tour on July 16, 2010. Supervisors visited Big Creek Alpaca Farm in Cherry Log and viewed best management practices including; use exclusion fencing, rotational grazing with cross fencing, and stream crossings. The tour also included Terry Stanley's cattle and horse farm on the Toccoa River, where the group observed examples of a watering ramp, rotational grazing and pasture planting. After the tour a meal was provided at district supervisor Richard Stanley's home by his wife Anne. The Blue Ridge Mountain District's conservation tour successfully showcased soil and water conservation practices, as well as the natural beauty of the North Georgia mountains.



John Loughridge, Region I staff member, worked with elementary students at Floyd County Ag Day on the Coosa Valley Fairgrounds in Rome to teach soil and water resource conservation.



Union County Commissioner Lamar Parish officially declared September 17th as a county holiday celebrating the Commission's own Keith Gilmer. Parish's proclamation came as Gilmer retires from GSWCC after 28 years of service as the Region I Representative. Keith will be missed by both Commission employees and district supervisors. Each of the six districts in Region I have made a point to honor Gilmer in their own special way.

Region II

Regional Representative, Robert Amos and Region II Resource Specialist, Kelli Coleman made a special visit to middle and high school agriscience students at Athens Christian School on September 21, 2010. Region II staff taught classes on soil; what soil is, how it's formed, and how to conserve it. Students received hands-on experience with the Enviroscape model, soil monoliths and soil samples taken from Whitehall Forest, a research facility operated by UGA's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources.



Be sure to check out the Region II spotlight on Hall County as this quarter's featured conservation district!

Region IV

The Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District welcomed 120 attendees to the Warrenton Biomass Facility Update and Georgia Piedmont Timber Land Sales Trends Workshop presented on September 2, 2010. Jesse Johnson of the Southern Land Exchange discussed timber land prices in the region and the future of timber land sales in the Piedmont area. Oglethorpe Power representatives John Puckett and Mike Price provided information on the biomass facility that is planned for Warren County and the impacts that it could have on the local timber industry. The workshop was sponsored by the Southern Land Exchange, Georgia Forestry Commission and Warren County SWCD. Partners for the event included: GSWCC, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Central Savannah River RC&D.



Region V

On September 28-30, 2010, GSWCC, in conjunction with Keep Albany-Dougherty Beautiful and the Flint River Water Planning & Policy Center, hosted the 8th Annual Water Festival at the Albany RiverQuarium. The festival included exhibits ranging from mosquito control to nonpoint source pollution, and presented a variety of topics including weather and the effects of soil erosion. Approximately 900 fifth graders from surrounding areas attended the event over the three day



period. GSWCC staff demonstrated a Running Water exhibit, encouraging students to divide into two teams and run a relay race while carrying a pre-measured bucket of water. Teams that finished with the most water remaining in the bucket were deemed winners and rewarded with a prize. Other teams also received an award after answering quiz questions.



Region V Representative, Luke Crosson and regional Administrative Assistant, Pam Nichols helped to plan the event. Crosson, who has participated in the Water Festival since its beginning, explains "the Flint RiverQuarium provides an excellent backdrop for an event such as this. In addition to the great exhibits that educate the students on ways in which we, as humans, rely upon and are affected by water, the aquarium gives the students a chance to observe, first hand, many of the diverse plant and animal species that depend on the Flint River ecosystem for their survival." The Flint RiverQuarium is located on the banks of the

Flint River in Albany, Ga. Visitors can experience the unique ecosystems of the Flint River Watershed through a variety of interactive exhibits featuring more than 100 species of native aquatic life.

Ag Water Metering Program



METERING PROGRAM HISTORY

In 2003 the Georgia General Assembly passed and Governor Sonny Perdue signed House Bill 579, requiring all permitted irrigation surface & groundwater withdrawals in Georgia to be metered by 2009. Along with other water management tools, like end gun shut-offs and uniformity tests, agricultural water meters can be used as a tool to quantify irrigation water use. Part of GSWCC's mission is to maintain an Agricultural Water Metering Program that meets Georgia's water needs while efficiently utilizing water resources by installing, maintaining, and monitoring state owned water meters on private irrigation systems. GSWCC seeks to provide state leaders with current water-use data in order to make water management decisions that maximize the efficient use of Georgia's natural resources and supplies irrigators with up-to-date technology that reduces irrigation costs and increases crop production. Monitoring irrigation systems helps GSWCC to aid in the development of water conservation programs and contributes to the development of the State Water Management Plan.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GSWCC has worked along with the GA Environmental Protection Division and the US Geologic Survey to plan a basin approach for the Ag Water Metering Program, targeting priority watersheds with higher annual irrigation rates. Agricultural water use data is managed to provide accurate, up-to-date information to state policy decision makers while also ensuring the privacy rights of individual landowners. The Ag Water Metering Program has installed 10,361 flow meters as of May 2010, and will continue to perform meter maintenance in four year intervals. Many Georgia producers have worked with GSWCC to install meters on their own operations. The Ag Producers Champion Program has identified commendable farmers throughout the state that have acted as leaders in their own community by being the first to volunteer to work alongside GSWCC to monitor irrigation water use.

In 2004 GSWCC began working with the USGS to select 198 sites to monitor agriculture water telemetry in Georgia. The Ag Water Telemetry Metering Program is a network of monitors that remotely measure and report weekly basin and sub-basin readings including; water use (acre inches), seasonal water use and rainfall data.

As irrigation meters are installed across the state, Georgia officials have the tools required to better analyze water use. Regional leaders can then make educated decisions about water use in their area.

EDUCATION

GSWCC provides workshops and information sessions for Georgia's irrigators, detailing how to read meters and apply water use data as on-farm management tools that increase crop production and lower irrigation costs. GSWCC works in conjunction with partner agencies like the National Peanut Research Laboratory, RC&D Councils, GA Farm Bureau and other state entities to provide tools such as the UGA water use graphs and Irrigator Pro to agricultural producers across Georgia. One of the Commission's strongest partner alliance lies with the locally led soil & water conservation districts. District supervisors assist with statewide activities and field days designed to educate agricultural producers about the use and functionality of ag water meters.

The Ag Water Metering Program promotes smart irrigation methods that compliment wise resource use. GSWCC provides annual irrigation reports to landowners, detailing water use on each farm tract. Supplying farms with yearly water usage reports helps agricultural managers to reduce pumping costs, improve efficiency and profitability, and conserve farm water resources. In the near future, GSWCC will work to provide regional water use data that can be used by research agencies to compare water use for specific crops.

District Spotlight: Hall County Soil & Water Conservation District



Top L-R: D. Sewell Blackstock, Billy Skaggs, Mark Spence, Gene Anderson, Buddy Bellflower
Bottom L-R: Mike Haynes, Jane Hemmer, T. Larry Nix

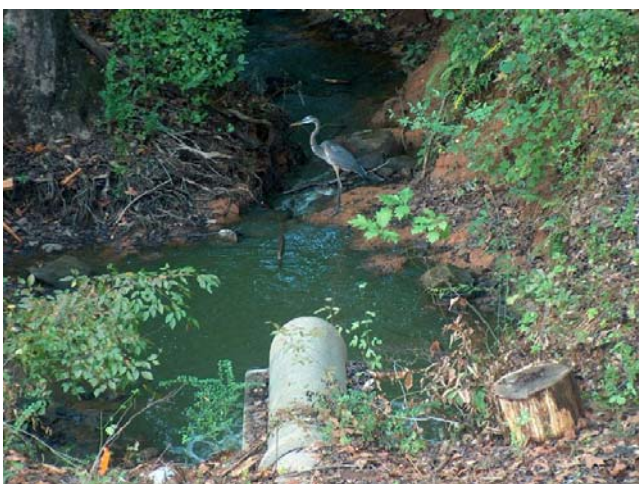
Nestled in the heart of Northeast Georgia, Hall County has been the focal point for arts, education, government, and business for nearly two centuries. Lake Lanier and the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains provide a beautiful backdrop for Hall County's varied mix of agriculture and urban industries. Since its formation in 1983, Hall County Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors have been active in their community providing Hall County

with a strong foundation in conservation and land management.

The district hosts a variety of activities throughout the year to provide conservation education opportunities for everyone in the county, including Tadmore Elementary School students at annual Ag Day events and government officials at Agribusiness Award Meetings. This past year alone, Hall County SWCD participated in over a dozen events to address local concerns; sponsoring the Farm City Breakfast, holding a poster contest for the Hall County Girl Scouts Chapter, hosting an annual Christmas banquet for affiliate members, supporting the Section 319 Mud Creek Project, and distributing Soil Stewardship Week materials to local schools and churches. Each fall at their annual affiliate member banquet, the district honors the outstanding achievements of one farm family and recognizes the support and dedication of one local business. The district is also keenly aware of the importance of protecting the health of local waterways by thoroughly reviewing and approving Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Plans.

This forward thinking district keeps in touch with the ever changing landscape of Hall County. In order to give the community a more complete look at the changes that have taken place in the county over the past century, the Hall County SWCD began working with Gainesville State College to digitize the 1955 and 1980 aerial maps of the county. The project was completed this past year and can be viewed [here](#). The next time you are driving along Highway 129 and pass the sign, "Entering Hall County Soil and Water District", know that you have entered a county where residents have imparted a love of the land to each new generation and continue to practice a relentless dedication to protecting the surrounding landscape.

Rural Water Program Updates



Plunge pool at Little River #15 in Cherokee County

The Watershed Dams Program remains busy with multiple ongoing projects.

REHABILITATION PROGRAM: The Rehabilitation Program is nearing the start of the construction phase for five watershed dams chosen for upgrades. The purpose of the program is to improve watershed flood control dams that are out of compliance with Georgia's Safe Dam Requirements. Structure upgrades are made possible utilizing 65% federal

funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; the remaining 35% of the program will be funded through state bond money.

The first pre-bid meeting for the REHAB program was held July 27, 2010 on the site of

Marbury Creek #22. Contractors from 12 different construction firms were present for the showing of the dam. On Tuesday, August 10, 2010 potential bidders from 29 different construction agencies were given tours of Sandy Creek #15 and South River #4. Little Sandy Creek, Trail #1, and Sandy Creek #23 were also toured by potential bidders. At each dam site, representatives from GSWCC, NRCS, and the Georgia State Financing & Investment Commission gave an overview of the bid schedule and the work to be performed. Following bid submissions, subsequent firms were awarded contracts:

Little Sandy Creek & Trail #1, Madison Co. - Charles L Sullivan Construction

Marbury Creek #22, Barrow Co. - J&K Utilities

Sandy Creek #15, Jackson Co. - Brasfield and Gorrie General Contractors

South River #4, Madison Co. - Sunbelt Structures

MAINTENANCE PROGRAM: J&K Utilities was recently awarded maintenance contracts on three watershed dams in Northeast Georgia. Trees have been cleared and grubbed and planting completed on Grove River #59 in Banks County. Gate repair on the principle spillway riser of Middle Oconee #6 in Jackson County is now complete. Upper Mulberry #8 in Hall County has been mowed and trees cleared from the dam's edge and around the plunge pool.

GSWCC has entered a new partnership with the Georgia Department of Corrections to allow inmates to perform maintenance on flood control dams, beginning with Sharp Mountain #13 in Pickens County. A skilled team of inmates serving short sentences for minor offenses will cut trees and clear brush from the dam under the supervision of DOC guards. The Commission would like to extend a special thank you to Jerry Edwards of the Limestone Valley SWCD, Pickens County, and Region I staff for helping with this endeavor.

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM: On Thursday, August 12, 2010 potential bidders toured sites chosen for emergency repair due to damages incurred from September 2009 floods. Representatives from GSWCC, NRCS and GSFIC overviewed the required renovations for Little River #25, #39 and #40 in Fulton County. Minor repairs include filling holes in auxiliary spillways that were created during flooding. The City of Roswell will be assisting GSWCC in this project with repairs on Little River #39. USDA-NRCS is providing matching funding for the sites.

Targeted Outreach Grants Awarded

The Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission and GACDS each received \$25,000 in grant awards through the Natural Resources Conservation Service for targeted outreach initiatives. The program seeks to improve NRCS conservation program delivery to Georgia's underserved producers through awareness programs, field days, tours and exhibits. GSWCC will use the allotted funds to target young, beginning producers. Both groups will partner with NRCS to provide education opportunities across the state.

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

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

Region V
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