



## A Word From the Director

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission continues to look for new and improved ways for Georgia citizens and our partners to access the natural resource information necessary to make informed natural resource management decisions. Our new "Interactive Mapping Experience" is the latest endeavor to provide information on our various soil and water conservation projects across the state. Visit our website [www.gswcc.georgia.gov](http://www.gswcc.georgia.gov) and click on the link under 'Announcements' to view this new tool.

In August, GSWCC welcomed Mr. Hal Haddock from Early County as a new State Board Member. Mr. Haddock's background in row crop production, irrigation and water conservation will serve the agency well. I would like to express our thanks to Mr. Steve Singletary who served faithfully as our previous Southwest Georgia board member for eight years.

I encourage you to stay engaged in the 2012 Farm Bill discussions and agricultural appropriations deliberations in our nation's capital. It is vital that the agricultural community share its views and ideas so that the resulting Farm Bill will be beneficial for the many conservation efforts underway in Georgia.

I hope you enjoy reading about the many programs and activities of GSWCC and local soil and water conservation districts across the state in this addition of our newsletter. Look for our display at the many workshops and conferences taking place in Georgia this fall and winter.

Thanks for reading,

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## Calendar of Events

### 12th Annual Coastfest

**October 1**  
Brunswick, Ga (10 - 4 p.m.)

### Introduction to Standard Bred Poultry

**October 5**  
Brooklet, Ga

### Georgia National Fair

**October 6-16**  
Perry, Ga

### Outside the Box Farming

**October 14**  
Newton, Ga

### Sunbelt Ag Expo

**October 18-20**  
Moultrie, Ga

### Farm to Fork Conference

**November 1-2**  
Tifton, Ga

### Royal Alpaca Challenge

**November 5-6**  
Conyers, Ga

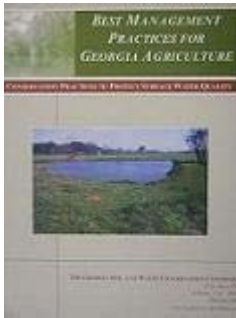


## Southern Woodland Owners Conference and Solutions Fair

*For Today's Private Timberland  
Owners*

### Electronic Publications

GSWCC is currently working to update the 'Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia'. The manual outlines vegetative and structural best management practices (BMP's) for land disturbing activities in the state. Electronic publication of the updated manual is set for the end of 2012. **Download your copy today** from the GSWCC website.



The 'Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture' manual is also available for electronic download.

This document, distributed by GSWCC, outlines conservation practices that protect surface water quality. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this manual, [click here](#).

The Southern Woodland Owners Conference and Solutions Fair will take place **November 1-2, 2011** at the UGA-Tifton Campus Conference Center.

The fair will offer pre-conference field trips to farms in Sumner and Cordele, Ga, as well as talks on timberland value trends, cutting edge seedling development, intergenerational land transfer, and forest certification.

### **Register today!**

For more information contact:  
UGA Tifton Conference Center  
(229) 386-3416

Thank You  
to GSWCC's Supporting Partners!

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission has generously received \$500,000 from **OneGeorgia** for agricultural water metering programs in fiscal year 2012.

In addition, the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** will begin a three-year, technical service agreement with GSWCC, in October of this year, to support the Mobile Irrigation Lab Program.

### GSWCC Offers New Interactive Maps

Use this tool to create, customize and print online maps. Create an interactive map to find soil and topographic features on your own property, review impaired stream data on a county level, or view GSWCC conservation programs statewide.

**Visit the [Announcements](#) section of our homepage and take advantage of this new online mapping tool!**

### Pine Mountain District Encourages Exercise through School Walking Trail

In order to add something special to the grounds of the new Marion County Middle/High School, the Pine Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is working with UGA students, GSWCC staff, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and school officials to plan and design a new walking trail for Marion County students.

The design team hopes the new walking trail will improve wellness in the school system as well as the

nearby community, by serving as an accessible means for exercise. The Pine Mountain SWCD hopes to incorporate natural elements in the trail so that it also serves as an outdoor learning environment. Plans have been made to plant native trees along the path and install public benches and picnic tables.



*The Marion County School's walking trail design team meets to discuss future plans for the trail.*

The Marion County Middle/High School walking trail is proposed as a five-year project that will be funded through grants and donations, and will be maintained in the future through a joint effort by the school's agricultural department and student groups from UGA and ABAC.

The Pine Mountain District annually sponsors the Pine Mountain Forestry Field Day, traditionally held in March of each year, on the school grounds. The field day serves to prepare students for the FFA's regional competition, organized by the Georgia Department of Education. Events generally include a turkey-calling contest, hands-on wildlife competition, and conclave events (bow shooting, cross-cut sawing and pole felling) for students.

## USDA's StrikeForce Initiative in Georgia



In an effort to alleviate persistent poverty conditions in Georgia, Arkansas and Mississippi, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack instigated the StrikeForce initiative to provide technical support for limited resource producers in the South.

[Click here](#) to find a list of designated StrikeForce counties in Georgia and find out what resources are available to help improve farming operations in the state's rural farming communities.

## Regional Office News

### Region I-Northwest Georgia

GSWCC is implementing a new cost-share program in the Middle Coosawatee River Watershed to help farmers implement best management practices (BMPs) on their land. The project area primarily covers North Central Georgia's Gordon and Pickens counties, and extends to areas of Murray, Gilmer, Bartow and Cherokee counties. Targeted streams in the watershed include: Lick Creek, Salacoa Creek, Talking Rock Creek and Little Scarecorn Creek.

The goal of this grant is to protect and improve water quality in the Middle Coosawatee Watershed through the installation of agricultural BMPs. **If you are a poultry or cattle producer** interested in implementing BMPs such as stackhouses, incinerators, composters, exclusion fencing, heavy use areas, alternative watering sources and/or stabilized feeding areas, you may be eligible to receive assistance through this project. Contact Leigh Rush, Project Coordinator for more information about the program at [lrush@gaswcc.org](mailto:lrush@gaswcc.org) / (706) 295-6131. To download an application, visit the [GSWCC website](#).

## **Region II-Northeast Georgia**

On July 31, 2011, GSWCC closed out the Upper Broad Watershed 319 Project. This project dispursed a total of \$337,164 on 30 agricultural operations in Banks, Madison, Franklin and Stephens counties in Northeast Georgia. Federal funding from the cost-share program guided water quality improvements on impaired stream sections of the Upper Broad Watershed.

The Walton County and Oconee River SWCD's hosted a Forest Management Field Day on September 22, 2011 through an NRCS outreach grant provided to the Oconee River District. Field day activities took place at the Julian E. Brown Environmental Study Area in Monroe. Visitors learned about managing forestland for timber production, forest pest management and prescribed burning practices.



## **Region IV-Central Georgia**



The Lamar and Towaliga SWCDs hosted a Pollinator Habitat Workshop early this summer at the Barnesville Civic Center. The workshop educated attendees about Georgia's agricultural productivity and its direct link to the health of native pollinators and honey bees. According to Jennifer Berry of the UGA Honey Bee Lab, more than 90 food, fiber and seed crops rely on pollinators for reproduction.

The Central Georgia SWCD hosted a tour of Mage Solar, a solar training and manufacturing facility in Dublin, on July 21, 2011. Approximately 30 individuals attended presentations about the workings of solar panels, the benefits of solar power, and its various uses. Mage Solar representatives generously offered a group tour of the solar training facility and demonstrated solar power applications.

## **Region V-Southwest Georgia**

The Pine Mountain SWCD hosted their 27th Annual Forestry Field Day at the Marion County High School in Buena Vista, Georgia. Nearly 250 students from twelve surrounding counties participated in this year's event to prepare for area and state forestry competitions. Cedar Creek Logging Inc. donated a truck load of logs for the day, while Pine Mountain Supervisor, Lee Lucas (pictured right) assisted students with the Weight Estimation Contest.



On April 27, 2011, the Lower Chattahoochee SWCD hosted its Annual Coastal Plain Grazing Field Day at the Jimmy Carter Plant Material Center in Americus. Bill Hodge of Hodge Ranch in Carrollton discussed beef genetics and forage systems. Over 50 guests attended a tour of the Plant Materials Center and received information about native warm season grasses and silvopasture. The event was a huge success thanks to the efforts of GSWCC, the Lower Chattahoochee SWCD, NRCS and the Two Rivers RC&D Council.

Fifth graders in Moultrie, Ga received a presentation on Agricultural Awareness & Stewardship on May 4th from GSWCC staff, Luke Crosson and Jonathan Hall. Students learned about the importance of conservation and preserving the planet for future generations.

### **Region VI-Southeast Georgia**



The Ogeechee River SWCD hosted an irrigation workshop in Statesboro, Ga on September 8, 2011. The workshop engaged 75 attendees and covered a variety of topics relating to agriculture and irrigation in the state, including: subsurface drip irrigation, irrigation equipment and controls, and irrigation scheduling.

### **2012 Farm Bill**

The uncertainty in Washington over future spending is weighing in heavy on the 2012 Farm Bill. Both House and Senate agricultural committees are waiting for the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to release a total dollar figure for future spending in the new bill before Thanksgiving. Conservation and farm programs are currently operating under the 2008 Farm Bill, which is set to expire on September 30th of next year. Contact your state representatives to show your support of these critical programs and check out the website links below to keep up-to-date with issues surrounding the 2012 Farm Bill.

[www.agriculture.house.gov](http://www.agriculture.house.gov)

[www.ag.senate.gov](http://www.ag.senate.gov)

[www.farmpolicy.com](http://www.farmpolicy.com)



### **Construction Means Progress for the Watershed REHAB Program**

GSWCC's Small Watershed Rehabilitation (REHAB) Program continues to bring Category 1 dams into compliance with federal Safe Dam criteria. The program works in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to implement watershed structure upgrades in Georgia.

Five dams in North Georgia were originally targeted for structure upgrades. Today, construction has been completed on four watershed dams. Marbury Creek #22 in Barrow County and Little Sandy

Creek & Trail #1 in Madison County received initial upgrades; existing earthen auxiliary spillways on both structures were widened to handle a larger volume of water flow in the case of a flood event.



*South River #4 (Madison Co.) during construction*

Construction is also complete on South River #4 in Madison County and Sandy Creek #15 in Jackson County. Each watershed dam received new concrete chute



*Sandy Creek #15 (Jackson Co.)*

spillways with labyrinth weirs. Earthen auxiliary spillways were closed on each dam and the height was increased by three to four feet.

GSWCC and NRCS held a public meeting on July 14, 2011 to inform residents living near Ellijay River #1 in Gilmer County that the dam is being considered as the next scheduled watershed structure to receive upgrades. Ten landowners were in attendance, as well as county commissioners, District 51 State

Senator Steve Gooch and Mark Holden, district supervisor from the Limestone Valley Soil and Water Conservation District. Jimmy Bramblett, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, John Loughridge and Bob Fulmer of GSWCC, and Emory Debord from the Gilmer County Water and Sewer Authority each spoke to the crowd to explain the proposed plans for rehabilitation on the Ellijay River #1 watershed.

~Andy Dyar, GSWCC Watershed Dams Technician

### Take the 40 Gallon Challenge!

The *40 Gallon Challenge* got its start in Georgia as a voluntary campaign to conserve water. Today, the nationwide program has collected over 2,000 water-saving pledges from individuals and businesses around the country.

The challenge calls for residents to **reduce water use by forty gallons, per person, per day**. An easily accessible online pledge card outlines daily water savings and encourages individuals to adopt water-saving techniques.

Use the pledge card to review the water-saving practices that you, your family, or your business use now, and make new pledges to see how you can further reduce your water demands. The *40 Gallon*



*Challenge* offers maps and charts that show water-saving activity in your state or across the nation, and has quick and easy downloads for poster, bookmark and sticker promotional items. Don't wait, [take the challenge today!](#)

## Predicting Changes in Southern Forests



*Young Oak Leaves* Source: [srs.fs.usda.gov](http://srs.fs.usda.gov)

The Southern Forest Futures Project is a long-term research effort that collects and analyzes data to predict potential changes in southern forests between 2010 and 2060. The project will help to address contemporary issues and use computer modeling to steer land management and policy decisions concerning forests in the thirteen southern states. Phase one of the project (unveiled in May 2011) released a report that contained detailed findings of issues in forests across the South; phase two will detail implications for forest management and

conservation inside the designated subregions of the South.

To view key findings of the Southern Forest Futures Project, [click here](#). This research project is chartered by the USDA Forest Service, the Southern Group of State Foresters, and the Forest Service's Southern Research Station.

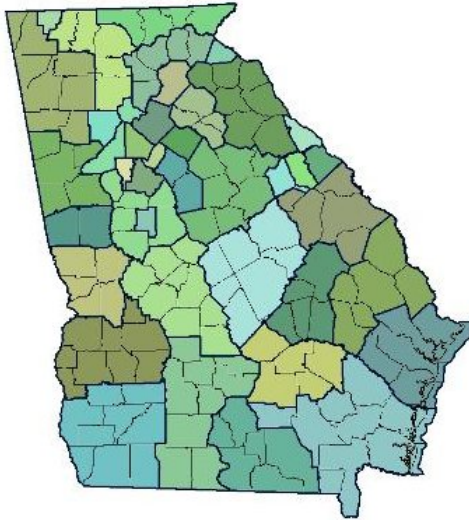
## Election and Appointment News

On August 5, 2011, Governor Nathan Deal appointed William Henry "Hal" Haddock Jr. to the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission Board. Mr. Haddock owns and operates Haddock Farms in Damascus, holds a supervisor seat on the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and serves as the vice-chairperson of the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Regional Water Planning Council. Welcome Mr. Haddock, to the GSWCC Commission Board!

Governor Deal also named three new appointees to vacant elected supervisor seats on September 23, 2011: Richard Thomas (Dougherty Co.) to the Flint River SWCD, James Reid (Sumter Co.) to the Lower Chattahoochee River SWCD, and Johnny Stevens (Richmond Co.) to the Brier Creek SWCD. [Click here](#) to view these appointments on the Governor's site.

Jasper County resident, Mr. Bill Whitten was elected as Group III alternate vice-president to the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors (GACDS) on August 11, 2011 in Smarr, Georgia. GACDS is a statewide volunteer organization that strives to protect, conserve and enhance the state's natural resources by locally promoting the benefits of conservation best management practices. Visit [www.gacds.org](http://www.gacds.org) to find out about statewide programs, upcoming events, and awards & annual scholarships opportunities offered through the association.

## Steering Conservation in Your Neighborhood



**Soil and Water Conservation Districts** were created in 1937 to protect and conserve soil and water resources in the State of Georgia. Today, Georgia has 40 Soil and Water Conservation Districts encompassing the state's 159 counties. Each county is represented by a minimum of two district supervisors, one elected and one appointed. Supervisors are volunteers that work on a local level to conserve and protect natural resources by promoting statewide conservation goals.

**GSWCC staff members are available** to speak at group meetings about opportunities to get involved with your local Conservation District; send an email to [myconservationdistrict@gaswcc.org](mailto:myconservationdistrict@gaswcc.org) to learn more!

Visit [www.gaswcc.georgia.gov](http://www.gaswcc.georgia.gov) and follow the link to 'Conservation Districts' to find more information and take an active role in your Soil and Water Conservation District today!

**Looking for more information? Contact your local GSWCC office!**

**Region I**

Rome Office - John Loughridge  
[Region1@gaswcc.org](mailto:Region1@gaswcc.org) - (706) 295-6131

**Region II**

Athens Office - Robert Amos  
[Region2@gaswcc.org](mailto:Region2@gaswcc.org) - (706) 552-4479

**Region III**

Conyers Office - Russell Toning  
[Region3@gaswcc.org](mailto:Region3@gaswcc.org) - (770) 761-3020

**Region IV**

Milledgeville Office - Keegan Malone  
[Region4@gaswcc.org](mailto:Region4@gaswcc.org) - (478) 445-5766

**Region V**

Dawson Office - Luke Crosson  
[Region5@gaswcc.org](mailto:Region5@gaswcc.org) - (229) 995-6001

**Region VI**

Statesboro Office - Rahn Milligan  
[Region6@gaswcc.org](mailto:Region6@gaswcc.org) - (912) 681-5241

*visit us on the web at [www.gaswcc.georgia.gov](http://www.gaswcc.georgia.gov)*