



# SOIL & WATER NEWS

**Brent Dykes, Executive Director**

| A Word From the Director   | In This Issue  |
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| <p>Conservation Districts play a vital role in providing technical assistance and prioritizing financial support for local conservation efforts. Your support of Georgia's 40 Conservation Districts is appreciated. I encourage you to visit our <a href="#">District Supervisor Elections webpage</a> to learn about the upcoming elections process and possibly consider qualifying for an elected district supervisor position.</p> <p>Agricultural water-use letters have recently been mailed out to agricultural water permit holders across the state. The information gathered from these meters is proving very valuable in the state's water planning efforts. In the Urban Program arena, progress is being made in developing new curriculum for our erosion control certification courses, and GSWCC is seeing an increase in erosion and sediment control plan reviews.</p> <p>During a recent trip to Washington, D.C., the Georgia Soil &amp; Water Conservation Commission and our partners advocated strongly for the 2012 Farm Bill. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), among other farm bill programs, have worked well in Georgia and we encouraged their continued authorization</p> | <p>Elected District Supervisor Positions</p> <p>Regional Office News</p> <p>REHAB Updates</p> <p>2012 Farm Bill</p> <p>Ag Water Metering &amp; MIL Programs</p> <p>Start2Farm Program</p> <p>Natural Resources Conservation Workshop</p> <p><a href="#">Join Our Mailing List!</a></p> |
|  | <h3>Website Updates</h3> <p>Visit the <a href="#">Announcements</a> section of our homepage and see GSWCC Executive Director, Brent Dykes' interview with GrowingGeorgia.</p>  |
|  | <h3>Calendar of Events</h3> <p><i>Click event date for more info.</i></p> <p><b><u>April 4-7</u></b><br/>GA Cattlemen's Assoc. 51st Annual Convention<br/><i>Perry</i></p>   |



in the 2012 bill. These two programs alone brought over \$20 million into the state for conservation practice implementation in 2011.

I hope you have a productive start to the 2012 agricultural planting season, and I look forward to seeing Georgia's economy continue to grow throughout 2012.



Brent Dykes, GSWCC  
Executive Director

### Elected District Supervisor Positions Appearing on November Ballot

Are you willing and interested in representing your county by serving on a soil and water conservation district board? Elections for elected district supervisor positions in 86 counties will take place **November 6, 2012** on the general ballot.

[Click here to view a list of supervisor positions up for election!](#)

Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisors are unpaid state officials that work across Georgia to bring conservation and natural resource education to citizens in their own community. Districts hold a minimum of ten meetings a year and host educational events, workshops and community field days. If you are interested in becoming a supervisor, please visit our '[How do I Become a District Supervisor](#)' page for a step-by-step guide.

#### What are the typical duties of a district supervisor?

- Working with landowners and developers to implement soil and water conservation measures
- Distributing information about natural resource conservation programs
- Conducting public demonstrations for best land management practices
- Serving on [NRCS Local Work Groups](#) to set funding priorities for the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Reviewing 'Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plans' for land disturbing activities in district counties

#### April 6-7

Spring Garden Exposition  
Gainesville

#### April 21

Agriculture & Conservation  
Education Series  
Loganville

#### April 22

Earth Day

#### April 25

Pond Management Field Day  
Lamar County  
Call Region IV for info. (478) 445-5766

#### April 26

Confederate Memorial Day  
State Holiday

#### April 26-27

35th Annual Vidalia Onion  
Festival  
Vidalia

#### May 3

Grazing for Profitability-Field Day  
Greene County  
Call Region IV for info. (478) 445-5766

#### May 10

Spring Team Ag Georgia  
Workshop  
Dillard

#### May 13-15

SE Lake & Watershed Mgmt  
Conference  
Columbus

#### May 17

Agriculture & Conservation  
Education Series  
Conyers

#### May 28



- Administering and participating in conservation programs undertaken by the State of Georgia and partner agencies
- Cooperating with partners to maintain and upgrade flood control watershed structures across the state

### Important Information for Candidates:

*Elected supervisors serve a four year term. The qualifying period for an elected district supervisor position is May 23 - (12:00 noon) May 25, 2012. Eligible candidates must be a registered voter of the county in which he or she runs. A person cannot hold another elected office in Georgia and also be an elected Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor.*

Memorial Day

#### June 3-7

Natural Resources Conservation Workshop

Tifton

#### June 14

Agriculture & Conservation Education Series

Atlanta

## Regional Office News

### Region I-Northwest Georgia

On January 31, 2012, the GSWCC Region I office participated in a Beginning Grazers Workshop in Calhoun, Georgia, put on by the Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition. Workshop topics included: soils, plant identification, forage quality, livestock grazing behavior, rotational grazing, contingency planning, and hay utilization & storage. The day was filled with lots of helpful information for livestock producers interested in improving their pastures and animal nutrition. Many speakers emphasized the importance of soil conservation as well as the need for monitoring soil health.



Soil Erosion Demo at Workshop



Rush (right) receives pin from Vice-Chair, Jeff Smith

The Coosa River Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) presented Floyd County supervisor, Thad Rush with a pin to recognize his 40 years of service to the district. The pin was awarded to him at the district's January meeting. Rush cited how proud he was to serve on a district with so many conservation pioneers during his years of service.





Cameron "Drake" Miller, a 5th grade student at Boynton Cameron Miller (left) with Boynton Elem. Elementary in Ringgold, Georgia, was presented with the 2011 NACD Poster Contest Award for grade category 4-6 at the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors' annual meeting in January. The theme for the 2012 NACD Poster Contest is "Soil to Spoon". Check out the [GACDS website](#) to find out how you can enter to win!

### Region III-Metro Georgia

The Cobb County SWCD held a stream bank restoration workshop at the Shaw Park Public Library on March 3rd for over 40 local citizens interested in learning more about methods and plantings for restoring eroded stream banks. District Supervisor, Jim Lanier gave a presentation on the vegetative practices used to stabilize stream banks, including the planting of willow shoots as well as native plants and shrubs. Joe Burgess with the GA Forestry Commission spoke of the tremendous value that trees give in an urban environment, including providing shade to help lower thermal radiation, reduce storm water runoff and benefits to local wildlife. Individuals that attended the workshop received dogwood tree seedlings.



Cobb County District Supervisors



As a result of successful attendance rates, the Cobb County SWCD is considering hosting similar workshops at local libraries across the district. Workshops are a culmination of a stream bank restoration project that was initiated by the Cobb County District, with the partnership of GSWCC, NRCS, U.S.

FWS, Cobb County, Rolling Hills RC&D and Aquascape Environmental.

### Region IV-Central Georgia



Central Georgia SWCD Supervisor, Glenn Waller was awarded the District III-2012 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award for agriculture. Mr. Waller and his wife Rabun have operated Waller Farm for 45 years in Harrison, Georgia. The farm consists of nearly 900 acres of cotton, corn, hay, peanuts, soybeans, wheat, and beef cattle. Mr. Waller utilizes parallel terraces with drain tile, strip-till & cover crops, overseeding, and crop rotation to best use his farm's most precious resources: soil and water. He has also modified his irrigation diesel pumps from gas to electric, improved dams and ponds on the property, and planted native tree species to provide additional food sources for wildlife.



Governor Nathan Deal and Georgia Agriculture Commissioner, Gary W. Black present the Wallers with a 2012 District III Environmental Stewardship Award

### Region V-Southwest Georgia

The Lower Chattahoochee River SWCD held their annual Conservationist of the Year Banquet on January 19th at the USDA Service Center in Dawson, Georgia. District Chairman, Art Johns presided over the banquet and Mr. Duane Watson from SW GA Farm Credit recognized the award recipients. The Lower



Lower Chattahoochee 2011 Conservationist of the Year Winners

Chattahoochee River District encompasses a nine county area in SW Georgia, which includes Clay, Lee, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell and Webster counties.

The Middle South Georgia SWCD held their annual Valentines Dinner on February 9, 2012 at the Tiftarea Conference Center in Tifton, Georgia. Thomas County supervisor, Carrol Fort was recognized with a service pin for 35 years of outstanding support and loyal service to the citizens of the Middle South Georgia District.



Region V Rep. Luke Crosson (left) with Carrol Fort





GA Southern Wildlife Director,  
Steve Hein

The Flint River SWCD sponsored their annual Birds of Prey Wildlife Demonstration at the Early County Elementary School in Blakely on February 23rd. Steve Hein, Director for the [Georgia Southern University Center for Wildlife Education](#) gave an enthusiastic performance to over 1,100 students in grades K-5. Mr. Hein and his assistant provided hands-on participation for individuals interested in holding a 13 ft. Burmese Python, as well as watching the ever-popular Birds of Prey Flight Show. For the past seven years, Mr. Hein has traveled to SW Georgia to advocate for birds of prey and help educate youth about the importance of wildlife and their habitat.

### Small Watershed Rehabilitation (REHAB) Program Shows Progress



South Fork Broad River #19 before maintenance

GSWCC is currently in the process of completing a contract with a North Georgia construction company to perform needed maintenance on two watershed dams that were targeted as potential water supply reservoirs in a 2009 study. The company has assisted with mowing small trees and brush on Sandy Creek #8 in Jackson County and replaced a non-functional drainage gate.

The construction company also removed large trees covering South Fork Broad River #19 in Oglethorpe County and planted grass to stabilize the site and prevent erosion.

GSWCC has worked in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the GA Environmental Protection Division to complete assessments on 28 flood control structures in the state that might serve as future sources of public water supply for local communities. [Visit our website](#) to read more about these assessments.



South River #19 after maintenance

### Hope for a 2012 Farm Bill?

On Thursday, March 29, the House approved a FY 2013 Budget Resolution, introduced by Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan. The resolution only controls spending actions in the House and sets off two Farm Bill actions by the House Agricultural Committee:

- 1) By April 27, the House Ag Committee must produce a bill that cuts \$33.2 billion from farm bill spending. The bill must be reported on time and include specific policies that will reach the



required savings.

2) The budget resolution assumes ten-year farm bill cuts of \$180 billion, including \$30 billion in cuts to crop subsidy programs, ***\$16 billion to conservation programs*** (like EQIP), and the remaining cuts to food stamp programs.

In order for a farm bill to pass this year, the Senate Ag Committee will need to approve its version of the bill before Memorial Day so the House Ag Committee can make adjustments in June & July. After that, both houses may adopt versions of the bill that go to a House-Senate conference during the 2012 national election. Analysts agree that approving a Farm Bill this year is an achievable goal, but not an easy feat before the current bill expires this September.

### GSWCC Continues to Promote Water Efficiency on Georgia Farms



The Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission is committed to helping Georgia's farmers improve on-farm irrigation efficiency. Our Agricultural Water Metering Program helps producers to determine annual agricultural water use by measuring the amount of water used on-site through irrigation meters. Since 2008, the U.S. Geologic Survey has worked with GSWCC to analyze metered

water data in order to understand Georgia's water resources and assist with statewide water planning.

[Download and print a program brochure here.](#)

In conjunction with the Metering Program, the GSWCC Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL) Program provides no-cost irrigation system assessments to irrigators in South Georgia. Since the program's launch in 2001, the MIL Program has performed over 1,670 irrigation audits and 694 system retrofits for the state's farming operations. This improvement in on-farm irrigation efficiency has resulted in billions of gallons of water savings in Georgia.

Reducing water needs on the farm also lowers the cost of operation. Schedule your irrigation uniformity test today by contacting (229) 995-6001 and asking for more information about our FREE courtesy test.

### Start2Farm Offers Resources for Beginning Farmers & Ranchers

The Start2Farm Program is a joint project between the USDA-National Agricultural Library and the American Farm Bureau Federation. The program's goal is to assist individuals that are new to farming and ranching, as well as farmers that have less than 10 years of agricultural experience. The online database connects farmers and ranchers with available federal programs and resources and is searchable by topic or geographical area. Use the database to find training resources, financing, technical assistance, and business-to-business support. Check out this great resource today (click image to visit [start2farm.gov](http://start2farm.gov))!



### Natural Resources Conservation Workshop (June 3-7, 2012)



The [Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors](#) would like to announce the 2012 Natural Resources Conservation Workshop for rising 10th, 11th, and 12th graders, June 3-7 in Tifton, Georgia. Students that attend the five-day event will have the opportunity to learn about the value, protection and conservation of Georgia's natural resources. Professionals that work with federal, state and private agencies will hold classroom lectures and host outdoor activities to demonstrate careers in natural resource management. On the final day of the workshop, students are tested on the material they have learned during the week and have the opportunity to win scholarships. Over \$17,000 worth of college scholarships were awarded in 2011. Visit [www.abac.edu/dnr](http://www.abac.edu/dnr) to download an application.

*Contact your [regional GSWCC office](#) to find out how local Soil and Water Conservation Districts sponsor attending students!*

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 Tinning, [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

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Loren Moore, Editor



