



## A Word From the Director

As we pause this time of year to celebrate Christmas and the close of another year, I am reminded of the importance of family and friends. It is these relationships that make hard times easier to face and the good times even more joyous.

Our partners and cooperators all across the state have been a part of making 2011 a prosperous year for GSWCC. In this edition of our newsletter you'll see the continuing efforts made by local conservation districts that make conservation a part of the everyday life of Georgia's citizenry. Through this network of 40 Conservation Districts, the conservation message is delivered at the local level.

I hope you will take the time to join us for the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisor's Annual Meeting at the Chateau Elan Resort on January 6-8, 2012, as we gather to celebrate the past year's accomplishments and make plans for the new year ahead. This is the ideal time to network with other professionals and gain new ideas.

The year 2012 has much to offer us. Let's make the most of the

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## Calendar of Events

Click on event date for more info

### **December 25**

Merry Christmas!

### **January 5-8**

SE Regional Fruit & Vegetable  
Conference  
*Savannah*

### **January 5-6**

Georgia Agritourism Conference  
*Savannah*

### **January 6-8**

Georgia Assoc. of Conservation  
District Supervisors Annual  
Meeting



opportunities ahead of us by sowing good seed so that we can reap a bountiful harvest, seed like those sown by the generations before us - humility, honesty, hard work and integrity.

May this Christmas be a joyous time for you and your family as you celebrate the birth of the Christ child and the hope that He brings to this world.

Merry Christmas,



*Braselton*

**January 27-28**

Georgia Young Farmers Annual  
Convention  
*Stone Mountain*

**February 24-25**

Georgia Organics 15th Annual  
Conference  
*Columbus*

## Regional Office News

### Region I-Northwest Georgia

On Saturday, September 24th, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) Region I office, along with the Calhoun Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) held a grazing field day. Speakers included Dr. Don Ball, Professor Emeritus at Auburn University and Greg Bowman, Gordon County Extension Coordinator. Dr. Ball spoke on the subject of rotational grazing systems and Bowman discussed



No till drill demonstration

winter pasture planting and permanent pasture restoration. Region I Representative, John Loughridge gave a presentation on no-till drill use and calibration and GSWCC Program Coordinator, Leigh Rush discussed the [Middle Coosawattee 319](#) water quality grant and had applications available for local landowners.

### Region II-Northeast Georgia



Students from J.J. Harris Elem tour the ACC Recycling Facility

GSWCC, the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors, and the Clarke County Cooperative Extension Service teamed up to conduct the second Junior Master Gardner class at J.J. Harris Elementary School. Children in grades 2-5 learned about the best time to plant

seeds, the water cycle, soil properties and plant growth. Twelve students participated in

the class each week, earning their Jr. Master Gardeners certificate at the end of the twelve week course. As part of the class, the students toured the Athens-Clarke County Recycling Facility, composting facility and landfill. If you are interested in coordinating a Junior Master Gardeners class for your school or club, or if you are a Master Gardener who would like to work with your local district to host the program, contact GSWCC at (706) 552-4470 or your local UGA Cooperative Extension office.

#### **Region IV-Central Georgia**

The Piedmont and Walton County Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosted an Erosion & Sediment Control Workshop at the Morgan County Farm Bureau office on October 28, 2011. Region IV Representative Keegan Malone, along with a spokesperson from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, discussed the GSWCC Education & Certification Training Program, local ordinances and exemptions, and the NPDES State General Permit.



Piedmont District COY Banquet

On October 4, 2011, the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District held the district's monthly meeting in conjunction with their 50th annual Conservationist of the Year Banquet in the new Rock Eagle dining hall. District Chairman, Pat Hardy welcomed everyone to the event and GSWCC Executive Director Brent Dykes provided the invocation. Approximately

180 individuals were in attendance. Chairman Hardy and Ricky Cochran of AgSouth Farm Credit presented the annual Conservationist of the Year awards to the following winners: Tate Tewksbury (Morgan Co.), Frank & Linda Bandel (Putnam Co.), Amos Ryce III (Jones Co.), Joe & Leslie Martin (Taliaferro Co.), Bobby Merrit (Hancock Co.), and Dr. Billy Copelan (Greene Co).



The Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District held their annual Conservationist of the Year Banquet on September 22, 2011 at the community services building in Warrenton. Thirty-seven people attended the program and Keegan Malone, Region IV Representative served as the keynote speaker for the evening, providing a presentation on the importance of making decisions concerning the succession of privately owned farmland. Supervisor Dan Crumpton recognized Barry Holden as the 2011 Warren County Conservationist of the Year. Mr. Holden was



Award winner Mrs. Holden & Chairman Joe Shurley

commended for his work in resource protection and conservation in the county.

### **Cochran Field Office**



Keegan Malone and David Hall teach students about soil and water conservation

The GSWCC Cochran field office, along with Region IV staff, participated in the annual Indian Pow Wow Field Day in October at the Thomas Way Nursery in Dudley, Georgia. Participants from pre-k and kindergarten classes at the Northwest Laurens Elementary School, along with many of their parents and relatives, were present at the two day event, which drew more than 450 individuals.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources staff were on-site to educate and entertain the groups. Students received Indian face paint and participated in hay rides, archery events, and campfire stories. Groups were also able to see Indian arrowheads and learned how to make corn bread from scratch. GSWCC staff members David Hall, Keegan Malone and Brian Horne used a watershed model to show students the importance of soil and water conservation.

### **Region V-Southwest Georgia**



GSWCC's Jo Williamson with students at the Running Water Demonstration

The GSWCC Region V office exhibited at this year's 9th annual Water Festival, located at the Flint RiverQuarium in Albany, Georgia. The goal of the festival is to educate youth about the important part that water plays in our daily lives and how to work toward preserving Georgia's natural resources. The three day event attracted 576 4th and 5th grade students from five surrounding counties. Each day, groups of

students participated in various water demonstrations. Students were educated about agricultural water use, erosion and pollution, weather, and proper hand washing techniques.

### Ensuring Watershed Protection in Georgia

GSWCC's Rural Water Resources Department submitted three applications for 319 water quality grants to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) in October 2011. Applications included the Cedar Creek & Folsom Creek Watersheds in southwest Ga, the Little Ochoopee and Magruda Creek Watersheds in southeast Ga, and the Settingdown Creek NMP Initiative in northwest Ga. Each watershed has been targeted for water quality improvements from agricultural nonpoint source pollution through the GA EPD 305(b)/303(d) impaired streams list.



Watering Ramp in Banks Co. installed with 319 grant funds

### GACDS Annual Meeting



Exhibitors at the January 2011 GACDS



Annual Meeting in Savannah      The Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors will hold their 68<sup>th</sup> annual meeting January 6-8 at the Chateau Elan Conference Center in Braselton, Georgia. This yearly event brings members of Georgia's forty soil and water conservation districts together to receive training, network with fellow conservationists and partner agencies, and engage in discussions with state and national leaders.

Sessions for the 2012 meeting will include a Georgia Environmental Protection Division report on the state's watershed flood control dams, a showcase of six district conservation projects, as well as awards, scholarships and special recognition for exemplary conservationists across the state. This year's meeting will also feature special meeting sessions for each of the five GACDS Groups represented in Georgia.

*GACDS is still looking for auction item donations for the live auction!!* This year's big ticket items up for grabs at the Friday, January 6th live auction include: a one year family membership to the Red Oak Golf Course in Cusseta, a quail hunt for two, cases of cane syrup and Blue Spring water, and a full-sized wooden table built by Central Georgia SWCD supervisor, Dan Dixon.

For information about event registration, [click here!](#)

### Commission Announcements

Georgia producers must submit applications for the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) before January 13, 2012. The USDA's annual program provides for wildlife habitat enhancement, improves soil and water quality, and adopts practices that address the affects of climate change. Visit the [NRCS website](#) for more information.

Visit our new [Online Mapping Experience](#) to create printable maps of your farm and view statewide GSWCC program information, Georgia's impaired stream locations and more!

Looking to keep up-to-date on the 2012 Farm Bill? Visit the [Announcements](#) section of our website to learn how you can influence the future of food and farming in Georgia.

Since November 2008, the U.S. Geologic Survey has partnered with GSWCC to investigate methods of estimating agricultural water use and growing season pumping rates in the State of Georgia. Read the USGS's Analysis of the Agricultural Water Metering Program [here](#).

Each county in Georgia is represented by a Soil and Water Conservation District. Visit the [Conservation Districts](#) section of our homepage to find out more information about your district.

### Spotlight on the Satilla River & Coastal Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Bill Alexander (Satilla R. SWCD) and Paul Harris (NRCS) distribute information, posters and peanuts at Coastfest 2011

Coastfest is a family-oriented environmental festival that is held annually at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources headquarters in Brunswick. This year's 17th Annual Coastfest (held in October) was a record breaking success with over 9,000 individuals in attendance. Each year, the Satilla River and Coastal Soil and Water Conservation Districts partner with GSWCC, NRCS and FSA to distribute educator packets to area teachers and provide Georgia classrooms with lessons about

conservation.

## 2012 Georgia Envirothon

The Georgia Envirothon is an environmental education program that provides high school students with hands-on, science based training in natural resources and ecology topics. Each year, soil and water conservation districts across Georgia proudly sponsor local teams. In March 2012, teams will compete at regional events and winning teams from the four Georgia regions will advance to a two day state competition. Statewide winners go to the Canon Envirothon over the summer to compete against teams across the U.S. and Canada.



The Georgia Envirothon evaluates a student's performance at the following training stations: soils/land use, aquatic ecology, forestry and wildlife. This year's current environmental issue - nonpoint source pollution and low impact development, will be administered by GSWCC Region II Resource Specialist, Kelli Coleman.

Registration for the 2012 Envirothon will remain open until January 15th. To register a team or find out more information about sponsorship, please visit the [Georgia Envirothon website](#).

## Annual Christmas Bird Count



From December 14, 2011 through January 5, 2012,

*Cedar Waxwing*

volunteers across the Americas grab their bird guides

and binoculars to take part in the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This effort helps the National Audubon Society and other wildlife organizations assess the health of bird populations and guides future conservation efforts. If you are interested in joining this long-running wildlife census to make a difference in bird conservation nationwide, [click here to learn more](#). Check the current year's results to find out what circles from your area reported during the 2010 CBC.

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 Tanning

[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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