

# Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District

## 2021 Plan of Work

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

### **District Identity:**

The Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District serves farmers, landowners, partners, and citizens by facilitating the transfer of conservation-driven technology and widespread implementation across southwest Georgia and beyond, while acting as a grassroots leader and local voice for stewardship of natural resources benefitting current and future generations of Georgians. The District aims to work closely with strategic partners to approach conservation in a cutting-edge and forward-thinking way, with a focus on local impact and empowerment for local stewardship.

The Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District was constituted as an agency of State Government by the authority and under provision of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District Law of 1937 on July 22, 1939. The District comprises Baker, Calhoun, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Miller, Mitchell, and Seminole Counties. Two Supervisors from each county, one elected and one appointed, serve on the eighteen-member Board. The Board is comprised of farmers, landowners, and land-users that are dedicated to the conservation, development, and protection of our natural resources.

District meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 9:30 a.m. at locations designated at the prior monthly meeting. Demonstrations, tours, and special meetings are held periodically with proper notification and location given.

### **Major Objectives:**

The Annual Plan of Work establishes the major objectives for the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The following objectives will be planned, developed, and implemented under partnership with the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

#### **Natural Resource Conservation:**

Promote the conservation of soil, water, and timber resources as well as wildlife habitat restoration, and other related resources. Work with government agencies and conservation organizations to assist in planning, developing and implementing conservation programs. Provide local direction and priorities for government funded technical assistance.

#### **Conservation Education:**

Educate the general public on the need for and the importance of conservation. Work with others in planning, developing, and implementing seminars, programs, contests, etc. that are used for the purpose of conservation education.

**Public Relations:**

Create public awareness of District conservation programs, objectives and activities through the news media and foster this awareness by keeping the general public informed on conservation issues and concerns.

The Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District uses the annual state allotment to support annual dues, educational opportunities, scholarships, and sponsorships through the year. The Board of Supervisors has authorized the use of state allotment funds for any of these purposes, outlined below, not to exceed the budgeted amount until allotment funds are exhausted. Any and all expenses outside of this authorized list or beyond the state allotment amount will be covered by District funds upon Supervisor approval.

<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Budgeted Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Sunbelt Ag Expo Sponsorship</b>	\$5,000	
<b>Education Grants (2)</b>	\$2,000	\$1,000 each
<b>GACD Membership Dues and Scholarship Contribution</b>	\$2,350	
<b>Golden Triangle Membership Dues</b>	\$250	
<b>NACD Membership Dues</b>	\$775	
<b>Destination Ag</b>	\$1,000	\$100 per student
<b>Poster Contest</b>	\$100	
<b>NRCW Registrations</b>	\$4,950	\$275 per student, 2 students per county
<b>NRCW Scholarship</b>	\$500	
<b>4-H2O Sponsorship</b>	\$500	
<b>IGEL Sponsorship</b>	\$500	

## Action Items:

### 1. Natural Resource Conservation:

- Assume leadership role in setting priorities, ranking applications, and awarding funds for federal and state funded conservation programs.
- Successfully administer a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project. This program enhances conservation and partnerships throughout the District as well as other regions of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama.
- Successfully administer and complete the Georgia Power Foundation grant focused on outreach and cost share to improve water quality in Spring Creek watershed.
- Provide outreach and technical assistance based on parameters of funding, specifically including in the Radium Springs springshed and Spring Creek watershed.
- Manage feral swine pilot program and outreach efforts; advocated for the continuation of the feral swine control and eradication program in the development of the new Farm Bill and launch trap training and leasing program.
- Sponsor and conduct demonstrations, tours, and field days to acquaint farmers and land-users with methods for protecting soil and water resources and promote greater participation and compliance with best management practices. Seek outside financial sources, if necessary, to hold these events.
- Work to obtain funds that will be targeted to increase irrigation efficiency and uniformity for inefficient systems and educate producers of the savings in cost and water loss due to inefficient systems.
- Launch and manage soil health demonstration sites and outreach in partnership with the USDA NRCS strategic soil health plan and work to obtain additional funds for soil health education, outreach, and implementation.
- Work to obtain funds that will be targeted to incorporate irrigation BMP's that will be used to demonstrate to producer's ways in which they can better conserve agricultural water resources.
- Work to obtain funds that will be used to provide technical assistance and education for urban agriculture.
- Assist land-users in the implementation of low pressure drop nozzle retrofits, remote soil moisture monitoring, sod-based rotation and variable rate irrigation technology.
- Assist land-users in applying best management practices that provide benefits to soil, water, wildlife, etc.
- Provide technical assistance to evaluate soil and water resources for proposed public facility sites.
- Provide technical training to farmers, crop consultants and conservationists in the District.
- Provide soils information with interpretations to developers for the use in development of Erosion and Sediment Control Plans.
- Provide technical and educational assistance to local issuing authorities in implementing their erosion and sediment control ordinance.
- Review and approve Erosion and Sediment Controls Plans within the jurisdiction of local issuing authorities as deemed necessary under the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Law of Georgia.
- Assist any interested issuing authority in obtaining a Memorandum of Agreement between themselves and the District, and, to periodically review their erosion and sediment control ordinance and program.
- Work with ADM and Golden Peanut to work to provide technical assistance as a partner in the

expansion of the re:Generations program into peanut production through the Climate Smart Commodities Agreement.

- Work as the local sponsor on three PL-566 Watershed Operation and Flood Prevention Programs in Mitchell, Calhoun, and Dougherty Counties.
- Launch focus groups and outreach on irrigation BMPs specific to orchard irrigation and work to secure resource to improve orchard irrigation efficiencies.
- Continue support of District's urban agriculture conservation program, Flint River Fresh.

## 2. Conservation Education:

- Offer sponsorship to at least two students in each county from the District to attend the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop (NRCW). Provide funds, if necessary, for transportation of students to the workshop. Tuition will be paid from District funds or from outside sources.
- Sponsor the \$500 Flint River SWCD scholarship that is awarded to a student each year at the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop (NRCW).
- Assist school curriculum advisors by providing natural resources conservation books, booklets, curriculum guides, and instructional seminars.
- Provide slide presentations with specific information on soil and water conservation for presentations to schools, civic clubs, churches, etc.
- Sponsor other 4-H, FFA, or other youth organizations in conservation related activities.
- Manage and expend funds made available through private, local, state, and federal sources in such a way as to promote natural resource conservation and related education.
- Promote on-the-farm field days to local teachers involved with science, biology, agriculture, etc. Provide assistance in conducting field days.
- Sponsor three annual environmental & agricultural education grants for local educators.
- Contribute to the 4-H2O Educational Camp by partnering with UGA Extension and Stripling Irrigation Research Park to offer hands-on instruction and sponsorship of the program.
- Work with school systems and communities to offer pollinator garden opportunities.
- Sponsor and collaborate with ABAC's Destination Ag Program to host a spring Destination Ag event. Work to formally expand partnership to include Chehaw Park.
- Endorse educational poster contest and offer District prizes.
- Sponsor taste test and outreach around healthy food habit and local food opportunities through partnerships with elementary schools.

## 3. Public Relations:

- Pay dues and take an active role in the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts and the National Association of Conservation Districts. Assist in sponsoring individual Supervisors to attend the activities of these organizations.
- Work closely with other agencies and organizations (Farm Service Agency, UGA's Cooperative Extension Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, Department of Natural Resources, Golden Triangle Resources Conservation & Development Council, and other related groups) to coordinate conservation activities in the District. Encourage each agency or organization to attend District Board meetings.
- Keep the general public informed of conservation programs that are available through local, state, and federal agencies. Sponsor and conduct meetings to inform groups and individuals of particular conservation needs.
- Develop and distribute an Annual Report of the District's accomplishments at the end of the fiscal year.
- Prepare and distribute news articles on District programs and activities. Contact television stations regarding District events.
- Invite elected governing officials (local, state, and federal) to District functions so that they are aware of conservation concerns, programs, and accomplishments.
- Work with partners to maintain [georgiaferalswine.com](http://georgiaferalswine.com) and [smartirrigationgeorgia.com](http://smartirrigationgeorgia.com) with

relevant information for farmers, landowners, and the general public.

- Seek outside sources of income to strengthen and support District activities and programs. Manage District financial and material resources to meet goals in an efficient and productive manner, and, as prescribed by state guidelines.
- Work with Association Management Group to maintain outreach platforms, provided operations and administration support, and providing accounting services.
- Oversee digital media accounts to highlight conservation programs, education, as well as, conservation issues and concerns. Accounts include, but not limited to, social media and websites.
- Host both a Smart Irrigation and Soil Health outreach campaign centered on BMPs, technologies, partnerships and innovations specific to the topic.