

# SOIL & WATER NEWS



January 2010

Brent Dykes, *Executive Director*

Carrie Fowler & Loren Moore, *Editors*

## A Word From the Director

**A**s we begin 2010, our state and our nation still face many of the same challenges that we endured during 2009. It is the endurance and perseverance of the American people that have made America the greatest country in the world, and it is these same qualities that will bring us through this new year. **GSWCC** staff continue to be committed to excellence in service delivery to Georgia's citizenry, and it is an honor to work with this talented group. Congratulations to Janice Marable, our Administrative Operation's Manager, on her recent retirement! She is a prime example of the dedicated staff working for GSWCC.

**GSWCC** is facing continued reductions in state funding in 2010, but 2009 was a record year for Federal Appropriations. The **GSWCC** Ponds Program, Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program and Watershed Rehabilitation Program were all funded at levels to address current landowner needs for conservation projects. During the General Assembly session, **GSWCC** sees great opportunities for water supply discussions and other water related topics. We will continue to be at the table to provide technical resources and informed input.

We will center on our core functions in 2010 as we weather the storms before us. We appreciate your support of **GSWCC** and its programs.



## Upcoming GACDS 66th Annual Meeting

**T**he Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors 66th Annual Meeting will be held on January 22-24, 2010 at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia.

Athens offers meeting attendees a variety of local attractions, including touring the UGA campus, shopping in the downtown district, and a variety of restaurants within walking distance of the Classic Center and hotel.

If you are interested in attending the 66th GACDS Annual Meeting, please visit the **GACDS website** or call Crista Carrell or Kim Chapman at (706) 542-3065. More information on Annual Meeting events can be found on page 4 of this newsletter. **Don't Miss the 2010 Annual Meeting!**



## GSWCC Metering Program Update


**G**SWCC staff from the Dawson office have been busy this year. By Spring 2010, **GSWCC** employees will install an estimated 300 new irrigation meters in the Flint River Basin. In addition, another 600 meters are currently being installed in the Lower Ocmulgee sub-basin. **GSWCC** metering staff continue to perform routine maintenance and readings on meters in the coastal region. In 2009, **GSWCC** partnered with the Georgia Forestry Commission to aid with reading irrigation meters throughout the state.

House Bill 579 directs **GSWCC** to implement, conduct and maintain an agricultural water use measurement program to assist the state in effectively managing and utilizing Georgia's water resources. Part of this program includes the installation, maintenance and monitoring of these state owned meters on private irrigation systems.



## GSWCC Ponds Program Sign Up Ends

In September 2009, **GSWCC** completed the sign up period for the Ponds Program. With 25 ponds under construction from 2008 funding, and 2009 applicants under review, **GSWCC** hopes to significantly reduce aquifer pumping and conserve groundwater resources by effectively utilizing existing surface water for irrigation. The program's primary focal area is in South Georgia, namely counties south of Chattahoochee, Twiggs, and Burke counties. The high demand for this program makes it unfeasible to fund all of the 275 applications received during the 2009 sign up. In order to select applicants to receive Ponds Program funding, the Southeast and Flint Ponds Committees reviewed each application. The committees reviewed information such as: cost per acre-foot of water stored, possible downstream hazards like roads or structures, and soil/hydrology tests. **GSWCC** Board Members will meet on May 3, 2010 to determine the final applicants to receive funding from the \$2.4 million dollars in 2009 federal funding. **GSWCC** anticipates additional funding to be available for another Ponds Program sign up in 2010.


**GSWCC** accepts applications to construct new or renovate existing surface water structures on an annual basis, as funding is available. Man-made ponds increase on-farm surface water capacity. These ponds have proven invaluable during recent droughts when water supply issues became more prevalent. NRCS provides technical assistance in the design of these ponds to ensure that ponds meet current standards and specifications. The maximum cost-share for a single project is 75 percent, not to exceed \$50,000. 

## Marable Retires from GSWCC After 34 Years of Service


Janice Marable, **GSWCC** Administrative Operations Manager, retired on December 31st, 2009. Janice began her career with **GSWCC** as a secretary for the Safe Dams Program in July of 1978



when the agency was still known as the Soil & Water Conservation Committee. In 1979, her position changed to Administrative Aide and in 1980, she became the Procurement Officer for the agency. Janice became Administrative Assistant to former Executive Director Graham Liles and served in that position

until she became Personnel Representative in 1996. In 2004, she accepted the position of Administrative Operations Manager where she remained until retirement. Janice worked under four separate **GSWCC** Executive Directors in her 34 years of service and has been a tremendous asset to our agency. Janice will maintain her connection with **GSWCC** and GACDS as a member of the GACDS Auxillary. We wish Janice the best in her future endeavors. 

## Hooks-Hanner Environmental Resource Center Receives Facelift

**GSWCC** worked in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC) throughout 2009 to perform renovations to the Hooks-Hanner Environmental Resource Center. With maintenance to the building recently completed, the Center now exhibits new paint on the building interior and exterior, a new server room, and a reconditioned sign. **GSWCC** purchased the building in the fall of 2001 and the aging office space needed minor refurbishing. The Georgia DOC generously provided the labor required to perform the building's new facelift and consequently saved **GSWCC** several thousand dollars in repair costs. Thank you to Bob Plemons and the Georgia DOC for their partnership and commendable work! 





## Fertile Crescent Farms Recognized as Conservation Farm Family of the Year

**S**upervisors from the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with Ag-Georgia Farm Credit, announced Fertile Crescent Farm of Madison County as the 2009 Conservation Farm Family of the Year. Owned and operated by Scott and Ginni Edwards (and their daughter Isabel), the farm is devoted to the production of naturally grown vegetables and cut flowers, as well as management of the forest resources.

More than a dozen conservation practices are currently being utilized on the land, all of which were installed without benefit of cost-share or grant funding from any government or private agency. Access roads were created to move from one field to another, and an efficient drip tape irrigation system was installed to provide water to crops from one active well. Mulching and conservation cover are utilized to protect the soil from erosion and to reduce the loss of irrigation water through evaporation. Grass strips are planted between the rows of vegetables and cut flowers in a method referred to as "stripcropping," where the crops are arranged so that a strip of grass is alternated with a crop to reduce erosion. Poultry litter from a nearby farm is utilized based on soil and litter analyses, with a conservation crop rotation utilized to minimize creating an environment suited for destructive insect pests (pest management). A love of the land and a desire to be a good steward prompted the implementation of these practices by Scott Edwards, who is a strong believer in sustainable agriculture.

The Conservation Farm Family of the Year is an annual recognition of a farm family in the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District that has shown outstanding leadership through their efforts in conservation. A partnership between the District and Ag-Georgia Farm Credit was forged six years ago in an attempt to better honor and recognize these recipients for their contribution to the protection of our natural resources and their commitment to the betterment of their community. The success of this farm is due in large part to the family's commitment to sustainable agriculture, hard work, and a deep love of the land. Congratulations to the Edwards family!

*submitted by Carol Boss, NRCS*



Ag Credit's Patricia Fields with the Edwards family

*GSWCC would like to recognize the District Supervisors that passed away during 2009.*

**Joe Bennett**

Broad River SWCD  
7 Years

**Henry Braselton**

Oconee River SWCD  
43 Years

**John Thomas Herrington**

Brier Creek SWCD  
36 Years

**James (Jimmy) Jackson**

Central Georgia SWCD  
36 Years

**James S. (Jimmy) Johnson**

Oconee River SWCD  
14 Years

**Joseph Jordan**

Satilla River SWCD  
21 Years

**K.A. Veal**

Middle South Georgia SWCD  
30 Years

**Bill Warthen**

Ochopee River SWCD  
35 Years

**James William (J.W.) Clark**

Henry County  
16 Years

**Jack Williford**

Brier Creek SWCD  
22 Years

We would also like to remember the families of Mr. David Bennett, former GSWCC Executive Director and Mrs. Anita Thompson, wife of Board Chairman Garland Thompson.

*When a loved one becomes a memory  
That memory becomes a treasure.*

# Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors

## 66th Annual Meeting

### Schedule of Events

#### Friday, January 22nd

- 8:00 am NRCS Employee Meeting
- 8:30 am GSWCC Board Meeting
- 9:30 am Registration/Exhibit Showcase
- 10:00 am Rainwater Harvesting
- Georgia RC&D Council Meeting
- 12:00 pm Lunch On Your Own
- Conservation Leadership Luncheon
- By Invitation Only*
- 1:30 pm Business Session
- 1:30 pm Auxiliary Meeting
- 2:30 pm Exhibit Showcase/Silent Auction Preview
- 3:00 pm Community Forestry Breakout Session
- Local Work Group Breakout Session
- 5:00 pm Reception (Cash Bar)
- 6:30 pm Partnership Hall of Fame Dinner
- 8:30 pm Hospitality Room

#### Saturday, January 23rd

- 7:00 am Hospitality Room
- 8:00 am Registration
- Exhibit Showcase
- Auxiliary Craft Sale & Country Store
- 8:30 am General Session
- 9:30 am Exhibit Showcase
- 10:00 am Statewide Water Issues
- 11:00 am Farm to School Breakout Session
- 11:00 am Energy Breakout Session
- 12:00 pm Awards Luncheon
- 2:00 pm Exhibit Showcase
- 3:00 pm Conservation Tour in Oconee County
- Agricultural Research Service*
- GACDS Conservation Education Center Site*
- 6:30 pm Dinner and Auction
- Oconee County Civic Center*

#### Sunday, January 24th

- Breakfast On Your Own
- 9:00 am Worship and Memorial Service
- 10:05 am Grand Prize Drawing
- 10:15 am Adjourn

#### Coming to the Annual Meeting?

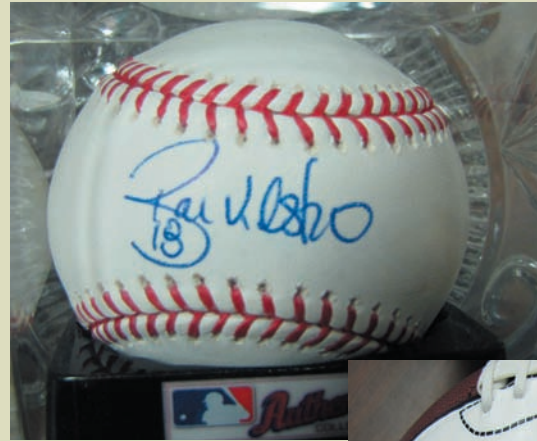
Check out these links for more information!

The Classic Center

The Hilton Garden Inn

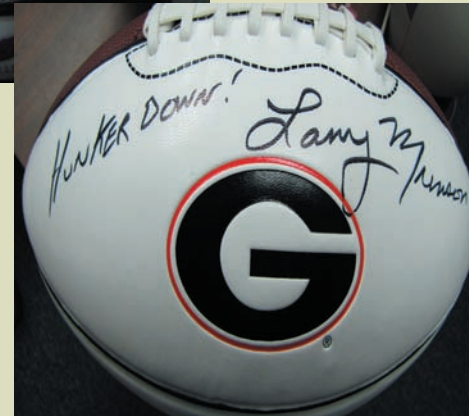
Visit Athens, GA

Take a look at a few of the great items that will be up for auction!



Atlanta Braves baseball signed by Ryan Klesko

Georgia football signed by Larry Munson



Win a 2 night stay at the Blue Ridge Comfort Inn & Lodge in Blue Ridge, GA



#### Other Items Up for Grabs Include

Hand built Dan Dixon heart pine table, Ryan Klesko autographed sign, BBQ ribs & chicken dinner for 50, UGA print, Kershaw pocket knife, handmade pottery, various apparel items, and much more!



# GSWCC Regional Office News

## Region I

The Roosevelt Soil and Water Conservation District sponsored their annual Youth Wildlife Field Day in October for elementary school students at the Marvin Jones Outdoor Classroom in LaGrange. About 400 students attended this workshop which is geared toward educating youth on wildlife, conservation, and careers in natural resources.



Youth Wildlife Field Day at Marvin Jones Outdoor Classroom

## Region II

The GSWCC Region II has been actively working to sign up landowners for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. To date, 12 landowners in Banks, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Oglethorpe, White, and Wilkes counties have been awarded contracts. These contracts combine to establish over 23 acres of riparian buffer along many prominent waterways and tributaries in the region.



A completed Partners for Fish & Wildlife Project utilizing fencing for livestock exclusion in the GSWCC Region II area.

## Region III

One county and four cities in Region III earned Green Communities Certification for leadership in reducing their environmental impact from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). DeKalb County and the cities of Atlanta, Fairburn, Roswell and Suwanee earned their certifications by implementing sustainability practices and policies in 10 categories ranging from energy efficiency and green building to transportation and water efficiency. Also earning certification in July was Cobb County and the cities of Alpharetta and Decatur, all of which lie in Region III.

The ARC launched the Green Communities Program to foster greater environmental stewardship by recognizing local governments that invest in programs leading to a more sustainable Atlanta region. ARC's Green Communities Program is the only program in the country that seeks to transform a region by promoting sustainability through a "green" certification program for local governments.

Maia Davis, Principal Environmental Planner, and Abby Owens, Senior Environmental Planner, were invited by the Region III office to attend SWCD meetings in DeKalb, Fulton, Cobb, Clayton, Rockdale, Henry and Gwinnett counties. At the district meetings, Davis and Owens informed around 50 local issuing authorities (LIAs) of ARC's Green Communities Initiative. LIAs regularly attend monthly district meetings.



## Region IV

The Central Georgia SWCD hosted a farm tour of Earl and Wanda Barrs' Gully Branch Farm on November 19, 2009. The Barrs' are recent winners of the National Tree Farm Award from the American Tree Farm System. The tour included several stops at forestry related conservation practice sites to learn about sustainable forestry management practices. Lunch was held in conjunction with a presentation by Mr. & Mrs. Barrs outlining the historic and current operation at Gully Branch.






# GSWCC Regional Office News


## Region IV *continued*

The Piedmont SWCD and the Oconee River RC&D held a Small Farm Conservation Field Day at the farm of Bedell Finley in Hancock County with 65 in attendance. The field day showcased several best management practices such as heavy use areas, cross fencing, rotational grazing and, over-seeding pastureland and tree planting. Discussions were held on the new Farm Bill, irrigation management and pest management in addition to the Georgia Forestry Commission providing information on forestry cost-share programs.

The Walton County SWCD held its Annual Meeting and Conservationist of the Year banquet on November 9, 2009 in Monroe. Chairman John Redding and Vice Chair Dan Bennett presented Walter Wellman of Alcovy Mountain Farm with the Conservationist of the Year Award. 

## Region V

The Middle South Georgia SWCD held its annual Conservationist of the Year Awards Banquet on November 5, 2009. There was a huge turn out, great food, and entertainment that provided laughter to all.

The Flint River SWCD honored Seminole County teacher, Tina Fain on December 3, 2009 for her achievement on winning "Outdoor Classroom of the Year." 



Seminole County Teacher Tina Fain & District Supervisor Greg Mims

## Region VI

For more than 15 years, individuals, families, church groups, and civic organizations across the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and other countries have participated in a wonderful opportunity to impact the lives of less fortunate children around the world through the international relief organization, Samaritan's Purse. This organization coordinates a program called Operation Christmas Child. Through the OCC program, more than 46 million shoeboxes filled with toys, personal hygiene items, booklets, school supplies, and other items, not readily available to the recipients, have been distributed globally. This year, GSWCC Region VI Staff participated in the OCC Program.



Region VI Regional Representative Rahn Milligan and Administrative Assistant Dianne Griffin prepare items for Operation Christmas Child

What began as a small campaign to help homeless children in Romania has grown into one of the largest relief and evangelical programs of its kind, and the Region VI Staff saw this as an excellent opportunity to do something within the spirit of the season. For more information on Samaritan's Purse and their international relief efforts, please visit [www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org). 