



SOIL & WATER NEWS

Brent Dykes, Executive Director

A Word From The Director

April 2013

As conservation districts across the state and nation begin to make plans to celebrate Stewardship Week (April 28-May 5), I am reminded that as citizens we all play a central role in how our natural resources are conserved.

It is the culmination of all of our individual actions that either have a positive or negative effect on our natural resources. This is where education and technical guidance is crucial.

It is the role of the Soil & Water Conservation Commission to provide technical assistance to landowners and land users so that the best land management decisions can be made.

As we pursue this goal, our staff strives to be responsive to your needs and concerns by going the extra mile to obtain answers to difficult resource concerns.

We strive to be dependable by completing the tasks at hand and following through on commitments. We are constantly seeking new opportunities to expand our knowledge based on the latest science so we can be knowledgeable about the available resource options.

I trust that we are meeting your expectations, but if we are not, then I welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can make improvements.

You can make a difference by your actions and “improve how our water sheds”!

Brent Dykes
Executive Director

Inside this Issue:

Stewardship Week

Around the Districts

Map It! - GIS

New: The Urban Update

Watershed Rehab in Madison County

New 319 (Nonpoint Source Pollution) Projects

Ag Day at the Capitol

Ag Water Metering Pilot Project

Irrigator Pro

Mobile Irrigation Lab

GSWCC Regional Offices

Stewardship Week

Georgia's 40 conservation districts are celebrating the 58th year of Stewardship Week, April 28 – May 5, 2013. Stewardship Week is one of the largest national annual programs to promote conservation. The 2013 Stewardship Week is themed, “Where does your water shed?”

You can learn more about what the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission is doing to maintain and upgrade local flood control watersheds by going to <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/watershed-program>. You can locate your local soil and water conservation district by going to <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/find-my-swcd>. There you can find information on upcoming events and programs.



Around the Districts

GSWCC has revised its web pages to make information on Soil and Water Conservation Districts more accessible. Meeting announcements, annual reports, plans of work, recent events and contact information are available for each district by going to <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/soil-water-conservation-districts>.

The **Altamaha** SWCD, in cooperation with the Coastal Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council, held a Pond Management and Micro-Irrigation Workshop at the Cow Pen Branch Hunting and Skeet Club in Baxley. Participants learned about sportfish and irrigation pond management from a GA DNR, Wildlife Resources Division representative. A NRCS engineer presented information on micro-irrigation including system types, designs, and effectiveness. In addition, participants also gained insight in the various technical and financial assistance programs offered through the USDA NRCS, USDA Rural Development, and USDA Farm Service Agency. Sponsors for the event included Coastal Georgia RC&D, Seven Rivers RC&D, Altamaha SWCD, Albany State University, GSWCC, Farm Bureau, NRCS, FSA, Rural Development, and GA DNR Wildlife Resources Division.



The **Brier Creek** SWCD, in cooperation with the **Columbia County** SWCD, held a Erosion, Sedimentation, and Pollution Control Plan Development & NPDES General Permits Update Workshop at the Julian Smith Barbeque Pit in Augusta. Participants were presented information on the Georgia Erosion and Sediment Control Act, the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permits, ES&PC plan review checklists as well as the guidance document. GSWCC staff, GA EPD and a City of Augusta representative provided information on the ES&PC plan submittal procedures for the City of Augusta.

Around the Districts

Blue Ridge Mountain SWCD sponsored an Erosion and Sediment Control Level 1A Recertification Course in Blairsville to recertify 14 GA DNR Wildlife Resources Division employees.

Catoosa County SWCD hosted an Erosion and Sediment Control Level 1A Recertification Course.

Central Georgia SWCD participated in the annual Indian Pow Wow event for the North West Laurens Elementary Pre-K and Kindergarten kids at Tomlinson Farm located in Dudley. The event is both fun and a great learning experience. Activities included GA DNR talking about different hides and what animals they represent, how sugar cane is ground, how corn meal is ground and made into corn bread, storytelling, and an arrowhead and spear showcase. GSWCC staff demonstrated with the enviroscape how water can be polluted and the importance of preserving and protecting this precious natural resource. The Central Georgia SWCD provided supplies and literature.



Coastal SWCD sponsored a small farm opportunities workshop. Held in Ludowici at Cecil Stafford's farm, attendees heard from NRCS, Farm Services Agency, Rural Development and Fort Valley State University Extension. Topics included technical and financial assistance as well as information on improving grazing capacity, rotating livestock and making farms more energy efficient.

Coosa River SWCD exhibited at the Georgia Multicultural Ag Conference in Cartersville. Approximately 90 attendees learned about beginning and maintaining a sustainable farming operation.

The **Flint River** SWCD sponsored their annual Birds of Prey Wildlife Presentations. Students from participating schools from Camilla, Cuthbert, Pelham and Cairo saw the ever-popular Birds of Prey flight show presented by the director for the Georgia Southern University Center for Wildlife Education. The students were given an up-close and personal experience with a Bald Eagle, several species of snakes, and various other raptors.



Around the Districts

Lamar County SWCD provided red maple seedlings to the public in celebration of Arbor Day 2013.



The **Ogeechee River** SWCD, in cooperation with the Coastal Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council, held a Grazing Management Workshop



at the Bulloch County Center for Agriculture. Participants learned proper pasture establishment methods as well as pasture management techniques from NRCS's Grassland Conservationist. An Extension Specialist with Fort Valley State University presented information on goat meat production, parasite control in small ruminants, and diversified livestock production systems. Participants also gained additional insight in the various technical and financial assistance programs offered through the USDA NRCS, USDA Rural Development, and USDA Farm Service Agency. Other sponsors for the event included Albany State

University, GSWCC, Fort Valley State University Extension, NRCS, FSA, Rural Development, and Agri Supply Company of Statesboro.

The **Piedmont** SWCD collaborated with Embry Farm Services, Chem Nut, NRCS, GSWCC and UGA Cooperative Extension on a Weed Management Field Day in Eatonton. Piedmont Conservation Products sponsored the event and provided lunch. Speakers discussed available NRCS programs, weed identification and suggested herbicide usage for those weeds, and grazing methods for cattle. The program ended with suggestions for sprayer selection and proper calibration of a sprayer unit. Georgia Farm Bureau was present also to film some of the day's events. Pesticide credits were given at the end of the event.

In Carroll County, **West Georgia** SWCD co-sponsored a series of Monday night education sessions centered around all aspects of equine management from horse health to pasture management.

Map It! - GIS

A one-stop GIS web tool for Georgia is available free and online from the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission. The interactive GIS allows the public to drill-down to information of interest, as well as advanced selection features that allow interactive information retrieval for engineers and others needing technical information on the state's water resources. Maps can be created and localized showing:

Political Boundaries	Potential Water Supply Reservoirs	Active EPD Water Permits
Mobile Irrigation Lab	Partners for Wildlife Locations	Ag Water Metering Program
Watershed Dams	Impaired Streams	Ponds Program Drainage Basins (HUCs)

The mapping page at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/gis-mapping> also includes links to U.S. government mapping web sites that highlight other important issues, such as current drought conditions and soil moisture levels.

The Urban Update

GSWCC has added a new and re-occurring section to the Soil and Water News, The Urban Update. The Urban Update will include information on erosion and sediment control issues, permit and legislative changes and education and certification requirements.

The Urban Program is responsible for administering the Education and Certification Program for individuals involved in land disturbing activities and providing technical support and guidance to local soil and water conservation districts, local issuing authorities and the citizens of Georgia on erosion and sediment control issues.

Education and Certification

New Requirements

Effective January 1, 2013, applicants seeking to obtain or renew erosion and sediment control certification for land disturbing activities must provide the GSWCC with the following items:

1. A signed and sworn affidavit verifying the applicant's lawful presence in the United States
2. One of 16 secure and verifiable documents as required by Georgia law.
3. A Checklist for Verification of Lawful Presence within the United States.

Urban Program at a Glance

ES&PC Plans Reviewed – 1,714

Individuals Certified – 2,311

Individuals Re-certified – 7,049

Reporting Period July, 2012 – February 2013

More information and forms are available at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov>.

Erosion and Sediment Control

Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control

The Manual is currently being revised and GSWCC is developing a new process for approving new practices.

Proposed revisions to the Manual will be posted for public comment.



NPDES Permits

The 2008 NPDES permits are set to expire July 31, 2013.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division and other stakeholders are meeting twice a month, starting in March and ending in May, to discuss the potential revisions.

2013 Legislative Session

There were no changes to O.C.G.A. 12-7-1, the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975, during this legislative session. However, GSWCC continues to monitor Senate Bill 160, which requires changes in the requirements for the verification of the lawful presence in the United States.

Watershed Rehab in Madison County

South River Watershed Dam 29, located in Madison County, is currently in the process of being rehabilitated for dam safety. This dam has been classified as high hazard dam by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Safe Dam Program. Essentially a dam becomes a high hazard dam, if in the event of a dam failure there are existing structures downstream in the dam failure breach zone where the associated flooding could potentially cause probable loss of life.

Dam 29 does not meet current dam safety requirements; however, the on-going rehabilitation construction will allow this dam to be compliant with state dam safety regulations.

Current regulations require that high hazard dams accommodate the state design storm, approximately 15 inches in 6 hours, without having the dam overtop, which could lead to potential dam failure. The selected rehabilitation option for dam 29 will be the installation of a concrete structure through the existing dam embankment capable of safely passing the design storm.

North Georgia Concrete has been selected as the contractor for this project. This company has offices in Dahlonega and Fayetteville. The rehab project will involve primarily the installation of a concrete chute spillway with a labyrinth weir through the dam embankment. The structure will have a width of 78 feet and a length of 164 feet, requiring approximately 3,500 cubic yards of reinforced concrete. The existing auxiliary spillway will be modified using conventional fill material. Proposed construction time is estimated to be 300 days. Construction began March 13 with a probable project cost of approximately \$2 million.



Dam 29 before current construction that will bring the structure into compliance with state dam safety regulations.

Fortunately for residents in Madison County, Dam 29 is the second dam to be upgraded for dam safety. Construction was completed for the rehabilitation of South River Watershed Dam 4 in the summer of 2011.

New 319 (Nonpoint Source Pollution) Projects

Soil and water conservation districts, in cooperation with GSWCC, are working with local stakeholders and organizations in the Cedar Creek Watershed and Folsom Creek Watershed (Ocmulgee River Basin) to monitor impaired streams in these two watersheds. The project will identify possible sources of pollution and then provide cost-share assistance to landowners to prevent pollution.

GSWCC, in cooperation with the University of Georgia and Georgia Poultry Federation, is providing assistance to farmers in the Settingdown Creek Watershed in northwest Georgia in updating their nutrient management plans. GSWCC will offer the same technical assistance in Georgia's coastal counties and the Altamaha Basin. As part of the process, GSWCC, UGA-CES and Georgia Department of Agriculture will update software that will allow producers to better manage their farms. The software will be provided free to the public.

Additional information on both these projects are on the web at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/current-section-319-water-quality-cost-share-projects>.

Ag Day at the Capitol

GSWCC staffer Carrie Fowler spoke to attendees about the importance of soil and water conservation during the 8th Annual Georgia Ag Day event at the Georgia Freight Depot in downtown Atlanta on March 22 . The event, hosted by Gov. Nathan Deal and Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, drew 4-Hers and FFA students from across the state along with state officials, their staff members and representatives from Georgia's many ag organizations. Exhibits manned by 52 ag organizations and agencies showcased the diversity of Georgia agriculture.

Ag Water Metering Pilot Project

GSWCC has sent letters to more than 950 agricultural water permit holders in the Ichawaynochaway sub-basin asking them to voluntarily read their ag water meters once a month during the 2013 growing season and mail the information on pre-stamped post cards provided by GSWCC.

The pilot project, if successful, will provide valuable information on crop water use during the growing season.

By reading their own meters, the agricultural producers can use the information as a farm management tool. The information can help with irrigation scheduling and provide an early warning if they are experiencing pump problems. The monthly readings will also help Georgia's Regional Water Planning Councils as they work to understand the water issues in the region and identify any "gaps" that may exist between the capabilities of the resources as articulated by the resource assessments and the future regional needs identified in the councils' plans.



Propeller type water meter

Anyone with questions concerning this pilot project should contact GSWCC at 229-995-6001 or email afleming@gaswcc.org .

Irrigator Pro

Irrigator Pro is an irrigation management technology that has demonstrated effectiveness in conserving water while increasing yields. It is an expert system designed to provide irrigation scheduling recommendations based on scientific data. Originally developed for peanuts, the success of Irrigator Pro for Peanuts created interest from other groups. A collaborative effort between the USDA ARS National Peanut Research Laboratory, GA Cotton Commission, the University of Georgia and the Peanut Foundation was established to create comparable models for cotton and corn.

For requirements needed to run the system and for software downloads, go to <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Research/docs.htm?docid=16805>.

Mobile Irrigation Lab

GSWCC, in partnership with USDA-NRCS, offers a free irrigation system evaluation service to Georgia's agricultural community. Upon request from a grower, a GSWCC Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL) technician visits the grower's field to conduct a visual inspection and tests to evaluate the application uniformity of their system, sprinkler application rate, system pressure and flow rate.



Once these data are collected and charted, the farmer will have knowledge of the flow, application rate and a scoring of the uniformity of their system.

The technician can recommend improvements that will improve the uniformity of crop yields and result in water savings. Efficient irrigation benefits both agricultural producers and the public by maximizing crop yields while improving water conservation.

Agricultural producers can schedule a MIL visit by contacting:

GSWCC Hooks Hanner Environmental Resource Center, Albany, Ga., at 229-995-6001, or
GSWCC Statesboro Office, Statesboro, Ga., at 912-681-5241

GSWCC Regional Offices

Effective July 1, the Region III Conyers Office will be closed. Districts currently in that region are being reassigned to other regions.

Region I Rome Office – John Loughridge, Region1@gaswcc.org (706) 295-6131

Region II Athens Office – Robert Amos, Region2@gaswcc.org (706) 552-4479

Region III Conyers Office – Staff, Region3@gaswcc.org (770) 761-3020

Region IV Milledgeville Office – Keegan Malone, Region4@gaswcc.org (478) 445-5766

Region V Dawson Office – Luke Crosson, Region5@gaswcc.org (229) 995-6001

Region VI Statesboro Office – Rahn Milligan, Region6@gaswcc.org (912) 681-5241

Communications / Information Resource Specialist – Michael Wald, mwald@gaswcc.org (706) 552-4489

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