



SOIL & WATER NEWS

Brent Dykes, Executive Director

2014 District Supervisor Elections

November 2013

Planning has begun for the 2014 Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor elections. While the Georgia Secretary of State's Elections Division has not published the election calendar for 2014 yet, a key date for the election of Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors will most likely be in early March 2014. That will be the deadline to qualify in order to be on the ballot for the November General Election, which is currently scheduled for November 4, 2014.

At present, we expect elections to be held in the following counties:

Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Baldwin, Barrow, Bartow, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bleckley, Brantley, Bulloch, Burke, Butts, Camden, Candler, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Cobb, Colquitt, Dawson, Decatur, DeKalb, Dodge, Dooly, Early, Echols, Elbert, Emanuel, Evans, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Glascock, Glynn, Grady, Greene, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Irwin, Jasper, Jefferson, Jenkins, Johnson, Jones, Lamar, Lanier, Laurens, Lee, Lincoln, Lowndes, Lumpkin, Macon, Madison, Marion, Meriwether, Mitchell, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Muscogee, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Peach, Pickens, Polk, Putnam, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Rockdale, Schley, Seminole, Stephens, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Toombs, Towns, Treutlen, Troup, Turner, Twiggs, Union, Walker, Walton, Ware, Warren, Washington, Webster, Wheeler, White, Wilcox, Wilkinson, and Worth.

If your county appears in the list of counties scheduled to hold an election for district supervisor and you are interested in becoming a candidate, you should complete the steps outlined on the GSWCC website at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/how-do-i-become-swcd-supervisor>.

You should also periodically check the GSWCC website for updates and election-related information as it become available.

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16 Districts to Receive Additional Funds

GSWCC is allotting additional Fiscal Year 2014 funds to the top 16 Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state. This allotment is based on district's submittal of a timely FY12 financial report, a complete FY13 Annual Report of Accomplishments detailing their activities, and an FY14 Plan of Work that met the requirements as put forth by the GSWCC. Documents as submitted by the 40 soil and water conservation districts across the state were reviewed and scored to determine the recipient districts.

The following 16 Districts will receive a \$500 allotment: Broad River, Coastal, Cobb County, Flint River, Lamar County, Walton County, Alapaha, Catoosa County, Hall County, Lower Chattahoochee River, Ogeechee River, Piedmont, Pine Mountain, Satilla River, Upper Chattahoochee River, and West Georgia.

This is the second year that an additional allotment has been made by GSWCC to recognize districts that have exhibited success in implementing their annual plan of work and in complying with yearly deadlines for submitting their Annual Reports of Disbursements and Receipts. We commend these districts for their efforts, and we hope these additional funds will aid them in their activities during FY 2014.

GACDS 2014 Annual Meeting

Preparations are underway for the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors 2014 Annual Meeting. This year the meeting will be held at the Macon Centreplex convention center from January 24 to January 26, 2014.

A block of rooms will be reserved for attendees at the Macon Marriott City Center, which is connected to the convention center. Look for more details on the GACDS website at <http://www.gacds.org/2014-gacds-annual-meeting/>.



A draft agenda is available at:

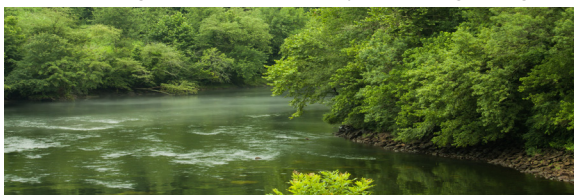
<http://www.gacds.org/storage/2014%20GACDS%20Annual%20Meeting%20Agenda.pdf>

BMPs for Georgia Agriculture

GSWCC has issued an updated *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture*.

The manual is designed to provide the agriculture community with knowledge of the best management practices (BMPs) that work to protect surface water quality as well as to help agency personnel educate farmers about BMPs and their usefulness.

Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture is a compilation of conservation practices that address surface water quality and includes an estimate of the effectiveness and relative cost of each BMP. This second edition of the manual also includes an expanded section on nutrient management planning. You can find the manual online at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture>.



Urban Update - GSWCC Board Approves Revised E&S Manual

In October, the Georgia Soil and Water Commission Board approved the revised *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia* (also known as the “Green Book” or “Design Manual”)

The most significant change to the Manual are the new testing procedures for proposed erosion and sediment control products, which will give the GSWCC Board useful information on proposed products when considering including new items on the list of GSWCC approved products.



After receiving Board approval, GSWCC staff held public meetings in Columbus, Cartersville, Savannah, and Atlanta to talk to the public about revisions. Copies of the revised Manual will be available in early January and put online at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/manual-erosion-and-sediment-control-georgia>.

Information on ASR in Georgia



The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) has created an informational site for Georgia's aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) demonstration project. While there has been a lot of news coverage about ASR this site is designed to help citizens educate themselves on ASR.

The website can be found at <http://asrgeorgia.org/>.

Sunbelt Ag Expo

With larger crowds than in 2012, this year's Sunbelt Ag Expo provided GSWCC with an excellent opportunity to show off our products ranging from GIS to the new Ag BMP Manual. Using GSWCC's new display monitor with real-time Internet access, people stopping by the booth could see the GIS in action and learn how they could access it from their homes and businesses. Many were impressed when staff could pull up aerial views of their hometowns and residences using their addresses.

GSWCC's Jake Fleming had the opportunity to speak to three dozen Georgia legislators touring the Expo about the ag water metering program. The legislative event, which was coordinated by the Georgia Agribusiness Council, brought lawmakers to Sunbelt research plots as part of a larger tour of agriculture site around Georgia. Afterwards, *GrowingGeorgia.com* published a nice article that included part of Jake Fleming's presentation.



State legislators gather at Sunbelt Ag Expo to learn about GSWCC's ag water metering program.



2013 Sunbelt Ag Expo hosted more than 90,000 visitors over three days in Moultrie, Ga.



GSWCC's Jake Fleming provides an overview of the ag water metering program.

Update on the Farm Bill

Senate and House conferees have begun consideration of the 2013 Farm Bill. The proposed legislation follows the termination of the old bill at the end of FY 2013 on September 30. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has outlined the association's priorities for the Farm Bill.

The NACD strongly supports the passage of a five-year Farm Bill, including the following key priorities:

- Senate language on Technical Assistance (TA)
- Senate budget for Title II Conservation
- Tying conservation compliance to crop insurance



NACD President Earl Garber outlined his priorities in a letter to Congress, which is available on the web at <http://www.nacdnet.org/dmdocuments/Farm-Bill-Conferee-Letter-10-28-13.pdf>

Ag Forecast Meetings Scheduled in 2014

Mark your calendars for the 2014 agricultural forecast meetings. UGA economists will give the annual ag economic outlook along with guest speakers, including experts on farm succession planning. Registration fee is \$30 per person or \$200 for a table of eight.

The meetings will be held on Jan. 24 at the Georgia Farm Bureau in Macon, Jan. 27 at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education in Athens, Jan. 28 at the Toombs County Agri-Center in Lyons, Jan. 29 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center in Tifton, Jan. 30 at the Cloud Livestock Facility in Bainbridge, and Jan. 31 at the Clarence Brown Conference Center in Cartersville. Advance registration is required by Jan. 22, 2014.

For more information, visit <http://www.georgiaagforecast.com> to register, call 706-583-0347 or send an email to carlam@uga.edu. Follow the meetings on Twitter @GAagforecast and join the conversation with #agforecast.

NRCS Re-opened



As of Oct. 17, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices reopened following the Federal government partial shutdown.

Under the bill passed by Congress and signed by the White House, agencies will be allowed to operate through Jan. 15, 2014. For future reference, despite the shutdown, some NRCS web pages were made available to the public during the shutdown. These included: NRCS Water & Climate Center, Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE), Conservation Practice Standards (CPS), EFOTG, Plants, and the Web Soil Survey.

These services could have been accessed through the NRCS shutdown web page also at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/NRCS-shutdown2013.html>. If there is another shutdown in January, it is likely these same sites will remain available to the public.

Around the Districts

Broad River SWCD sponsored “The Sustainable Agriculture Conference for New and Beginning Farmers” in Watkinsville. Conference participants were able to attend sessions on: integrated pest management meat goat production, farm to school meat processing, how to start a cooperative beekeeping, on the farm composting, Georgia Organics programs, USDA Support Programs Market Analysis, food preservation and the Cottage Foods Act, becoming Certified Naturally Grown vs. USDA Organic Certified, record keeping in the mobile unit and GATE certification, and on-the-farm food safety certification. In addition to the sessions, the conference included guest speakers, vendors and exhibits.



Piedmont SWCD held the district’s 52nd annual Conservationist of the Year banquet at Rock Eagle. District Chairman Pat Hardy welcomed everyone. A meal sponsored by Piedmont Conservation Products, and participating businesses and banks from within the district in the new dining hall at Rock Eagle. Rick Huszagh, Owner of Down to Earth Energy located in Walton County, was the keynote speaker for the evening. Conservationist of the Year awards were given to: Baldwin County – The Flannery O’Connor – Andalusia Foundation; Putnam County – Wooten Family Farm; Jones County – Debra K. Waugh; Taliaferro County – Fall Line Farms; Hancock County – Millhouse Plantation; Greene County – Granite Hills Farm; and Morgan County – Williams Dairy Farm.



Upper Ocmulgee SWCD co-sponsored a Small Farmer Workshop at the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington. The workshop was made possible by a grant from the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors. Representatives from NRCS, Crystal Organic Farm and Georgia Department of Agriculture presented topics including: production in high tunnels, microirrigation, GA Grown and Farmers Markets, Farm Bill/Cost Share Programs, and production from a producer’s prospective.



The District also presented Conservationist of the Year awards to recipients of both Newton and Jasper Counties. Sue and Martin Knowles of Buttercup Farm were presented the award for Jasper County and the FFA-FCCLA Center was presented the award for Newton County. After the program, everyone enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by the FFA Camp staff.

Matthew Kulinski talks to small farmer workshop attendees about the GeorgiaGrown program

Warren County SWCD held their Conservationist of the Year in which Charles Harper was awarded a plaque recognizing him as a Supervisor Emeritus for his 33 years of service on the Warren County SWCD Board. Holli Farms was recognized as the 2013 Conservationist of the Year for their outstanding efforts in protecting the soil and water resources in Warren County. Brent Dykes gave the keynote speech in which he discussed the history of and present day make up of Warren County.



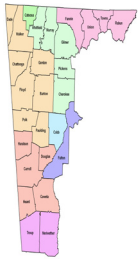
The SWCD, along with The Little Rivers Cattlemen’s Association, sponsored a Forage Field Day held at Dasher Angus Farm in Warrenton. Speakers at the event were Dr. Dennis Hancock, UGA Extension Forage Specialist on Harvesting and Curing High Quality Hay, Wes Smith, UGA Extension County Coordinator, Upson County on Establishing a Rotational Grazing System, and Rick Smith, UGA Extension County Coordinator, McDuffie County on Maximizing Winter Grazing.

Around the Districts - Continued

Walton County SWCD honored Hal, Cheryl, and Clay Brady from Brady-Foster Farm with its Conservationist of the Year Award at its annual banquet held at the Walton EMC. Walton County Commission Chairman Kevin Little served as the evening's keynote speaker. North Georgia College and State University student Aubrey Hayes Boss received the 2013 Julian Brown Scholarship. In addition, Aaron Newton, Clayton Callaway, and Trace Scroggs were honored for their participation in the 2013 Natural Resource Conservation Workshop. District outreach employee and former chairman John Redding was honored for his induction into the GACDS Hall of Fame and the NACD Southeast Hall of Fame in 2013.



New Staff and New GSWCC Regional Office



On Oct. 17, Region 1 moved its offices from Rome to Calhoun with the assistance of GSWCC staff. The region continues to support the same districts as before the move. Here is their new contact information:

GSWCC Region 1
1282 SR 53 Spur SW, Suite 300
Calhoun, GA 30701
Office: 706-624-1434

GSWCC has seen the addition of several new staff. Cathy Deal has been hired as Administrative Assistant in the Statesboro office. In Dawson, Sandra Reed has been hired as Administrative Assistant, while Amber Reese has been brought on part-time as the Front Desk Receptionist in Dawson. In Athens, Ms. Amber Adkinson is assisting at the state office in a similar capacity on a part-time basis. GSWCC warmly welcomes these additions to our offices.

GSWCC Regional Offices

Region I Calhoun Office – John Loughridge, Region1@gaswcc.org (706) 624-1434

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

Region III Statesboro Office – Rahn Milligan, Region3@gaswcc.org (912) 681-5241

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

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

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

Visit us on the web at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov>