



SOIL & WATER NEWS

Brent Dykes, Executive Director



A Word From the Director

July 2014

I often think about how blessed I am to have the privilege of working with conservation district supervisors.

These local leaders come from all walks of life – farmers, small business owners, engineers, equipment operators, real estate professionals and many other professions. Each with a desire to see the natural resources of this state conserved.

District supervisors are local community leaders who see the need to teach today's youth about the importance of conservation so that future generations carry on this important work.

They are stewards who believe in the wise use of resources to maintain Georgia's scenic natural beauty and its vibrant business climate.

District Supervisors form a communication network that stretches to the farthest corners of the state, while at the same time addressing the needs of the individual landowner.

District Supervisors inform and multiply the efforts of the Conservation Commission.

If you are not partnering with your local conservation district, I encourage you to begin doing so. They can strengthen and add great value to your activities.

Brent Dykes
Executive Director

In this Issue:

Improving Water Quality in Georgia

New USDA Leadership in Georgia

RCPP - New USDA-NRCS Program

ASDSO Honors GSWCC and Bob Fulmer

Pine Mountain SWCD Video

A Successful 2014 NRCW

District Supervisor Appointments

Staff Changes at GSWCC

GACDS Group Meetings

Around the Districts

Upcoming District Events

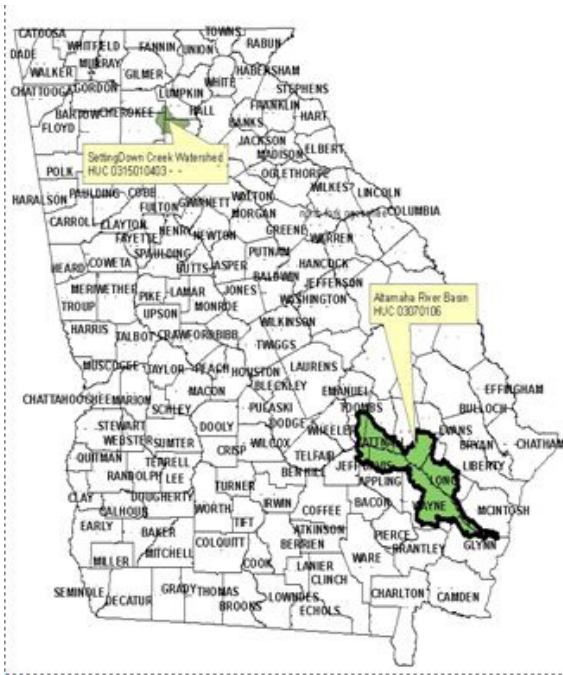
Soil and Water Conservation District Websites

GSWCC

Improving Water Quality in Georgia

With one project completed and two more underway, GSWCC and Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been focusing on improving water quality for citizens in Georgia with the voluntary cooperation of agricultural producers in the state.

Water flowing through Gilmer, Gordon, Murray, and Pickens counties is cleaner following a recently completed \$700,000 water quality program for the Middle Coosawattee River conducted by the Limestone Valley Soil and Water Conservation District and the Coosa River Soil and Water Conservation District. With funding provided by Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission staff contracted with agricultural producers to install conservation practices that have reduced nitrogen entering the Middle Coosawattee River by an estimated 63 percent, reduced phosphorus by an estimated 80 percent, and reduced sediment by an estimated 57 percent. “By sharing the cost of installing conservation practices with landowners, we were able to make measurable improvements to Talking Rock Creek, Little Scarecorn Creek, Salacoa Creek, and Lick Creek,” explained Brent Dykes, executive director of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.



Having completed the Middle Coosawattee River project, two new voluntary Multi-Phased Nutrient Planning Management Initiatives for poultry and livestock operations have begun in northern and southeastern Georgia.

The Settingdown Creek Watershed Project lies primarily within the boundaries of the Upper Chattahoochee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Forsyth and Dawson counties) but also runs through a portion of the Limestone Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (Cherokee and Pickens counties).

The Altamaha River Basin travels through the Altamaha Soil and Water Conservation District (Appling and Jeff Davis counties), Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District (Long and McIntosh counties), Ogeechee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Tattnall County), Oohoopee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Montgomery and Toombs counties), and Satilla River Soil and Water Conservation District (Glynn and Wayne counties).

Farmers participating in these projects will receive a free on-farm assessment, soil testing, an updated Nutrient Management Plan, and an incentive payment for participation in the program. GSWCC will assist in identifying potential funding sources to complete improvements based on the farm assessment. There is no cost to farmers for this service.

Farmers wishing to take advantage of this free service to update their plans should contact GSWCC Region offices to set up a time to complete an on-farm assessment. Agricultural producers in Cherokee, Dawson, Forsyth, and Pickens counties may contact Jessica Bee in the GSWCC Region I office in Calhoun by calling 706-624-1434 or emailing jbee@gaswcc.org. Producers in Appling, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne counties may contact the GSWCC Region III office in Statesboro by calling 912-681-5241 or emailing region3@gaswcc.org. The GSWCC has produced a free manual, [Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture](http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture), listing agricultural water quality improvements, which is available online at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture>.

New USDA Leadership in Georgia

Terrance Rudolph is the new NRCS State Conservationist for Georgia, effective July 13. Mr. Rudolph comes to Georgia after serving as NRCS Area Conservationist in Knoxville, Tenn. Katura Wright became Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, effective June 30. Katura Wright transferred from Missouri where she served as Assistant State Conservationist for Programs.



Dr. Fred Harrison Jr. has been appointed the USDA FSA Executive Director for Georgia, effective June 2. Dr. Harrison's background includes serving as Dean of the College of Agriculture, Home Economics and Allied Programs at Fort Valley State University. We look forward to continuing our partnership with both agencies in promoting soil and water conservation.

RCPP - New USDA-NRCS Program

The new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between USDA-NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. NRCS supports locally driven projects and encourages landowners and producers to get involved in the design of project proposals.

RCPP combines the authorities of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Great Lakes Basin Program. Assistance is delivered in accordance with the rules of EQIP, CSP, ACEP and HFRP; and in certain areas the Watershed Operations and Flood Prevention Program.

The program establishes three pots of money for grants.

- 35 percent of total funding will be divided among eight critical conservation areas (CCAs) including the Longleaf Pine Range here in Georgia.
- 40 percent will go to regional or multi-state projects selected on a competitive basis.
- 25 percent to state-level projects through a competitive process administered by State Technical Committees.

In Georgia, NRCS has identified the need to address the following critical priorities for projects:



1. Excess/Insufficient Water
2. Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife
3. Inefficient Energy Use
4. Livestock Production Limitation
5. Water Quality Degradation

Preproposal applications were due July 14, 2014, and full proposals will be due September 26, 2014. Full proposals will be accepted only from applicants who are notified at the end of the preproposal review process that their application has been identified for further evaluation.

Once projects are approved, farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners located within project areas will be able to contact their local USDA Service Center to find out how to apply for financial assistance. The project partner will also conduct outreach to landowners and producers and will be able to provide assistance with applying to NRCS programs. Beginning in fall 2014, NRCS will post selected RCPP projects on their website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ga/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>.

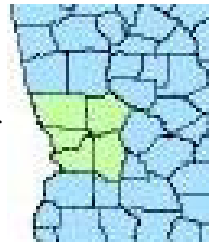
ASDSO Honors GSWCC and Bob Fulmer



The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) has selected the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission to receive the 2014 ASDSO Southeast Regional Award of Merit. The Association gives this award annually to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to dam safety on a regional level. This nomination was selected in concurrence of the ASDSO Southeast state representatives and recognizes GSWCC and Bob Fulmer's hard work on Watershed Flood Control Dams in Georgia. The award will be presented in September at the ASDSO Annual Conference Awards banquet.

Pine Mountain SWCD Video

Ever wonder what is happening in individual soil and water conservation districts? With 40 districts in Georgia, it is hard to go to every district event and see all of their activities. To help overcome this problem, the Pine Mountain SWCD has produced a video showing highlights of their recent activities. Covering Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Muscogee, and Talbot counties, the district is very active and particularly proud of their annual Forestry Field Day. You can watch their new video on the GSWCC website at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/videos/pine-mountain-soil-and-water-conservation-district>.



A Successful 2014 NRCW

More than 160 students from all parts of Georgia learned about the importance of soil and water conservation, agriculture, forestry, and mining while having fun at the one-week residential Natural Resources Conservation Workshop that was held June 8 - 12 at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton.



This year's camp featured a combination of field trips, classroom instruction, and recreational activities led by GSWCC staff. Besides gaining a new appreciation for the state's natural resources, the camp gave out more than \$17,000 in college scholarships.

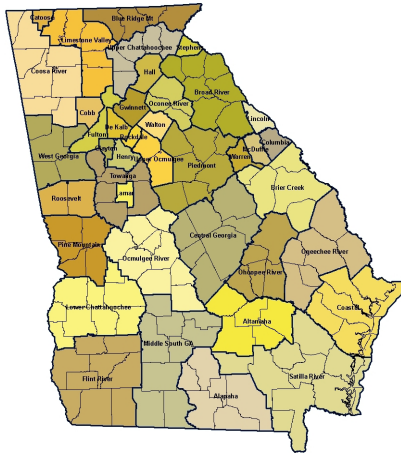
None of this would be possible without the ongoing support provided by Georgia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts that sponsor many of the students attending the camp and provide bus transportation for some students.

Planning is already beginning for next year's camp. Next spring's rising 10th, 11th, and 12th graders who have not attended camp in the past should begin thinking about being part of next year's camp in June 2015.

Below are a few photos showing camp activities. Many more photos are available on the NRCW Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NaturalResourcesConservationWorkshop>.



District Supervisor Appointments



At the June 2014 meeting of the GSWCC State Board, the Board considered nominations forwarded from the state's 40 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and appointed the following District Supervisors:

GSWCC Region III

Altamaha SWCD: Charles Pat Tanner (Bacon County), Garland Thompson (Coffee County)

GSWCC Region IV

Piedmont SWCD: Robert David Blizzard (Baldwin County), William Robert Woodall Jr. (Hancock County)

Warren County SWCD: Edgar Joe Shurley

GSWCC Region V

Alapaha SWCD: Carlos Vickers (Berrien County), James Michael Coggins (Echols County), William Darsey (Lanier County), Johnny Swilley (Lowndes County)

Flint River SWCD: Hal Haddock (Early County), Jeffrey Brinson (Grady County)

Pine Mountain SWCD: Sam Rigdon (Marion County), Harvey Milner (Muscogee County)

Staff Changes at GSWCC

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission has experienced some personnel changes over the past six months, and while some of you have already met the GSWCC staff in their new roles, here is a quick summary.

On June 30, Niki Strain retired from GSWCC. With that change, the Athens office has been restructured. Cynthia Wilbur is now the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission's Administrative Operations Manager. Replacing Cynthia, Kim McCollum is now Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director.

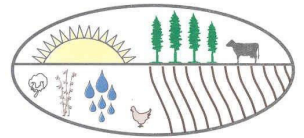
Brady Hart has joined GSWCC Region I as an Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist. Effective May 5, he began handling new E&S plan submittals for Fulton County SWCD and Cobb County SWCD. Projects in those two SWCDs submitted for review before May 5 will continue to be processed by Susan Castle in the Winder, Georgia, Satellite Office.

Jessica Bee has joined Region I as Agricultural Water Quality Project Specialist, and she is handling the 319 project in Settingdown Creek Watershed.

In Region III, Cathy Deal has been on the job for several months as Administrative Assistant, while Lancia Wyant became the full-time permanent Administrative Assistant in Region V earlier this year. Heather Dickey has started as Administrative Assistant in Region IV. There is currently a vacancy for an Agricultural Meter Technician located in Region V. Current contact information for GSWCC staff can be found at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/contacts>.

GACDS Group Meetings

The Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors have begun their series of summer Group Meetings.



GACDS Group V was hosted by Danny Norman at his Tea Grove Plantation in Allenhurst, Ga. The May meeting began with welcoming and introductions by GACDS Group V Vice President Art Rider and Coastal SWCD Supervisor Cecil Stafford. Senator Jack Hill offered his assessment of the past legislative session, and the NRCS Acting State Conservationist provided an update on the Farm Bill conservation programs.



Participants had the opportunity to view the wonderful collection of antique farm and working vehicles collected by Mr. Norman that tell the history of agricultural progress in rural America.

GACDS Group IV held their Summer Meeting on June 19 at the Hooks-Hanner Environmental Resource Center in Dawson, Ga. The group was welcomed by Pine Mountain SWCD Chairman Sam Rigdon. Updates were given by Danny Hogan, GACDS President, Brent Dykes, GSWCC Executive Director, and a representative from USDA-NRCS. A presentation on Conservation in the Lower Flint Basin was made to the group by Calvin Perry, Stripling Irrigation Research Park. Rod Pinkston, Jager Pro LLC, spoke to the group about Feral Hog Control on Pennahatchee Creek.



Other GACDS Groups will be having their meetings over the next couple of months. You can see more photos of the Group Meetings and keep current on GACDS Group activities at <http://www.gacds.org/>.

Around the Districts

Broad River SWCD held a poultry composter field day in Martin, Ga., featuring the Ecodrum™ Composter. The program discussed economical solutions to animal mortality management. The program also included cost-share information from the NRCS and tips for use from Eric Segars, farm owner. In addition to the Broad River SWCD, the day was sponsored by Ecodrum, Franklin County Young Farmers, and Franklin County Extension Service. **Broad River SWCD** also held a pond workshop at Gunnells Pond in Danielsville that focused on pond maintenance and fish health.



Gwinnett County SWCD sponsored a multi-cultural workshop at the Lamme Farm. Topics included irrigation and soil management, as well as some hands-on activities to learn how to do it yourself. Other sponsors of the event included McFarland Dyer & Associates Inc., Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D Council, UGA Extension Service - Gwinnett County, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA - NRCS Lawrenceville Office, the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission, and the City of Dacula.

Brier Creek SWCD co-sponsored a Tree Care Seminar in cooperation with the City of Augusta, the Central Savannah River RC&D Council, and the Richmond County UGA Cooperative Extension. Topics included trees and green infrastructure, young tree pruning and care, best management practices for tree conservation, mitigating ice damage, ornamental tree inspection for pests, City of Augusta tree management, pesticide application techniques, and top 12 invasive species.



Upcoming District Events



July 28 - Join the **Limestone Valley SWCD** on Monday, July 28, to see their newly purchased GrassWorks Weed Wiper. The equipment is designed to treat noxious weeds, and the district has made the machine available for rent through the Hinton Milling Company. Hear from experts on Farm Bill conservation programs, litter spreader truck calibration, and nutrient management planning. The workshop begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Hinton Volunteer Fire Station, 9273 Georgia Highway 53 W, Jasper, Ga. 30143. There is no cost and lunch will be provided by the Hinton Volunteer Fire Department. Register by calling 706-624-1434 or emailing jlamm@gaswcc.org.

Soil and Water Conservation District Websites

- Altamaha SWCD <http://www.altamahaswcd.org>
- Cobb County SWCD <http://cobbswcd.org>
- Flint River SWCD <http://flintriverswcd.org>
- Fulton County SWCD <http://www.fultonswcd.com>
- Hall County SWCD <http://www.hallswcd.org>
- Henry County SWCD <http://ofig.org/old2/hcswcd>
- Towaliga SWCD <http://www.towaliga.com>
- Walton County SWCD <http://www.waltoncountyga.org/WConserve/wcswc.html>

GSWCC

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission State Board

Phone: 706-552-4470 **Email:** gswcc@gaswcc.org

Garland Thompson (Chairman) Douglas, Georgia

Dennis T. Brown (Vice Chairman/NACD Representative), Commerce, Georgia

Carl E. Brack, Carrollton, Georgia

David T. Hays, Covington, Georgia

William H. "Hal" Haddock Jr., Damascus, Georgia

GSWCC Executive Staff

Brent Dykes (Executive Director), Athens, Georgia, Email: bdykes@gaswcc.org

Dave Eigenberg (Deputy Executive Director), Dawson, Georgia, Email: deigenberg@gaswcc.org

GSWCC Regions

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

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

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

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

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

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