

## News from Around the Districts

### REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR GACDS ANNUAL MEETING

The Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors Annual Meeting will be held January 31 - February 3, 2013, at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center, 800 Spring St., NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30308. Hotel reservations may be made by calling 1-800-706-2899 or 404-838-2100 and using the group code "GACDS". To make reservations online go to [www.gatechhotel.com](http://www.gatechhotel.com), click on group bookings and enter the password gasoil0113. Or you can go to [www.gacds.org](http://www.gacds.org), and then click on "News and Events", "Annual Meeting", and "GACDS 2013 Annual Meeting". **The group rate ends January 4, 2013.** Please see your registration form for deadlines.

**Legislative Luncheon.** On Thursday, January 31st, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., GACDS will sponsor a Legislative Meet and Greet Luncheon at the Georgia State Capitol in Room 230. This is an excellent time for you to spread the conservation message to your legislators. Be sure to call your State Representative and State Senator to invite them to stop in for lunch. If you need help finding your local State legislative official, go to [www.gaswcc.georgia.gov](http://www.gaswcc.georgia.gov).

GACDS will provide transportation from the hotel to the Capitol. If you wish to use this service please RSVP to Kim Chapman at 706-552-4470. More information is available at <http://www.gacds.org/annual-meeting/>.

The **Broad River SWCD** was awarded an outreach grant from NRCS to provide assistance to small and beginning farmers throughout the seven county area. The District plans to use the funds to partner with other conservation groups and producers to promote sound conservation practices and highlight what assistance is available to producers. The District will hold four targeted outreach programs and one small farm conference through the coming year covering topics ranging from farm taxes and accounting principles to organic farming, water efficiency and product marketing practices.

**Catoosa County SWCD** sponsored an appreciation breakfast to thank the partners involved in the Emergency Watershed Protection program used to clean up storm debris deposited in streams in and around Ringgold from the April 2011 tornado. The SWCD supervisors thanked representatives from Catoosa County government, City of Ringgold government, and state inmate work crews from the Georgia Department of Corrections for their hard work implementing this disaster clean-up program funded partially by the NRCS.



Roger Bowman, Catoosa Chair, speaking

### 2012 ELECTION RESULTS

Results from the 2012 Georgia General Election are now on the GSWCC website.

Congratulations to those elected to new terms and thanks for agreeing to serve as representatives to improve conservation efforts in your county.

In addition to elected positions, there is also a process for appointing Supervisors. District Supervisors are unpaid state officials who work hand-in-hand with the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission.

Information concerning District Supervisors is available at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/how-do-i-become-swcd-supervisor>.

### Around the Districts (continued)

**Coosa River SWCD** supervisors were presented a program by Donald Wood, Wesley Dean, and Jonathan Markham of the UGA Forage Breeding Team about growing alfalfa in north Georgia. Information provided included establishment and maintenance of alfalfa stands, as well as discussing trial data and literature.

Gov. Nathan Deal, speaking at the **Hall County SWCD's** 30th annual affiliate member banquet, said the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river basin is facing a threat in the tri-state battle over water. "As you know, water is an important issue for our state. We are continuing to work to try and solve the so-called water war. Hall County residents live in the water basin with the greatest threat," Gov. Nathan Deal said as he emphasized the importance of reservoirs and water storage. "We have to have more capacity to capture and hold water for when the bad times and droughts come," Deal said. "We have to grow the system." The governor applauded the conservation group and other similar organizations for their work in preserving water.



Keegan Malone introducing speaker Mark Hains

The **Lamar County SWCD** and **Towaliga SWCD** held a successful longleaf pine workshop in Barnesville, Georgia. Mark Hains with the Longleaf Alliance was the main speaker and gave an interesting overview of the longleaf pine history and also some background regarding the Longleaf Alliance. Topics covered in depth were practices such as planting, scalping, chemical site prep, subsoiling, and control burning. The workshop concluded with an overview given by NRCS representative Carmen Westerfield of farm bill programs available through the NRCS.

The **Lower Chattahoochee River SWCD** received a \$50,000 grant as part of NRCS's Enhancing Program Delivery in Georgia outreach grant program. The project will assist historically underserved farmers in accessing support and resources that can help to maintain their livelihoods and improve the financial and environmental management of their operations. Objectives include: (1) Increase participation by historically underserved farmers in USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service programs in the South Georgia target area. (2) Facilitate the use of technology-based tools and information networks by historically underserved farmers to engage them in improving environmental resource management and to increase their interactions with NRCS programs (environmental and otherwise). (3) Build on existing farm agency and organization partnerships to focus on the delivery of services to historically underserved farmers. Lower Chattahoochee River SWCD's Conservationist of the Year banquet is scheduled for Thursday, January 17th, at the USDA Service Center in Dawson at 6:30 p.m.

The **Middle South SWCD** Board of Supervisors and its cooperating banks held their Annual Conservationist of the Year banquet at the Agrirama Conference Center. This award is given to the outstanding conservationist from each of the nine counties of Ben Hill, Brooks, Colquitt, Crisp, Irwin, Thomas, Tift, Turner, and Worth. Chair Keith White of Worth County spoke before the program, which featured David Bridges, President of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.



Middle South SWCD Board of Supervisors & Guests

### Around the Districts (continued)

Conservationists of the Year award winners for the Middle South District included Virgil Purvis (Ben Hill), Webb Farms (Brooks), J.A. Norman (Colquitt), Randy Coffee Farms (Crisp), Troy & Nellie Jo Spicer (Irwin), Cynergy Farms (Thomas), Jones Ponder (Tift), Sumner Farms (Turner) and Henry Mims Farms (Worth).

**Piedmont SWCD** held their 51st Annual Conservationist of the Year banquet in the new dining hall at Rock Eagle. District Chair Pat Hardy welcomed everyone and GSWCC Executive Director Brent Dykes provide the invocation to the approximately 150 in attendance. The meal was sponsored by Piedmont Conservation Products and participating businesses and banks from within the District. Dr. David E. Stooksbury, UGA Professor of Engineering and Atmospheric Sciences was the keynote speaker and provided an informative talk on climate patterns, the current drought situation, and weather predictions for the upcoming winter season. Conservationist of the Year awards were given to Randy New & Victor Bayne (Baldwin), J.O. Edmonds, Jr. (Greene), Debra Phillips (Jones), Mike Boyer (Hancock), Dennis Huff (Morgan), Roger Lamar (Putnam) and Kirby Beggs Family (Taliaferro). Mr. Hardy gave his personal congratulations to the award recipients and thanked all support staff and Rock Eagle for their efforts in putting together the night's event.

**Pine Mountain SWCD** has scheduled its Annual Forestry Field Day for Thursday March 21st, at the new Marion County Middle High School in Buena Vista at 2:30 p.m.

**Roosevelt SWCD** held their annual Youth Wildlife Field Day at the Marvin Jones Outdoor Education Center in LaGrange. 120 Third Grade students from Hollis Hand Elementary and Mountville Elementary Schools attended the event. Representatives from NRCS, GA-DNR, GA Forestry Commission, US Army Corp of Engineers, UGA Cooperative Extension, GSWCC, Mead Westvaco, Troup County Farm Bureau and Two Rivers RC&D helped with the event. The students rotated among seven stations ranging from wildlife education to a scaled down paper making station. The event was sponsored by Mead Westvaco, Two Rivers RC&D, and the Roosevelt SWCD.



Roosevelt District Supervisor Glen Gosa (back), Paul Jones GA-DNR in waders with teacher and students

Georgia's Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black, addressed the **Upper Chattahoochee River SWCD's** annual meeting. The commissioner spoke about improvements that have been made to the office in recent years, such as adding technology for field representatives to use. He also encouraged audience members to be proud of being farmers and to educate others about what they do. Leonard Ridings, District Chair, highlighted some of the District's achievements during the past year. The event, which drew about 200 people, was held at the Lanier Technical College Forsyth Conference Center and included members from the District's five counties — Forsyth, Dawson, Habersham, Lumpkin and White. One family from each of the District's counties was recognized as Farm Family of the Year.

**Upper Ocmulgee River SWCD** held a Horse Pasture Field Day in Jasper County with approximately 40 people in attendance. Attendees learned about various topics including equine nutrition, forage systems for horses, weed control in pastures, and farm bill cost share programs. At the dinner that followed, the Upper Ocmulgee River SWCD presented Dominique Ford with the Conservationist of the Year Award for Jasper County.

## Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission - December 2012

### Around the Districts (continued)

The **Warren County SWCD** held its Conservationist of the Year banquet at the Community Services Building in Warrenton. District Chair Joe Shurley presided over the banquet, introducing special guests and welcoming everyone to the program. District Supervisor Jim McMichael then gave an invocation. The crowd then enjoyed a meal, compliments of Ag Georgia Farm Credit and Affiliate Members. The District's Affiliate Members for 2012 were also introduced. GSWCC Regional Representative Keegan Malone presented information on the drought and future water supply in Georgia. Mr. Shurley recognized this year's Conservationist of the Year for Warren County, Charles Harper. Mr. Harper was commended for his work in protecting and conserving the natural resources of the county. He thanked the district supervisors for the award and recognition and received an engraved plaque from the district.

**West Georgia SWCD** hosted their Annual Conservationist of the Year Barbeque at District Supervisor Tommy Waldrop's farm in Winston. The District presented a scholarship to Tiffany Brown, a junior at Bowdon High School in Carroll County. Ms. Brown was awarded this scholarship because she attended the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop and scored the highest on the final exam out of all students who attended from the West

Georgia SWCD area. Coweta County dairy farmer David Stanford was awarded the 2012 Conservationist of the Year award. State Senator Bill Heath attended the event.



David Stanford (left), West Georgia District Supervisor Lisle Bowers and NRCS District Conservationist Valerie Pickard. In front: David Stanford's two sons



Tiffany Brown and West Georgia District Supervisor Carl Brack

### GSWCC FY2013 Strategic Plan

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission has released its FY2013 Strategic Goals. These are in line with the statewide goals set forth by Governor Deal for the State of Georgia.

**Goal #1:** Implement the water quality and quantity recommendations made by the regional water councils as part of the Statewide Water Planning Process.

**Goal #2:** Improve functionality of watershed dams in order to ensure the safety of Georgia's citizens.

**Goal #3:** Increase effectiveness of local soil and water conservation district boards.

More detailed information is available on the GSWCC website at [https://gaswcc.georgia.gov/sites/gaswcc.georgia.gov/files/related\\_files/site\\_page/GSWCC%20FY2013%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf](https://gaswcc.georgia.gov/sites/gaswcc.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/GSWCC%20FY2013%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf).