

2013

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor Handbook



Georgia Soil and Water
Conservation Commission





This is the 2013 edition of the *Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor Handbook*. It is intended for newly elected and appointed Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors, as well as for existing District Supervisors. The information in this publication was developed by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission in consultation with the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education. Please refer to the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission for specific procedures and policies.

Comments?

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Introduction



This booklet provides an overview of Georgia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, their partners, and your responsibilities as a local conservation district supervisor. It will help you follow the policies and procedures governing district activities to assist you in serving your local community and the State of Georgia.

In this booklet you will learn to:

- Describe a conservation district
- Understand the history of local, state, and national conservation movements
- The ethical, legal and financial responsibilities of a supervisor
- Identify basic terminologies and regulations related to conservation districts

The goal of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts is to assist people and communities in the care of the natural resources in their area. Conservation Districts offer technical, educational and financial assistance to private land owners.

Using natural resources wisely helps to ensure their availability well into the future.

1

Being a District Supervisor

As a district supervisor you play a vital role in all activities related to soil and water conservation in your district.

Districts receive assistance in fulfilling their mission through the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission. GSWCC provides soil and water resource information; education; technical, financial and planning assistance; and program oversight to locally led soil and water conservation districts, landowners, land users, and local, state and federal governments to maintain, conserve and wisely use the soil and water resources for all Georgians.

By working together, districts and the GSWCC encourage voluntary conservation practices on private lands, thus protecting and conserving the natural resources this state enjoys. Some of these efforts include:

- Directing the programs with your local Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Cooperating with USDA-NRCS in Farm Bill Programs
- Administering the Flood Control Watershed Program
- Promoting and participating in the Erosion and Sediment Control Education and Certification Program
- Promoting and participating in the Ag Water Metering Program
- Entering into contracts/agreements and accepting grants to further soil and water general purposes.

1. *The District Supervisor's Role:*

As a district supervisor, you play an important role. The success of each district and the goals accomplished are up to the district supervisor. Simply put, as a district supervisor, you must be aware of the natural resource concerns in your community and then seek solutions through partnerships, funding opportunities, and conservation plans. Even though economic growth and development are in a downturn, the economy will recover and the population will increase. As this happens, our soil and water resources will remain finite. The work that district supervisors do today to protect these resources will ensure they are here for future generations to enjoy.



Supervisor Duties:

In summarization of Annotated Code of Georgia Section 2-6-33 which outlines the Powers of districts and supervisors:

- 1- Develop comprehensive plans for conservation of soil and water resources in the District.
 - Develop an Annual Plan of Work and list of Prior Year Accomplishments
 - Assist with thorough soil and water resources action plans that include BMPs such as no-till, vegetative plans for stream banks, erosion control, and water conservation methods.

- 2- Work with land owners and developers as well as local, state, and federal governments to implement soil and water conservation measures and practices.
 - Make full use of Farm Bill programs (Environmental Quality Incentives Program—EQIP, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program—WHIP)
 - Develop and maintain relationships with other agencies and organizations such as Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Research Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D), etc...
 - Explain benefits of conservation practices to landowners, especially the impact to their operating budget and production results
 - Cooperate with EPD and local governments to review erosion control plans and ensure installation of BMPs on land disturbance sites
 - Work with your local Chamber of Commerce and government on projects such as tree planting, wetland trails, and stream restoration

- 3- Make machinery and equipment, fertilizer, seed and seedlings, and other materials available to landowners to help conserve soil and water resources.
 - Apply for grants to obtain cost share funding to help farmers install BMPs
 - Hold equipment demonstrations and plant demonstration plots

- 4- Conduct surveys, investigations, and research on soil and water parasites. Generate and disseminate information and data on conservation measures.
 - Disseminate NRCS soil surveys, GSWCC Ag BMP Handbook, regional Ag Water use, & E&SC Manual for Erosion Control to interested parties
 - Sponsor research station tours to explain new research findings
 - Install on-farm demonstration sites
 - Promote the importance of Soil Stewardship Week and facilitate distribution of educational and fun material to the community, schools, churches, etc.

- 5- Conduct demonstrations for soil and water conservation methods.
 - Field days, tours, project site visits
 - Conservation workshops for youth and teachers

- 6- Construct, improve or maintain structures necessary for flood water control & storage.
 - Seek funds and local support to maintain watershed dams
 - Participate in Emergency Watershed Program
 - Monitor watershed easements through yearly field visits

7- Facilitate and generate financial assistance to land owners, as well as local, state and federal agencies, for soil and water conservation practices.

- Chair and decide upon federal funding priorities through Local Work Group process
- Promote local and federal cost-share programs to landowners
- Be innovative and apply for grants that will further soil and water conservation efforts

8- Administer and/or participate in the management of soil and water conservation projects undertaken by the State of Georgia and any agency of the United States.

- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- 319 Program (Nonpoint Source Pollution Program)
- Ponds/Mobile Irrigation Lab
- Agricultural Water Metering Program
- Farm Bill Programs (EQIP, WHIP, CRP, etc.)

2. *Becoming a District Supervisor*

In each district, there are both elected and appointed individuals serving as supervisors. The following describes how each position is obtained.

By Popular Vote



- Elections are regulated and supervised by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission and are held during the general election cycle in even-numbered years.
- Elected district supervisors hold a four-year term of office (or until a successor has been named).
- As elected State officials, supervisors are subject to the constitutional provision that their office is vacated when they qualify for another state, county, or municipal office.
- The commission monitors the expiration dates of district supervisor terms and provides notice to the district chairman and the regional representatives (or other appropriate Commission-designated representative) who shall notify the district supervisor whose term is to expire during the period covered by the next scheduled election. The notice is provided no later than thirty days prior to the beginning of the applicable general election qualifying period.

By Appointment:

- GSWCC Regional Representatives will advise Boards of expirations at monthly meetings.
- The elected members of the District Board select 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice recommendations and forward them to the Commission at least 30 days prior to expiration.
- The GSWCC State Board will review the recommendation and consider appointments at their next meeting.
- Appointed district supervisors hold a two-year term of office (or until a successor has been appointed).

3. Communication

Supervisors should follow the following principle when conducting business:

Communication with partners is essential

As a District Supervisor, you have many partners to help you succeed in your mission beginning with the 39 other districts in the state, which are potential partners for your activities. In addition, there are several organizations with goals similar to your own district's goals.

GSWCC – The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, headquartered in Athens with five regional offices in the State, has a professional staff whose primary duty is to serve and advance the goals of Georgia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/>

GACDS – The Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors, a nonprofit organization, is comprised of the 370 district supervisors in the state and is dedicated to the protection and conservation of our state's natural resources. <http://www.gacds.org/>

RC&D – Resource Conservation and Development Councils work with local, state, and federal agencies to assist local people in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all citizens.

NRCS – An agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has worked with Georgia landowners to protect the state's natural resources for 75 years to provide technical assistance on natural resources issues and assist individuals, groups, communities, and counties implement soil and water conservation practices to protect the 34 million acres of privately owned land in Georgia. <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/>

NACD – The National Association of Conservation Districts is a nonprofit organization that represents America’s 3,000 conservation districts and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. <http://www.nacdnet.org/>



4. Supervisor Training

District supervisors are encouraged to attend training sessions throughout their term to stay current on conservation topics and programs.

The Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors (GACDS) currently holds an annual training event to provide district supervisors with current information.

Information is provided routinely to district supervisors through the GSWCC Regional Representative assigned to each conservation district. GSWCC also posts helpful information, outreach materials and PowerPoint presentations for current District Supervisors on its website at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/information-current-swcd-supervisors>.

Information about training opportunities can be found at: <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/> and www.gacds.org.

2

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission

❖ *This section will help you understand:*

1. The formation of the conservation commission/legislation
2. The makeup of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
3. The goals of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission strategic plan

1. Commission Formation:

In 1937 the General Assembly of the State of Georgia enacted the Georgia Soil Conservation Districts Law.¹ Act No. 399 stated:

“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of the soil and soil resources of this State, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion, and thereby to preserve the natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect health, safety and general welfare of the people of this State.”

It also included a provision that supported the establishment of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission² to serve as an administrative and technical assistance provider to local conservation districts.

The districts are state agencies and elected and appointed supervisors are state officials. These maps show the division of the five regions and the forty districts located in Georgia (Larger maps are available at the end of this manual):

Map of districts



GSWCC
Regions and
Offices



Georgia’s 40
Conservation Districts

¹ The name was subsequently changed in 1962 to Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law by Act No. 630. Legislators added the word “water” to better fit the activities of each district to promote cleaner water.

² *The Changed Look of the Countryside*, page 245

2. Current Organization of the Commission:

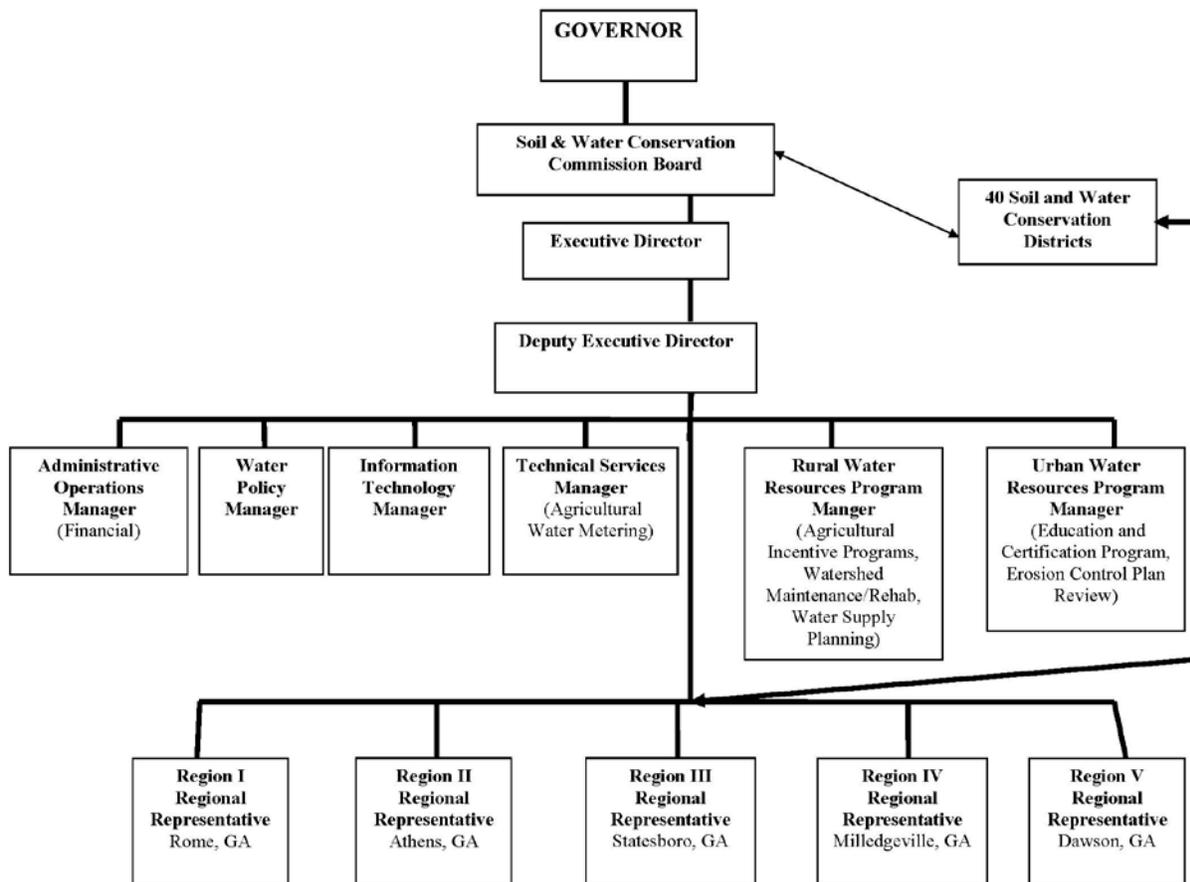
Local soil and water conservation districts interact with the GSWCC Board through the appointment of district supervisors, annual district fund allotments, approval of annual plans of work, submission of financial reports, and new program ideas.

GSWCC Board

The Commission serves as a policy-making body and is thoroughly informed in all areas of activity of special importance in maintaining its viability and credibility as a state agency. Commission members are regularly informed of agency expenditures, out-of-state travel, and personnel actions. Specifically, quarterly summaries of agency expenditures and balances are presented to the Commission.

Approval of the Commission budget is a result of detailed consideration and discussion of the budget of Commission programs. Where new programs are needed or when major changes in program emphasis are required, they are discussed and approved by the Commission before initial budget preparation.

GSWCC Organizational Flow-Chart



Current list of GSWCC State Board Members:

- Garland Thompson, (Chairman)—Douglas, GA , Group 5
- Dennis Brown, (Vice-Chairman)—Commerce, GA, Group 2
- Carl Brack—Carrollton, GA, Group 1
- David Hays—Covington, GA, Group 3
- Hal Haddock—Damascus, GA, Group 4

3. Fiscal Year 2013 Agency Strategic Plan:

The Strategic Plan is a four-year action plan required by the Governor of all state agencies. It charts the programmatic activities of the GSWCC.

Districts are encouraged to select projects that align with the strategic plan [as listed here](#):

State Goal: Growing—Creating jobs and growing businesses

“Conserve and enhance natural resources, with an emphasis on increasing state water supplies and security”

Agency Goal #1: Implement the water quality and quantity recommendations made by the Regional Water Councils as part of the Statewide Water Planning Process.

Measurable Objective# 1: Obtain additional state funding to ensure successful implementation of the statewide water plan.

Strategy #1: Seek \$650,000 of state funding for implementation of the Agricultural Water Metering Program.

Strategy #2: Seek initial state funding to provide for a state agricultural cost-share program administered through the local soil and water conservation districts to address water quality and quantity concerns (O.C.G.A 2-6-52).

Strategy #3: By FY 2016, expand the use of metering data to provide more producer-friendly and useful results for making water-use decisions.

Strategy #4: Upgrade and implement new E&S curriculum and develop a web-based solution that improves customer service to LIA’s and design professionals.

State Goal: Safe and Growing—Protecting the public’s safety and security; creating jobs and growing businesses “Promote safe communities and stable families where children thrive; conserve and enhance natural resources, with an emphasis on increasing state water supplies and security”

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

Measurable Objective #1: By FY 2016, expand partnerships on watershed dam projects.

Strategy #1: Work cooperatively with state agencies, local government, and soil and water conservation districts to complete maintenance on watershed dams.

Strategy #2: By FY 2016, seek additional bond funding to bring six dams into Safe Dams compliance.

Strategy #3: Seek initial funding for cost-share program to assist communities in using watershed reservoirs for water-supply use. (O.C.G.A 2-6-27)

State Goal: Responsible and efficient government—fiscally sound, principled, conservative
“Enlist community support and public-private partnerships to leverage available resources”

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

Measurable Objective #1: By FY 2016, provide four focused training courses to assist district chairmen and treasurers in efficient budgeting and principled expenditures.

Strategy #1: Contract with C.P.A. to create curriculum and proctor courses on fiscally-sound accounting procedures.

Measurable Objective #2; By FY 2016, increase the average attendance at Supervisor Training from 60 to 180 supervisors.

Strategy #2: Develop and implement a new UGA Center for Continuing Education-developed course module to train district supervisors in their mandated duties.

Measurable Objective #3: Increase funding for local soil and water conservation districts.

Strategy#3: Identify and promote one major project in each soil and water conservation district that when implemented would improve the natural resources of the area.

Strategy#4: Work with existing local community groups and funding entities to increase awareness of district functions and activities.

3

Programs

❖ *This section will help you understand:*

1. Programs to be offered by GSWCC through Conservation Districts
2. Available Supervisor trainings

O.C.G.A. §12-7-01(E&SC Act, E&SC Certification Program); O.C.G.A. §12-5-31, 12-5-105 (Ag Water Metering); O.C.G.A. §12-5-370 (Safe Dams Act, State Water Plan) govern GSWCC program activities. Listed below are the various conservation programs offered through conservation districts.

1. *The Conservation of Ag Water Supplies*



Program Purpose: The Conservation of Ag Water Supplies Program works to assist agricultural water users in quantifying water use, conserving existing water use through irrigation audits, and reducing dependence on groundwater and surface water supplies. The program seeks to increase the uniformity and efficiency of ag water irrigation systems, and to obtain and manage quality data on agricultural water use for state policy makers.

Irrigation Application Uniformity Improvement—Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL):

- GSWCC provides free in-field irrigation system uniformity test and visual inspection.
- Field verified application chart, system uniformity graph and visual observation report provided as deliverables.

Irrigation Scheduling:

- In cooperation with the USDA/ARS National Peanut Research Laboratory, GSWCC works to promote the use of *Irrigator Pro* to schedule irrigation using real time information from fields to determine application amounts, matching crop water needs with available soil moisture.
- Irrigator Pro* allows producers to plan irrigation events as to influence economic returns with the ultimate goal of reducing costs and conserving water.

Measuring Agricultural Water Use:



--The goal of the metering program is to obtain accurate and timely information on the patterns and amounts of agricultural water use by EPD permits. This information is essential to proper management of water resources by the state and useful to farmers for improving the efficiency of their use of water.

- Measurement of agricultural water-use is a necessary component of assisting farmers to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the utilization of a valuable resource.
- The Commission locates and evaluates pumping sites, purchases meters, and causes meters to be installed on all EPD permitted sites issued before July 1, 2003, based upon funding.
- The Commission certifies proper installation for farmers' installed meters as a condition of EPD permits issued after July 1, 2003.
- The Commission maintains over 10,000 meters and collects water use data for all EPD-permitted sites.
- Permit holders are mailed a yearly report showing the water-use recorded for each permit, in units of acre-inches pumped.
- Agricultural water-use data is managed in a manner that provides for access by State policy decision makers and, at the same time, ensures privacy rights of landowners involved.
- Only summaries of water-use by the eight-digit USGS hydrologic code are made available to the general public. Water-use of any individual irrigator is kept confidential and information gathered from the meters will not be used by any State agency and/or individual for purposes not intended by the law.

2. Urban Lands



Program Purpose: The purpose of the Urban Lands Program is to improve and protect Georgia's urban soil and water resources through the use of best management practices (BMPs) as called for in the Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law and delivered through soil and water conservation districts. The goal is to reduce soil erosion on urban lands and educate those involved in land disturbance, local governments, and erosion and sediment control professionals on urban BMPs.

The Education and Certification Program

In 2003, House Bill No. 285 created the Education and Certification Program for individuals involved in land disturbing activities. The Conservation Commission was charged with managing and administering the program. The Education and Certification Program consists of the following courses and certifications:

--Subcontractor Awareness Seminar (Certified Subcontractor) is a two hour seminar with no exam that is designed for individuals working in a subcontractor capacity.

--Level IA Fundamentals Seminar (Certified Person/Personnel) is a one day course designed to train individuals that are the Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Permittee, as defined by the state general permit.

--Level IB Advanced Fundamentals Seminar (Certified Inspector) is a two day course designed to train regulatory inspectors and non-regulatory personnel contracted to do regulatory inspections.

--Level II Introduction to Design (Certified Plan Reviewer/Certified Design Professional) two day course for both plan reviewers and design professionals.

All certification courses, with the exception of the Subcontractor Awareness Seminar, have a 50-question, one hour timed exam at the end of the course. Individuals must obtain a passing score of 70 percent to receive certification. All certifications are valid for three years and four hours of GSWCC approved continuing education hours are required to renew certifications. For more information visit the Education and Certification page at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov>.

Plan Reviews and Technical Assistance for Urban Erosion and Sedimentation Control Issues

In addition to the Education and Certification Program, Urban Lands Program provides technical assistance involving erosion and sedimentation control issues around the State. The Commission's Erosion and Sediment Control Specialists provide technical plan reviews on behalf of the Districts in the Metro Atlanta area as well as provide technical support to all plan reviewers throughout the State.

Program staff has extensive knowledge and experience with the State and Federal laws governing erosion and sediment control and with the *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia*.

3. Rural Water Resources



350 SWCD-Owned Flood Control Reservoirs (See larger map at end of this manual.)

Program Purpose: Within GSWCC, the Rural Water Resources Program is a multifaceted program including an agricultural financial incentive program, a flood control reservoir program, and also agricultural complaint response and solution. GSWCC maintains a financial incentive program made possible through agreements with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (GA-EPD), Clean Water Act, Section 319(h) funding. GSWCC pursues projects in targeted watersheds that work to improve and protect water quality through the installation of best management practices on agricultural operations. Additional Section 319(h) funding is utilized for various nonpoint source educational programs as well as to support the Erosion and Sediment Control Education and Certification Programs. Through this funding, the *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture* manual has been developed.

In the Small Watershed Program, GSWCC provides technical assistance in the operation and maintenance of over 350 soil and water conservation district-owned flood control reservoirs that were constructed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) primarily in the 1950's and 1960's. Districts have signed agreements to operate and maintain these dams. GSWCC seeks funds to provide financial assistance to districts that help meet these maintenance requirements. Due to the urban location of many of these dams they now protect houses, roads,

and other improvements downstream that represent significant hazards, should dams fail. These dams are being re-classified as Category I high-hazard structures according to the GA- EPD Safe Dams Program. Districts now own over 150 dams that are out of compliance with Georgia Safe Dams requirements. This program works with districts to secure funding to upgrade these Category I dams and bring them into compliance with state requirements, either with state funding or existing NRCS programs.



GSWCC is also responsible for providing technical assistance for agricultural complaints throughout the state. GSWCC personnel work in close cooperation with GA-EPD and NRCS to address complaints in a timely and professional manner.

4 Ethics

❖ *This section will help you understand:*

1. State Code of Ethics
2. District Supervisor Ethics/Expected Behavior

As State Government Officials, District Supervisors are expected to abide by a code of ethics **both as required by state law but also according to expectations of the citizens of Georgia, whom you serve.**



1. State Code of Ethics

Supervisors are state officials and are governed by state law. Supervisors are expected to adhere to the standards outlined in the Code of Ethics for Government Service.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE

“Any person in government service should:

- I. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party or government department.
- II. Uphold the Constitution, laws, and legal regulations of the United States and the State of Georgia and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.
- III. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give to the performance of his duties his earnest effort and best thought.
- IV. Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.
- V. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not, and never accept, for himself or his family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his governmental duties.
- VI. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a government employee has no private word which can be binding on public duty.

- VII. Engage in no business with the government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his governmental duties.
- VIII. Never use any information coming to him confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit.
- IX. Expose corruption wherever discovered.
- X. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.”³

“Notwithstanding any provisions of law to the contrary, each member of all boards, commissions, and authorities created by general statute shall:

- (1) Uphold the Constitution, laws, and regulations of the United States, the State of Georgia, and all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion;
- (2) Never discriminate by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether or not for remuneration;
- (3) Not engage in any business with the government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his governmental duties;
- (4) Never use any information coming to him confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit;
- (5) Expose corruption wherever discovered;
- (6) Never solicit, accept, or agree to accept gifts, loans, gratuities, discounts, favors, hospitality, or services from any person, association, or corporation under circumstances from which it could reasonably be inferred that a major purpose of the donor is to influence the performance of the member's official duties;
- (7) Never accept any economic opportunity under circumstances where he knows or should know that there is a substantial possibility that the opportunity is being afforded him with intent to influence his conduct in the performance of his official duties;
- (8) Never engage in other conduct which is unbecoming to a member or which constitutes a breach of public trust; and
- (9) Never take any official action with regard to any matter under circumstances in which he knows or should know that he has a direct or indirect monetary interest in the subject matter of such matter or in the outcome of such official action.”⁴

³ O.C.G.A. §45-10-1

⁴ O.C.G.A. §45-10-3

Since 2003, the Governor has issued an Ethics Executive Order to maintain the public trust. While this order only covers state employees, it is a good model for district supervisors to follow. It lists the following:

- Orders that all employees avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest. (business or monetary gain from position should be avoided.)
- Prevents employee acceptance of gifts over \$25.00, including food, lodging, and transportation, in order to influence an employee.
- Accountability: Open Records protocol listed in Section VI.
- The public has the right to inspect and copy all public records (letters, approved minutes, photographs, and computer-based information)



2. District Supervisor Ethics

As a supervisor, you are expected to follow the tenets outlined in the oath of office pledged at the start of your tenure:

I, _____, swear that I will perform, to the best of my abilities, all duties of a supervisor of the _____ Soil and Water Conservation District. I will make every effort to help my district reach its overall objective that each acre of land is used according to its capabilities and treated in accordance with its needs. I further swear that I am qualified to hold office according to the Laws of Georgia.

Having taken the oath, you are hereby authorized and required to perform your duties as a District Supervisor according to the law and trust reposed to you. This authority is to continue during the term designated by Law or until removed under the provisions of said law.

State law O.C.G.A. § 2-6-32 (d), stating” Any supervisor may be removed by the commission, upon notice and hearing, for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office, but for no other reason” authorizes a supervisor’s removal from office.

The Center for Nonprofit Excellence offers a good sample of an appropriate Code of Ethics. Below are some aspects of the CNE Code.⁵

- District Supervisors should participate in district board meetings and actions.
- District Supervisors should keep well-informed about developments relevant to issues that may come before the district board.
- District Supervisors should recognize that all authority is vested in the full district board only when it meets in legal sessions.
- District Supervisor s should respect and support majority decisions of the district board.
- District Supervisors should not discuss the confidential proceedings of the district board outside of board meetings.
- District Supervisors should represent all those whom the district serves, not just a particular geographic area or interest group.
- District Supervisors should bring to the attention of the district board any issues that they believe will have an adverse effect on the district or those that the district serves.
- District Supervisors should declare conflicts of interest between personal life and their position on the district board, and abstain from voting or discussion when appropriate.
- District Supervisors should refer complaints to the proper level on the chain of command.
- District Supervisors should consider themselves a “trustee” of the district and do their best to ensure that it is well-maintained, financially secure, growing, and always operating in the best interests of those whom the district serves.
- District Supervisors should always work on how to do their jobs better.

⁵ The Center for Nonprofit Excellence. “Code of Ethics Sample.” http://www.nascanet.org/Upload/DO_Training/6_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics_Sample.pdf. PDF version of document downloaded January 3, 2013.

5

Legal Responsibilities/Expectations

❖ *This section will help you understand:*

1. Parliamentary Procedure
2. Federal Farm Bill



1. Parliamentary Procedures:

Districts should use *Robert's Rules of Order* as a guide for district meetings:

The Following are Basic Rules of Parliamentary Procedure⁶

- The rights of the organization supersede the rights of individual members.
- All members are equal and have equal rights to attend meetings, make motions and debate, and vote.
- A quorum must be present to conduct business. A quorum is the number of members required to be present to legally conduct business.
- The majority rules. The minority has the right to be heard but must abide by the majority's decision.
- Silence is consent. Nonvoting members agree to accept the majority decision.
- A two-thirds vote is necessary when limiting or eliminating members' rights or when changing a previous decision.
- A motion must directly relate to the question under consideration, and once a speaker has been granted the floor another member may not interrupt.
- The presiding officer may not put a debatable motion to a vote as long as members wish to debate it.
- Once a question is decided, it is generally out of order to bring up the same motion or one essentially like it at the same meeting.
- Personal remarks are always out of order in debate. Debate must be directed to motions and principles, not motives or personalities.

⁶ W. McBride, *Meetings Procedure, Organization, and Public Participation*. Retrieved from University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government Web site: <http://www.cviog.uga.edu/pdf/handbook/handbook-meeting-procedures/D>. Zimmerman, *Robert's Rules in Plain English* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997).

- **Districts should designate officers routinely:**
 - All districts should designate a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer
- **A quorum is defined as a majority of the supervisors of a district**

Legal responsibilities: Legal representation for a SWCD is provided through the GSWCC by the State Attorney General's office.

(Please see O.C.G.A. §2-6-20 through 2-6-52 for more information.)

2 Federal Farm Bill:

- Farm Bill: This federal law is changed every four to five years and it governs agricultural conservation policy. Specifically, it authorizes expenditures of federal funds for conservation programs like EQIP, WHIP, and CRP.
- It also authorizes Local Work Groups, which the conservation districts chair, to set priorities for the allocation of federal conservation dollars.
- A good summary of current agricultural programs can be found in the NRCS's annual *A Guide to NRCS in Georgia*, a copy of which is available at http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/sites/gaswcc.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/NRCS_2012_State_of_Georgia_Story.pdf.



6

Fiduciary and Financial Responsibilities

- ❖ *This Section will help you understand:*
 1. Funding sources
 2. Use of District Money
 3. How are Districts Accountable



Guidance on District Financial Operations:

- District budgets should be based on the Supervisor Duties as listed on pages 3 and 4.
- Organize budget by category (i.e., travel, per diem, contracts, etc...)
- List major budget items in district’s Annual Plan of Work.
- If a district plans to pay per diem and reimburse mileage for supervisors attending district functions or trainings, then this action should also be listed in the district’s Annual Plan of Work. The district should establish a process to obtain the proper receipts and documentation to document the payment of mileage and/or per diem.
- The GSWCC or SWCD can only issue a per diem payment or mileage reimbursement to and in the name of a district supervisor.
- The GSWCC will issue an IRS Form 1099 to district supervisors that receive GSWCC per diem in the amount of \$600 or more per calendar year. The SWCD should do so also.
- It is recommended that a district secure a surety bond for the District Treasurer.
- A district should have a written contract with a conservation equipment operator that is operating district-owned equipment to cover proper use of the equipment, any possible loss, and potential liability.

There are a variety of ways supervisors can obtain money for their districts and there are instances when supervisors may not accept money. Additionally, there are particular ways districts can spend money.

1. Funding Sources

- State Appropriations through GSWCC: Annual Reports are made to the GSWCC Board to account for activities funded.
- Donations and contributions through affiliate membership programs
- No-Till Income
- Equipment Rental } Rental of conservation equipment through agreements with partnering agencies

- Interest income
- Grants: Applying for conservation-related grants from local, state, federal, and non-profit groups. USDA-NRCS, private foundations, and Clean Water Act Section 319 Grants are useful grants to apply for.
- All District funds are **State Funds regardless of the source.**
- Districts **cannot** legally charge a fee for providing services to the public (i.e., Erosion and Sediment Control plan reviews.)
- Districts can charge to recover the cost of printing materials or for meeting room rental expense.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) offers useful financing guidelines in “More Dollars for Your District.” Below is a summarization of some important points; more in-depth information can be found at:

[http://www.nacdnet.org/resources/guides/fundraising/dollars%20for%20districts/More Dollars for your District.pdf](http://www.nacdnet.org/resources/guides/fundraising/dollars%20for%20districts/More%20Dollars%20for%20your%20District.pdf)

The NACD recommends districts go beyond traditional fundraising events and use other finance strategies to achieve financial stability. They recommend the following initiatives:⁷

- Organize a Finance Committee
- Create a Supporting Membership Program
- Develop a good financial “Action Plan” to multiply the “Buying Power” of District funds
- Seek Grant Funding and other Contractual Agreements
- Host Special Events and Fundraisers
- Create a newsletter
- Support other local and conservation-minded projects
- Seek Volunteer Support from local community groups
- Foster good working relationships with local and state governments

2. Use of District Money

State Funds must be expended according to the Georgia Constitution: Gratuity Clause:
Paragraph VI. Gratuities. (a) Except as otherwise provided in the Constitution , (1) the General Assembly shall not have the power to grant any donation or gratuity or to forgive any debt or obligation owing to the public, and (2) the General Assembly shall not grant or authorize extra compensation to any public officer, agent, or contractor after the service has been rendered or the contract entered into. In other words, the district must receive an equal return for any funds it disperses.

⁷ Beth Mason and Phylis Vandevere. “National Association of Conservation Districts District Guidelines: ‘More Dollars for Your District’.” www.nacdnet.org. PDF version of document downloaded January 3, 2013.

District money *cannot* be spent on:

- Flowers
- Door Prizes
- Non-supervisor Meals
- Technical Training for anyone other than supervisors
- Actual district supervisor travel expenses, other than mileage (*see below*)
- Purchasing food and/or alcohol

District Money *can* be spent on:

- Employee staff—permanent or temporary
- Regular operating expenses for staff and facilities (office supplies and postage)
- Surveys, investigations, and research
- Demonstrational Projects
- Preventative and control measures
- Financial aid for prevention and control measures
- Construct, obtain, maintain, operate, and improve property
- Develop plans for conservation, control, and prevention
- Professional Association Dues
- Purchasing conservation equipment
- Purchasing conservation materials for demonstration and educational purposes
- District Supervisor mileage incurred in performance of district duties at the State of Georgia rate
- District Supervisor per diem at the rate set by the GSWCC Board

3. How are Districts Accountable:

- Annual Work Plan—Plans should include financial and contract details
- Annual Report of Activities
- Review of Annual Financial Report

District Financial Reports: District financial reports should be conducted at least once each fiscal year (July) and submitted to GSWCC.

This is a sample form for submitting a report.

_____ SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
FOR THE STATE FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/2011

CASH RECEIPTS

State Funds Received

(List by State Agency and Program Name)

_____	\$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Federal Funds Received

(List by Federal Agency and Program Name)

_____	\$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Other Funds Received

(List by Type - For Example Sales, Donations, etc.)

_____	\$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

CASH BALANCE BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR 7/1/____ \$ _____

TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS AND BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR CASH BALANCE \$ _____

(Should Equal Balance at End of Page Two)

Recommendations for financial activities:

- District should be fully aware of the reporting and financial requirements when signing a contract.
- Consultation with GSWCC is strongly suggested if employees will be hired under the grantor contract.
- GSWCC will work with Districts to provide timely and accurate contract management information when needed.



Financial Disclosures are required by all elected supervisors and are administered by the Georgia Campaign Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission (GCT&CFC). They must be completed via online reporting and are due on July 1st of each year for the preceding calendar year. The information that is requested includes: finances, business entities, real property ownerships, and employment.

- Requires a PIN # from the Georgia Campaign Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission, sent via email. For more information, contact the GCT&CFC at 866-589-7327, or online at <http://ethics.ga.gov/>.

7 Public Information

❖ *This section will help you understand:*

1. The correct procedure when communicating with the public

1. Public meeting protocols:

Open Meetings: The Georgia Open Records and Open Meetings Act provides citizen access to public documents and meetings so that they can have a full understanding of the policies, procedures, and decisions made by government officials.

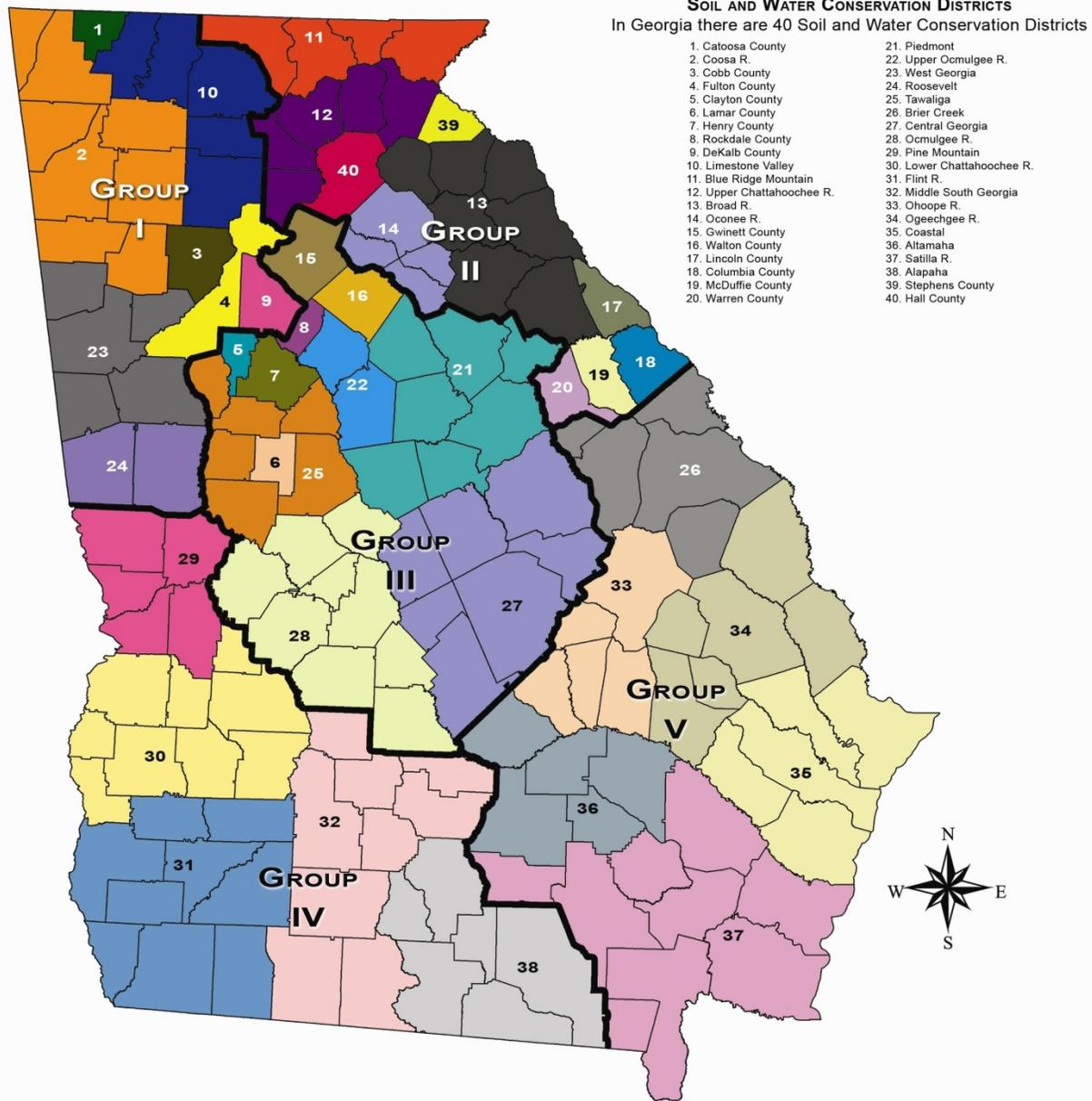
- All meetings are open to the public.
- All actions are open to the public whenever a quorum is present.
- Due notice should be given at least 24 hours before the meetings by posting a notice at the meeting location and in the local newspaper.
- Agendas should also be posted.

Open Records: The public has the right to inspect and copy ALL public records (letters, approved minutes, photographs, and computer-based information).

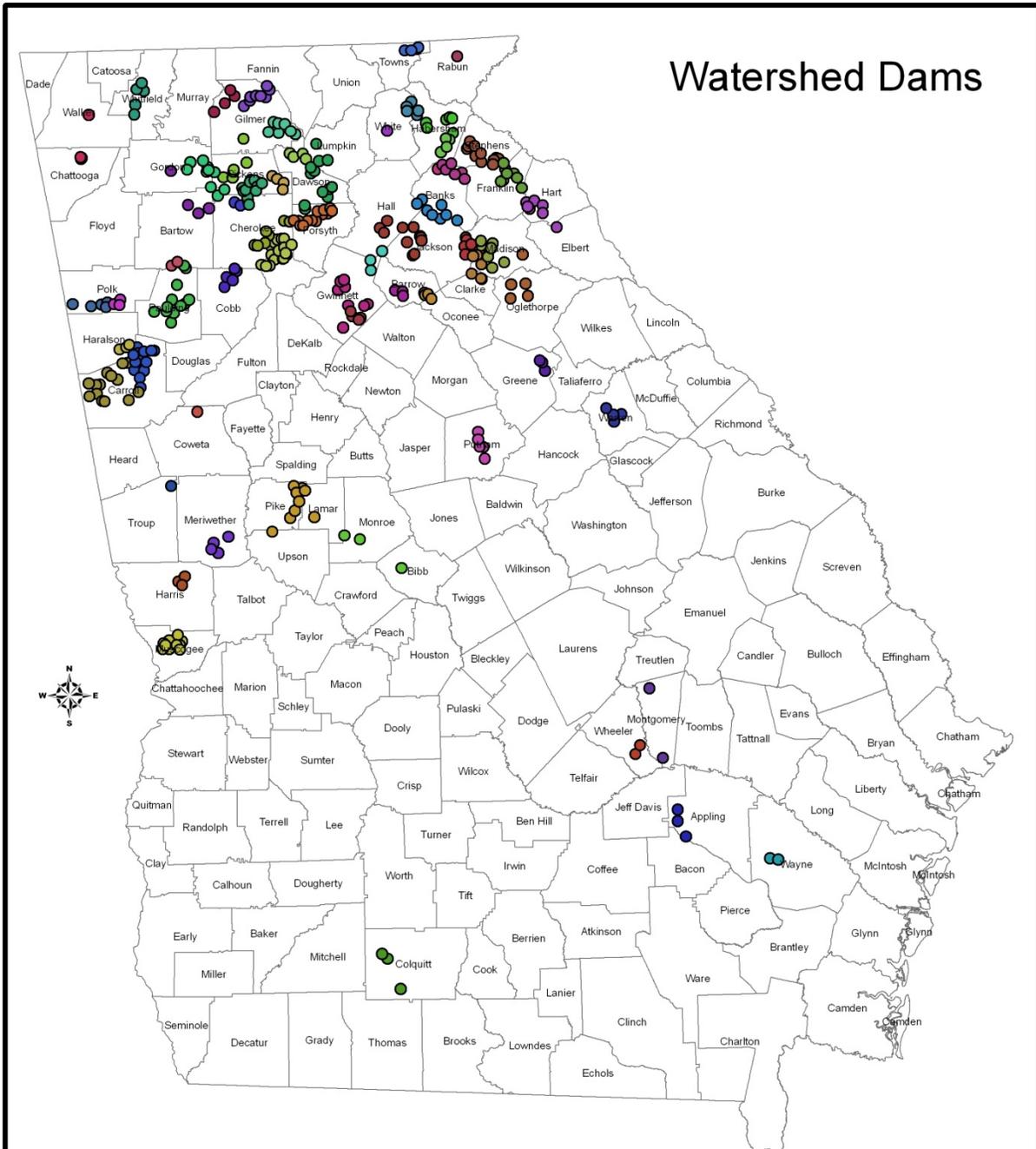
Process for Releasing Information:

- Citizen makes a written request to the records custodian.
- Custodian has 3 business days to respond and provide the records.
- If the records are not available in 3 days, then the custodian must schedule a time with the citizen for review and copying of the records.
- Custodian may charge an hourly rate (equal to the lowest paid employee who has access to the records) for search and retrieval of the records and up to 25 cents per copy.





Watershed Dams



- Watershed_Dams**
- Watershed Name
 - AMICALOLA CREEK
 - BARBER CREEK
 - BEAVERDAM CREEK
 - BIG CEDAR CREEK
 - BISHOP CREEK
 - BRIDGE CREEK-OCLOCKNEE RIVER
 - BULL CREEK
 - CANE CREEK
 - CARTECAY RIVER
 - CEDAR CREEK
 - ELLIAY RIVER
 - ETOWAH RIVER REACH
 - EUHARLEE CREEK
 - GROVE RIVER
 - GWINNETT COUNTY RC&D
 - HAYNES CREEK-BRUSHY FORK CREEK
 - HAZEL CREEK
 - HEAD OF LITTLE TENNESSEE RIVER
 - HEADWATERS OF THE CHATTOOGA RIVER
 - HIGHTOWER CREEK
 - HUDSON RIVER
 - LITTLE CREEK
 - LITTLE RIVER
 - LITTLE RIVER II
 - LITTLE SANDY CREEK AND TRAIL CREEK
 - LITTLE SATILLA CREEK
 - LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER
 - LONG SWAMP CREEK
 - LOWER LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER
 - MARBURY CREEK
 - MIDDLE FORK BROAD RIVER
 - MIDDLE OCONEE-WALNUT CREEK
 - MILL CREEK
 - MILL-CANTON CREEKS
 - MOUNTANTOWN CREEK
 - NOONDAY CREEK
 - NORTH BROAD RIVER
 - NORTH FORK OF THE BROAD RIVER
 - PALMETTO CREEK
 - PINE LOG TRIBUTARY
 - POTATO CREEK
 - PUMPKINVINE CREEK
 - RACCOON CREEK
 - ROCKY COMFORT CREEK
 - ROOTY CREEK
 - SALLACOA CREEK AREA
 - SANDY CREEK
 - SAUTEE CREEK
 - SETTINGDOWN CREEK
 - SHARP MOUNTAIN CREEK
 - SOQUE
 - SOUTH FORK BROAD RIVER
 - SOUTH FORK LITTLE RIVER
 - SOUTH RIVER
 - STAMP-SHOAL CREEKS
 - TALKING ROCK CREEK
 - TESNATEE CREEK
 - TOBESOFKEE CREEK
 - TRI-COUNTY RC&D
 - UPPER MULBERRY RIVER
 - YELLOWJACKET CREEK