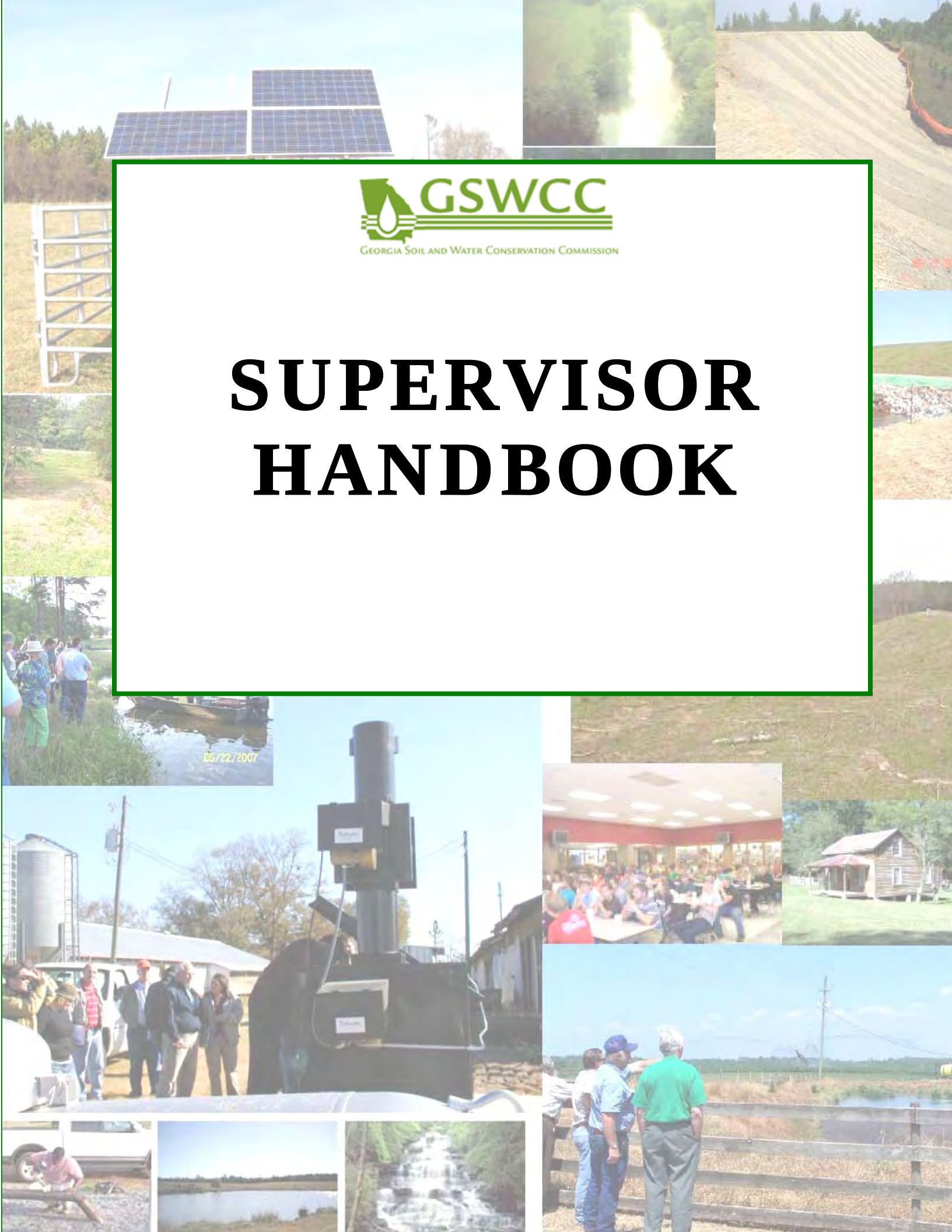
GSWCC

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission

SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK



GSWCC
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission

GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Agricultural Water Conservation and Metering Program

Program Description: 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 through agricultural water catchments.

Conservation of Agricultural Water Supplies

Purpose – To increase the uniformity and efficiency of ag water irrigation systems, to obtain and manage quality data on agricultural water use for state policy makers, and to construct/renovate agricultural water catchments for irrigation of cropland in South Georgia using federal funds.

Pond Program
- GSWCC accepts applications to construct new or renovate existing surface water structures.
- Currently, GSWCC is unable to fully fund all of the applications.
- Man-made ponds increase on-farm surface water capacity.
- Pond construction is completed by an exemption from the Army Corps of Engineers.
- NRCS provides technical assistance in the design of these ponds to ensure that ponds meet acceptable standards and specifications.
- Cost share rates are at 75%, not to exceed $50,000.

Irrigation Application Uniformity Improvement - Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL)
- GSWCC accepts applications to provide free in field irrigation system uniformity test and visual inspection.
- Currently, GSWCC is unable to fully fund all of the applications received.
- Eligibility determined audit tests results using the Christiansen's uniformity coefficient and end-gun shut-off acreage
- Field verified application chart, system uniformity graph and visual observation report provided as deliverables
- Cost share rates are at 75%, not to exceed $5,000 for nozzle package, $3,000 for end-gun shut-off.

Irrigation Scheduling
- In cooperation with the USDA/ARS National Peanut Research Laboratory, GSWCC works to promote the use of *Irrigator Pro.*
- Scheduling irrigation should utilize 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

Purpose- To obtain accurate and timely information on the patterns and amounts of agriculture 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 will locate and evaluate pumping sites, purchase meters and cause meters to be installed on all EPD permitted sites issued before July 1, 2003.
• The Commission certifies proper installation for farmers installed meters as a condition of EPD permits issued after July 1, 2003.
• The Commission will maintain meters and collected water use data for all EPD permitted sites.
• Permit holders will be mailed a yearly report showing the water-use recorded for each permit, in units of acre-inches pumped.
• Agricultural water-use data will be managed in a manner that provides for access by State policy decision makers and, at the same time, insures privacy rights of landowners involved.
• Only summaries of water-use by the eight digit USGS hydrologic code will be made available to the general public. Water-use of any individual irrigator will be 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.

For additional information, please visit the Agricultural Water Conservation and Metering program page.

Rural Water Resources Program

Bob Fulmer, Program Manager
Carrie Lynn Fowler, Nonpoint Source Program Specialist

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 resolution. GSWCC maintains a financial incentive program made possible through agreements with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) 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. These are typically 60 percent cost-share agreements with a 10 year maintenance requirement. 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 Program. 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 1960s and 70s. Districts have signed agreements to operate and maintain these dams. GSWCC seeks funds to provide financial assistance to districts to 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 1 high hazard structures according to the GAEPD 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 1 dams and bring then into compliance with state requirements, either with state funding or existing NRCS programs.

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

For additional information, please visit the Rural Water Resources page.

Urban Lands and Education/Certification

Lauren Zdunczyk, Program Manager

Urban Lands

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 (BMP's) 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 land disturbers, local governments, and erosion and sediment control professionals on urban BMP's.

The Education and Certification Program

In 2003, House Bill 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.

Eligibility Requirements for Inspectors

- Must have completed 60 days work experience in the field of erosion and sediment control.
- In lieu of 60 days work experience, you may obtain a Level IA Certification.

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

Eligibility Requirements for Design Professionals

- Proof of licensure in the State of Georgia in the field of engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, geology, land surveying or CPESC.

Eligibility Requirements for Plan Reviewers

- Have at least 6 months work experience in the field of erosion and sediment control
- In lieu of 6 months work experience, an individual my obtain a Level IB certification

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% 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 www.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 provide 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.*

For additional information, please visit the Urban Lands page.

STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1937-2008

1937-1945
W.S. Brown—Director, Georgia Agricultural Extension Service
H.P. Stuckey—Director, Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station
Silas H. Starr—Director, Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station
Eugene Talmadge—Governor of Georgia

1945—amended to add to the above: 2 members appointed by the Governor-who are outstanding conservationist farmers and members of the Board of Directors of GACDS

1945
Brown—Director, Georgia Agricultural Extension Service
H.P. Stuckey—Director, Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station
G.H. King—Director, Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station (assumed office 1942)
Ellis Arnall—Governor of Georgia
J.C. Wise, Jr.—GACDS Director
T.B. Thornton—GACDS Director

NOTE—Legislation in 1949 directed that the Conservation Commission be comprised of 5 individuals who are supervisors

1949-1953
Z.P. Almon
J.E. Eubank
Jim L. Gillis, Jr.
O.W. Price
J.T. Watson (Deceased 1950)
W.F. Hall (Replaced Watson)

1949-1954
Z.P. Almon
J.E. Eubank
Jim L. Gillis, Jr.
W.F. Hall
O.W. Price

1961-1973
Lamar Franklin
Jim L. Gillis, Jr.
C.M. Higginbotham
David Kistner (Resigned 12-16-70)
Fred Statham
Rufus Coody (Replaced Kistner, January, 1973)

1973-1973
Rufus Coody (Resigned 1-6-76)
Amon Corn
Herbert Hawkins
Frank Murrah
Austin Rheney

1976-1977	Amon Corn Herbert Hawkins Frank Murrah Austin Rheney H. Crawford Hewell
***1977-1980**	Amon Corn (Resigned 10-22-79) Frank Crawford (Resigned 4-18-79) H. Crawford Hewell Frank Murrah Garland Thompson
1980-1985	H. Crawford Hewell (Resigned 1-1-84) Frank Murrah Garland Thompson J.M. “Bob” Plemons Jimmy S. Johnson
1985-1989	Frank Murrah Garland Thompson J.M. “Bob” Plemons Jimmy S. Johnson Roy J. Chappell
1989-1991	Garland Thompson J.M. “Bob” Plemons Jimmy S. Johnson Roy J. Chappell J. Joe Nichols
1991-2000	Garland Thompson J.M. “Bob” Plemons (Resigned 7-13-00) Jimmy S. Johnson Roy J. Chappell A. B. C. “Brad” Dorminy
2000-2003	Garland Thompson Roy J. Chappell (Deceased 1-31-03) Mable Brown (Oath taken on 5-29-02) Barbarianne Gaulding-Russell (Oath taken on 5-29-02)
***2003-7/2011 (Official oath given 11-13-03)**	Garland Thompson Carl Brack (Oath signed 11-12-03) Dennis Brown (Oath signed 11-12-03) David Hays (Oath signed 9-18-03) Steve Singletary (Oath signed 9-18-03)

*Begins five year staggered term

8/2011-Present	Garland Thompson Carl Brack Dennis Brown David Hays Hal Haddock, Jr.

STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DUTIES AND POWERS

The State Soil and Water Conservation Commission is the agency of State Government charged with responsibility for carrying out provisions of the Soil Conservation Law approved March 26, 1937, and amended March 6, 1945, February 23, 1955, March 17, 1960, February 27, 1962, April 17, 1973, and July 1, 1988.

The Commission shall have responsibility:

To provide for the conservation of the soil, water and all other related natural resources in Georgia.

To provide the mechanics for maintaining the organization of the Soil and Water conservation Districts of Georgia.

To coordinate the programs of the several districts and to formulate programs which will strengthen the work of conserving our soil, water and related sources.

To secure the assistance of the U.S. government and any of its agencies, and the agencies of state and county governments, in carrying our district soil and water conservation work.

To disseminate information throughout the State concerning the activities of the districts.

To furnish an exchange of advice and experience between the various districts that will promote and advance the conservation of these vital resources.

To perform the duties necessary to implement the administration of the Federal Watershed Protection and Flood Control Act. (Small Watershed Program.)

To receive appropriations from the State for the operation of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the State Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

The State Soil and Water Conservation Commission constitutes an operating program by performing the functions described in the foregoing description.

Following are illustrations of Commission activities:

1. The general administration of the commission and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
2. Conduct educational and information programs to acquaint the public with district activities and resource conservation needs of State.
3. Provide statewide program leadership in soil and water conservation.
4. Maintaining liaison with governmental agencies and private groups having an interest in the use and conservation of natural resources.
5. Review watershed programs and assist in establishing priorities for development.
6. Providing state leadership to local units of government in developing and conducting erosion and sediment control programs under the provisions of Act 599.
7. Serving as a central source of information and guidance for other state agency activities relating to soil and water conversation.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN DISTRICT AFFAIRS

Specific responsibilities in district affairs include keeping district boards informed about conservation concerns, issues, programs, and legislative affairs at the state and national levels. The representative should assist the boards in preparing and maintaining long-range Plans of Work, Annual Plans of Work, budgets, announcements, resolutions, publications, requisitions and special reports. The representative will serve in an advisory capacity with GACDS Committees and work to implement objectives they identify.

The Regional Representatives will assist districts with proper procedures in supervisor appointments and elections. The representatives will male it a point to visit prospective supervisors and explain duties of the office and familiarize them with the work, history, and philosophy of districts. Afterward, visiting each supervisor outside of the district meetings at least once a year is helpful, with meetings as often as necessary with a level of high interest and ability.

The Regional Representative will give high priority to attending each and every district meeting and be prepared to work with the Chairman in preparing the agenda. At the meetings, the representative should offer to take minutes and handle their disbursement. Another duty is encouraging the district board to deal with problems of attendance or failure to accept the responsibilities as a supervisor. When requested by the district, the regional representative will assume responsibility for the district supplies and other operations activities.

In the area of informational activities, he will assist the district with stories and photos for the news media. This work shall be closely coordinated with the state office. Further, assisting with district affiliate member and “Man of the Year” programs will be necessary. The representative must also maintain communications and a close working relationship with state and federal agencies and other groups working with and through districts and keep them informed of district programs and objectives. This will include watershed associations and RC&D Councils.

The Regional Representative should check with the NRCS Area Conservationist and Designated District Conservationist on a regular basis as necessary on activities and plans relating to districts. The representative will then present programs to civic clubs an organized groups on the work of districts and help GACDS with its programs and activities. This includes annual meetings, summer groups meetings and other Associations meetings.

GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
DATE OF FORMATION

DISTRICT	CHARTER ISSUED
Coosa River	9-13-37
Broad River	10-21-37
Upper Chattahoochee River	1-12-38
Ocmulgee River	2-10-38
Piedmont	4-28-38
Oconee River	6-07-38
Upper Ocmulgee River	6-24-38
West Georgia	7-13-38
Brier Creek	11-07-38
Little River (no longer exists—See below)	11-07-38
Middle South Georgia	3-16-39
Limestone Valley	5-12-39
Lower Chattahoochee River	7-17-39
Pine Mountain	7-17-39
Flint River	8-12-39
Ohoopee River	8-12-39
Central Georgia	2-17-40
Towaliga	6-11-40
Ogeechee River	7-12-40
Satilla River	5-12-42
Alapaha	11-10-43
Atlanta (no longer exists—See below)	2-05-45
Altamaha	2-08-05
Coastal	2-14-45
Lincoln County	12-22-48
Catoosa County	10-03-51
Blue Ridge Mountain	10-19-51
Walton County	8-12-77
*Columbia County	10-31-79
*McDuffie County	10-31-79
*Warren County	10-31-79
Roosevelt	1-23-80
**Cobb County	5-09-80
**Dekalb County	5-09-80
**Fulton County	5-09-80
Gwinnett County	8-15-80
Lamar County	3-06-81
Henry County	9-11-81
Rockdale County	9-11-81
Clayton County	12-21-81
Stephens County	4-19-82
Hall County	3-18-83

*Comprised the former Little River District 1938-1979.
** Comprised the former Atlanta District 1945-1980.

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*** Current through the 2008 Regular Session ***

TITLE 2. AGRICULTURE
CHAPTER 6. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
ARTICLE 2. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

O.C.G.A. § 2-6-22 (2008)

§ 2-6-22. Definitions

As used in this article, the term:

(1) "Commission" or "State Soil and Water Conservation Commission" means the agency created in Code Section 2-6-23.

(2) "District" or "soil and water conservation district" means an agency of this state organized in accordance with this article for the purposes, with the powers, and subject to the restrictions set forth in this article.

(3) "Due notice" means notice published at least twice, with an interval of at least seven days between the two publication dates, in a newspaper or other publication of general circulation within the appropriate area or, if no such publication of general circulation is available, notice given by posting at a reasonable number of conspicuous places within the appropriate area, including, where possible, public places where it is customary to post notices concerning county or municipal affairs generally. At any hearing held pursuant to such notice, at the time and place designated in such notice, adjournment may be made from time to time without the necessity of renewing such notice for such adjourned dates.

(4) "Land occupier" or "occupier of land" means any person, firm, or corporation, other than the owner, who is in possession of any lands lying within a soil and water conservation district, whether as lessee, renter, tenant, or otherwise.

(5) "Landowner" or "owner of land" means any person, firm, or corporation who holds legal or equitable title to any lands lying within a soil and water conservation district.

(6) "Qualified elector" means any person qualified to vote in elections by the people under the Constitution of this state.

(7) "Supervisor" means one of the members of the governing body of a soil and water conservation district, elected or appointed in accordance with this article.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 3; Ga. L. 1962, p. 116, §§ 2, 3; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 1.

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*** Current through the 2008 Regular Session ***

TITLE 2. AGRICULTURE
CHAPTER 6. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
ARTICLE 2. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

O.C.G.A. § 2-6-23 (2008)

§ 2-6-23. State Soil and Water Conservation Commission -- Established; composition; terms of office; ex officio advisers; seal; rules and regulations

(a) There is established, to serve as an agency of the state and to perform the functions conferred upon it in this article, the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

(b) Five district soil and water conservation supervisors, who shall be appointed by the Governor as provided in this Code section, shall serve as members of the commission. Commencing with appointments for the year 1977, the Governor shall appoint to the commission one supervisor from each of the five Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors' groups. Such initial appointments were for terms of office of one, two, three, four, and five years, respectively. Thereafter, successors shall be appointed for terms of office of five years and until their successors are duly appointed.

(c) The following persons shall serve ex officio in an advisory capacity to the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission:

(1) The director of the Cooperative Extension Service;

(2) The commissioner of natural resources;

(3) The director of experiment stations of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the University of Georgia;

(4) The executive director of the Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service;

(5) The Georgia state director of the Farmer's Home Administration;

(6) The director of the Southern Piedmont Conservation Research Center;

(7) The president of the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors;

(8) The director of the State Forestry Commission;

(9) The Georgia supervisor of national forests of the U.S. Forestry Service;

(10) The state conservationist of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service;

(11) The dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the University of Georgia;

(12) The state supervisor of agricultural education in this state;

(13) The Commissioner of Agriculture; and

(14) Such other representatives of state or federal agencies as the commission deems desirable.

(d) The commission shall adopt a seal, which shall be judicially noticed. It may perform such acts, hold such public hearings, and promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the execution of its functions under this article.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 4; Ga. L. 1945, p. 190, § 2; Ga. L. 1949, p. 584, § 1; Ga. L. 1962, p. 116, § 2; Ga. L. 1973, p. 929, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 2; Ga. L. 1995, p. 10, § 2.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-24

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*** Current through the 2008 Regular Session ***

TITLE 2. AGRICULTURE
CHAPTER 6. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
ARTICLE 2. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

O.C.G.A. § 2-6-24 (2008)

§ 2-6-24. State Soil and Water Conservation Commission -- Chairperson; quorum; compensation; surety bonds; records; audits

The commission shall designate one of its members as chairperson and may, from time to time, change such designation. A member of the commission shall hold office so long as he or she retains the office by virtue of which he or she is serving on the commission. A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum, and the concurrence of a majority shall be required for the determination of any matter within its duties. The members of the commission shall receive for each day of actual attendance of meetings of the commission a daily expense allowance in the amount specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 and shall be entitled to expenses, including traveling expenses, necessarily incurred in the discharge of their duties on the commission. The commission shall provide for the execution of surety bonds for all employees and officers who are entrusted with funds or property. It shall provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings and of all resolutions, regulations, and orders issued or adopted and shall provide for an annual audit of the accounts of receipts and disbursements.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 4; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 3; Ga. L. 2002, p. 951, § 1.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-25 (2008)

§ 2-6-25. State Soil and Water Conservation Commission -- Employment of administrative officer, experts, agents, and employees; legal services; delegation of powers and duties; furnishing of information; agency cooperation

The commission may employ an administrative officer and such technical experts and other agents and employees, permanent and temporary, as it may require. It shall determine their qualifications, duties, and compensation. The commission may call upon the Attorney General of this state for such legal services as it may require. It shall have authority to delegate, to one or more of its members or to one or more agents or employees, such powers and duties as it may deem proper. The commission is authorized to furnish information and to call upon any or all state or local agencies for cooperation in carrying out this article.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 4; Ga. L. 1975, p. 724, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 4.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-26

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-26 (2008)

§ 2-6-26. State Soil and Water Conservation Commission -- Merit and retirement systems for employees

All employees of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, not including members of the commission, shall be subject to a merit system of employment as promulgated by the commission, under which all such employees shall be selected on a basis of merit, fitness, and efficiency, according to law. All such employees are authorized to become and be members of the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia, as established by Chapter 2 of Title 47. There shall be paid from the funds appropriated for the operation of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission all employer contributions required by Chapter 2 of Title 47 creating the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia. All rights, credits, and funds in such retirement system which were possessed by persons at the time of their employment by the commission are continued and preserved, it being the intention of the General Assembly that such persons shall not lose any rights, credits, or funds to which they may be entitled prior to becoming employees of the commission.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1973, p. 908, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 5.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-27 (2008)

§ 2-6-27. State Soil and Water Conservation Commission -- Additional duties and powers

In addition to the duties and powers otherwise conferred upon the commission, it shall have the following duties and powers:

(1) To offer such assistance as may be appropriate to the supervisors of the soil and water conservation districts in the carrying out of any of their powers and programs;

(2) To keep the supervisors of each of the districts informed of the activities and experiences of all the other districts and to facilitate an interchange of advice, experience, and cooperation between such districts;

(3) To coordinate the programs of the districts so far as this may be done by advice and consultation;

(4) To secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and any of its agencies and of the agencies and counties of this state in the work of such districts;

(5) To disseminate information throughout this state concerning the activities and programs of the districts and to encourage the formation of such districts in areas where their organization is desirable;

(6) To receive gifts, appropriations, materials, equipment, land, and facilities and to manage, operate, and disperse the same;

(7) To formulate such rules and regulations, to exercise such powers, and to perform such duties as are necessary to implement the administration of the federal Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act;

(7.1) To formulate such rules and regulations in consultation with the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources, to exercise such powers, and to perform such duties as are necessary to implement the administration of the education and training program established under Code Section 12-7-19;

(7.2) To formulate such rules and regulations and to exercise such powers as are necessary to perform its duties under subsection (m.1) of Code Section 12-5-31 and subsection (b.1) of Code Section 12-5-105;

(8) To enter into contracts and agreements with the districts, municipalities, and counties of this state, other agencies of this state, the United States and any agencies thereof, any association, any landowner or land occupier, or any person in order to carry out the purposes

of this article; and

(9) To receive grants from any agency of the United States government or any agency of this state, and to make grants to districts, municipalities, or counties in this state, or other state agencies in order to:

(A) Fund up to 20 percent of the cost of obtaining permits for and constructing improvements to any dam that was originally constructed or financially assisted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, of the United States Department of Agriculture;

(B) Fund up to 40 percent of the cost of obtaining a permit under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1344, for the construction of any new public water supply reservoir. In awarding any grants under this subparagraph, the commission shall consider regional effects and water supply yield of the proposed reservoir, anticipated population growth, and local government funding commitment; or

(C) Carry out other purposes of this article.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 4; Ga. L. 1949, p. 584, § 2; Ga. L. 1955, p. 257, § 1; Ga. L. 1962, p. 116, § 3; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 6; Ga. L. 1988, p. 1336, § 1; Ga. L. 2003, p. 224, § 1; Ga. L. 2003, p. 813, § 1; Ga. L. 2008, p. 644, § 1-2/SB 342.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-28 (2008)

§ 2-6-28. (For effective date, see note.) Number and boundaries of soil and water conservation districts; alteration of existing districts or formation of new districts

(a) The number and geographical boundaries of the several soil and water conservation districts shall remain as they existed on July 1, 1973, unless changed as provided in this Code section.

(b) (For effective date, see note.) If two-thirds of the supervisors within each of the affected districts, each of the governing authorities of each county within any affected district, and the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission agree to the alteration of any district or the formation of any new district, the alteration or formation may be effected if all such approvals are filed with the commission along with the description of the altered boundaries or the boundaries of the new districts. The alteration of existing districts or formation of new districts may not be effected so that the boundaries of any such district will traverse the boundaries of any regional commission within the district or districts. All of the property and assets of any altered district shall be distributed among the affected districts in accordance to the same ratio used in the distribution of state appropriated funds to the affected districts.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 5; Ga. L. 1973, p. 929, § 2; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 7; Ga. L. 1989, p. 1317, § 6.1; Ga. L. 2008, p. 181, § 11/HB 1216.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-29 (2008)

§ 2-6-29. District supervisors -- Number; appointment, qualifications, and terms of appointive supervisors; county basis of election of elected supervisors

(a) The governing body of each district shall consist of not less than five supervisors. Two supervisors shall be appointed by the commission, provided that in those districts which contain three or more counties or portions of three or more counties, the commission shall appoint one supervisor for each county in the district. Appointments by the commission shall be made from a list submitted to the commission by the elected supervisors of the district, containing three nominees for each appointive position. The supervisors appointed by the commission shall be persons who are qualified by training and experience to perform the specialized, skilled services which will be required of them in the performance of their duties under this article. Appointed supervisors shall serve for terms of office of two years and until their successors are appointed.

(b) Elected supervisors shall be elected upon a county basis, as provided in Code Section 2-6-30. Not more than one elected supervisor shall be elected from each county within a district, except in districts consisting of less than three counties.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 7; Ga. L. 1949, p. 584, § 5; Ga. L. 1973, p. 929, § 3; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 8.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-30 (2008)

§ 2-6-30. District supervisors -- Election procedure for elected supervisors

(a) Within 30 days after the date of issuance by the Secretary of State of a certificate of organization for a soil and water conservation district, nominating petitions may be filed with the commission to nominate candidates for supervisors of such district. The commission shall have authority to extend the time within which nominating petitions may be filed. No such nominating petition shall be accepted by the commission unless it is subscribed by 25 or more qualified electors of the county in which the nominee resides. Qualified electors may sign more than one such nominating petition to nominate more than one candidate for supervisor.

(b) The commission shall be required to give due notice of an election only in the particular county in which an election is to be held. The ballot for each county shall contain only the names of the nominees from that county and the electors of each county shall be eligible to vote only for the nominees of their particular county. The names of all nominees within the county on behalf of whom nominating petitions have been filed within the time designated shall appear upon the ballots arranged in the alphabetical order of their surnames, with a square before each name and a direction to insert an "X" in the square appearing before the name of the person for whom the elector desires to vote. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared the duly elected district supervisor from that county.

(c) The commission shall pay all the expenses of such election, shall supervise the conduct thereof, shall prescribe regulations governing the conduct of such election and the determination of the eligibility of voters therein, and shall publish the results thereof.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 6; Ga. L. 1949, p. 584, § 6; Ga. L. 1950, p. 293, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 9.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-31 (2008)

§ 2-6-31. District supervisors -- Chairman; terms of office of elected supervisors; filling vacancies; quorum; compensation and expenses

(a) The supervisors shall designate a chairman and from time to time may change such designation.

(b) (1) The term of office of each elected supervisor shall be four years, except as otherwise provided by paragraph (2) of this subsection. An elected supervisor shall hold office until his or her successor has been elected and has qualified. Successors to elected supervisors shall be elected at the general election immediately preceding the expiration of terms and shall take office the first day of January immediately following that election.

(2) (A) The terms of those persons elected as supervisors in 2003 and whose terms have not expired as of the date that implementation of this paragraph is permissible under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, shall expire on December 31, 2008.

(B) The terms of those persons elected as supervisors in 2004 and whose terms have not expired as of the date that implementation of this paragraph is permissible under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, shall expire on December 31, 2008.

(C) The terms of those persons elected as supervisors in 2005 shall expire on December 31, 2010.

(D) The terms of those persons elected as supervisors in 2006 shall expire on December 31, 2010.

(E) If any persons were elected as supervisors on or after January 1, 2007, but prior to the date that implementation of this paragraph is permissible under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, then the terms of such persons shall expire on December 31, 2012.

(c) (1) Any vacancy in the office an appointed supervisor shall be filled for the unexpired term. The selection of any person to fill an unexpired term of an appointed supervisor shall be made in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(2) Any vacancy occurring in the office of an elected supervisor shall be filled as follows:

(A) If the vacancy occurs more than 90 days prior to the date of a general election preceding the general election at which a successor will be elected to a new full term of office, then such vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term of office at a special election to be held on the same date as said general election preceding the general election at which a successor will be elected to a new full term of office; and in such case the Governor shall

select a qualified person from among two persons nominated by the remaining supervisors of the district to fill the vacancy until the person elected at such special election takes office; and

(B) If the vacancy does not occur more than 90 days prior to the date of a general election preceding the general election at which a successor will be elected to a new full term of office, then the Governor shall select a qualified person from among two persons nominated by the remaining supervisors of the district to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

(d) A majority of the supervisors shall constitute a quorum; and the concurrence of a majority of the supervisors in any matter within their duties shall be required for its determination.

(e) The commission is authorized to fix a per diem payment for supervisors; in addition thereto, such supervisors shall be entitled to the regular mileage allowances provided for state employees if such supervisors travel by private conveyance and to their actual travel expenses if they travel by public conveyance.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 7; Ga. L. 1951, p. 695, § 1; Ga. L. 1973, p. 929, § 3; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 10; Ga. L. 2007, p. 276, § 1/SB 263.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-32 (2008)

§ 2-6-32. District supervisors -- Services of county agricultural agents; employees and agents; copies of rules, orders, and other documents; surety bonds; removal of supervisor; consultation

(a) The supervisors of a district may utilize the services of the county agricultural agents and the facilities of the county agricultural agents' offices insofar as practicable and feasible. With the approval of the commission they may employ additional employees and agents, permanent and temporary, as they may require and may determine their qualifications, duties, and compensation. The supervisors may delegate to their chairman, to one or more supervisors, or to one or more agents or employees such powers and duties as they may deem proper.

(b) The supervisors shall furnish to the commission, upon request, copies of such rules, regulations, orders, contracts, forms, and other documents as they shall adopt or employ and such other information concerning their activities as the commission may require in the performance of its duties under this article.

(c) The supervisors shall provide for the execution of surety bonds for all employees and officers who are entrusted with funds or property. They shall provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings and of all resolutions, regulations, and orders issued or adopted and shall provide to the commission summary financial data listing cash receipts and disbursements for each state fiscal year.

(d) 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.

(e) The supervisors of a district may invite the legislative body of any municipality or county located near the territory comprised within the district to designate a representative to advise and consult with the supervisors on all questions of program and policy which may affect the property, water supply, or other interests of such municipality or county.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 7; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 11; Ga. L. 1998, p. 206, § 1.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-33 (2008)

§ 2-6-33. Powers of districts and supervisors; prerequisites to exercise

A soil and water conservation district shall be an agency of this state. Such district and the supervisors thereof shall have, in addition to other powers granted in this article, the following powers; provided, however, that before the supervisors shall have the authority to exercise any of the powers conferred in this Code section, they shall formulate and submit to the commission for its approval a program or programs of projects and operations, proposed changes in which may be submitted for the approval of the commission from time to time, and shall not undertake any of such work until after such program or programs shall have been approved in writing by the commission; and provided, further, that no provision with respect to the acquisition, operation, or disposition of property by public bodies of this state shall be applicable to a district unless the General Assembly shall specifically so state:

(1) To conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the character of soil erosion and the preventive and control measures needed; to publish the results of such surveys, investigations, or research; and to disseminate information concerning such preventive and control measures, provided that in order to avoid duplication of research activities, no district shall initiate any research program except in cooperation with the government of this state or any of its agencies or with the government of the United States or any of its agencies;

(2) To conduct demonstrational projects within the district on lands owned or controlled by this state or any of its agencies, with the cooperation of the agency administering and having jurisdiction thereof, and on any other lands within the district, upon obtaining the consent of the owner and occupiers of such lands or the necessary rights or interests in such lands, in order to demonstrate by example the means, methods, and measures by which soil and soil resources may be conserved and soil erosion in the form of soil blowing and soil washing may be prevented and controlled;

(3) To carry out preventive and control measures within the district, including, but not limited to, engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, changes in the use of land, and the measures listed in paragraph (3) of subsection (a) of Code Section 2-6-21, on lands owned or controlled by this state or any of its agencies, with the cooperation of the agency administering and having jurisdiction thereof, and on any other lands within the district, upon obtaining the consent of the owner and the occupiers of such lands or the necessary rights or interests in such lands;

(4) To cooperate and enter into agreements with and, within the limits of appropriations duly made available to the district by law, to furnish financial or other aid to any agency, governmental or otherwise, or any owner or occupier of lands within the district, in the carrying on of erosion control or prevention operations within the district, subject to such

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-34 (2008)

§ 2-6-34. Conditions to extending benefits or performing work

As a condition to the extending of any benefits under this article to or the performance of any work upon any lands not owned or controlled by this state or any of its agencies, the supervisors of a district may require contributions in money, services, materials, or otherwise to any operations conferring such benefits and may require landowners and occupiers of land to enter into and perform such agreements or covenants as to the permanent use of such lands as will tend to prevent or control erosion thereon.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 8.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-35 (2008)

§ 2-6-35. Land use regulations -- Adoption authorized; public hearings

The supervisors of each district shall have authority to formulate regulations governing the use of lands within the district, in the interest of conserving soil and soil resources and preventing and controlling soil erosion. The supervisors may conduct such public meetings and public hearings upon proposed regulations as may be necessary to assist them in this work.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 9.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-36 (2008)

§ 2-6-36. Land use regulations -- Referendum

(a) The supervisors shall not have the authority to adopt land use regulations until after they shall have caused due notice to be given of their intention to conduct a referendum for submission of such regulations to the owners of lands lying within the boundaries of the district, for their indication of approval or disapproval of such proposed regulations, and until after the supervisors have considered the result of such referendum. No proposed regulations shall be submitted in a referendum until after they have been submitted to and approved in writing by the commission. Copies of such proposed regulations shall be available for the inspection of all eligible voters during the period between the publication of the notice and the date of the referendum. The notice of the referendum shall recite the contents of the proposed regulations or shall state where copies of such proposed regulations may be examined.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 9; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 13.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-37 (2008)

§ 2-6-37. Land use regulations -- Provisions authorized; uniformity required; availability of copies

(a) The regulations to be adopted by the supervisors under this article may include:

(1) Provisions requiring the carrying out of necessary engineering operations, including the construction of terraces, terrace outlets, check dams, dikes, ponds, ditches, and other necessary structures, having due regard to the legislative findings set forth in Code Section 2-6-21;

(2) Provisions requiring the observance of particular methods of cultivation, including: contour cultivating; contour furrowing; lister furrowing; sowing; planting; strip cropping, changes in cropping systems, seeding, and planting of lands to water-conserving and erosion-preventing plants, trees, and grasses; forestation; and reforestation; having due regard to the legislative findings set forth in Code Section 2-6-21; and

(3) Provisions requiring the retirement from cultivation of highly erosive areas or of areas on which erosion may not be adequately controlled if cultivation is carried on, having due regard to the legislative findings set forth in Code Section 2-6-21.

(b) The regulations shall be uniform throughout the territory within the district, provided that the supervisors may classify the lands within the district with reference to such factors as soil type, degree of slope, degree of erosion threatened or existing, cropping and tillage practices in use, and other relevant factors and may provide regulations varying with the type or class of land affected but uniform as to all lands within each class or type.

(c) Copies of land use regulations adopted under this article shall be printed and made available to all owners and occupiers of lands lying within the district.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 9.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-38 (2008)

§ 2-6-38. Land use regulations -- Binding effect

Land use regulations adopted pursuant to Code Sections 2-6-35 and 2-6-36 by the supervisors of any district shall be binding and obligatory upon all owners and occupiers of land within such districts.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 9.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-39 (2008)

§ 2-6-39. Land use regulations -- Inspections to determine observance; petition; judicial proceedings; costs and expenses

(a) The supervisors shall have authority to go upon any lands within the district to determine whether land use regulations adopted under this article are being observed.

(b) Where the supervisors of any district find that any of the provisions of land use regulations adopted in accordance with this article are not being observed on particular lands and that such nonobservance tends to increase erosion on such lands and is interfering with the prevention or control of erosion on other lands within the district, the supervisors may present a petition to the superior court of the county or counties within which the lands of the defendant lie. The petition shall set forth the adoption of the land use regulations, the failure of the defendant landowner or occupier of the land to observe such regulations and to perform particular work, operations, or avoidances as required thereby, and that such nonobservance tends to increase erosion on such lands and is interfering with the prevention or control of erosion on other lands within the district. It shall ask the court to require the defendant to perform the work, operations, or avoidances within a reasonable time and to order that if the defendant fails to do so, the supervisors may go on the land, perform the work or other operations or otherwise bring the condition of the land into conformity with the requirements of such regulations, and recover the costs and expenses thereof, with interest, from the owner or occupier of such land.

(c) Upon the presentation of the petition, the court shall cause process to be issued against the defendant and shall hear the case. If it appears to the court that testimony is necessary for the proper disposition of the matter, it may take evidence or appoint a referee to take such evidence as it may direct and report the same to the court with his findings of fact and conclusions of law, which report shall constitute a part of the proceedings upon which the determination of the court shall be made. The court may dismiss the petition or it may require the defendant to perform the work, operations, or avoidances and may provide that upon the failure of the defendant to initiate such performance within the time specified in the order of the court and to prosecute the same to completion with reasonable diligence, the supervisors may enter upon the land involved, perform the work or operations or otherwise bring the conditions of the land into conformity with the requirements of the regulations, and recover the costs and expenses thereof, with interest at the rate of 5 percent per annum, from the owner or occupier of such land.

(d) The court shall retain jurisdiction of the case until after the work has been completed. Upon completion of the work by the supervisors pursuant to the order of the court, the supervisors may file a petition with the court, a copy of which shall be served upon the defendant in the case, stating the costs and expenses sustained by them in the performance of the work and seeking judgment therefor with interest. The court shall have jurisdiction to

enter judgment for the amount of such costs and expenses, with interest at the rate of 5 percent per annum until paid, together with the costs of the action, including a reasonable attorney's fee to be fixed by the court.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 10.
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TITLE 2. AGRICULTURE
CHAPTER 6. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
ARTICLE 2. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

O.C.G.A. § 2-6-40 (2008)

§ 2-6-40. Land use regulations -- Amendment or repeal

(a) Any owner of land within a district may at any time file a petition with the supervisors asking that any or all of the land use regulations adopted by the supervisors under Code Sections 2-6-35 and 2-6-36 be amended, supplemented, or repealed.

(b) Such land use regulations shall not be amended, supplemented, or repealed except in accordance with the procedure prescribed in Code Section 2-6-36 for adoption of land use regulations.

(c) Referenda on adoption, amendment, supplementation, or repeal of land use regulations shall not be held more often than once in six months.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 9.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-41 (2008)

§ 2-6-41. Right of eminent domain for small watershed project; conditions precedent; procedure

(a) When a small watershed project is instituted under the sponsorship of a duly constituted district alone or under cosponsorship with any political subdivision of this state and is approved by the state and federal governments for construction thereof, and when, as a condition precedent to the exercise of the rights conferred in this Code section, 90 percent or more of the separate property owners have gratuitously given in writing and delivered to such district the necessary easements and land rights, for the purpose of the small watershed project, and when the governing board of the district finds that it cannot acquire by voluntary contract the remaining necessary easements and land rights, the sponsoring district, upon such showing incorporated in a condemnation proceeding, is granted the right of eminent domain for the purpose of acquiring the remaining necessary easements and land rights to enable it to accomplish the completion of the small watershed project.

(b) Upon compliance with the conditions precedent set forth in subsection (a) of this Code section, a district may proceed to condemn such land in accordance with the procedure set forth by Code Sections 22-2-130 through 22-2-142 and other pertinent eminent domain statutes to acquire the remaining easements and land rights necessary. In any such proceeding, the condemnor shall be required to condemn the fee simple title to all land not otherwise acquired which will be covered by permanent ponding or permanent flooding. The condemnor shall tender to the condemnee the full sum awarded in the condemnation proceedings or shall pay the same into court, in the event of the refusal of the condemnee to accept the same, before entering upon, occupying, or subjecting to its use, by flooding or otherwise, any part of the lands or rights in land sought to be condemned.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1960, p. 973, §§ 1, 2.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-42 (2008)

§ 2-6-42. Cooperation between districts

The supervisors of any two or more districts may cooperate with one another in the exercise of any or all powers conferred in this article.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 11.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-43 (2008)

§ 2-6-43. State agencies to cooperate with districts and observe land use regulations

Agencies of this state which have jurisdiction over or are charged with the administration of any state-owned lands lying within the boundaries of any district and agencies of any county or other governmental subdivision of the state which have jurisdiction over or are charged with the administration of any county-owned or other publicly owned lands lying within the boundaries of any such district shall cooperate to the fullest extent with the supervisors of such districts in the effectuation of programs and operations undertaken by the supervisors under this article. The supervisors of such districts shall be given free access to enter and perform work upon such publicly owned lands. The provisions of land use regulations adopted pursuant to Code Sections 2-6-35 through 2-6-38 shall be in all respects observed by the agencies administering such publicly owned lands.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 12.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-44 (2008)

§ 2-6-44. Exemption from taxation

The property and property rights of every kind and nature acquired in the name of the State of Georgia by any district shall be exempt from state, county, and other taxation.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 8.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-45 (2008)

§ 2-6-45. Discontinuance of district -- Petition of landowners; hearings

Following the expiration of five years from the organization of a district, any 25 owners of land lying within the boundaries of such district may file a petition with the commission seeking to have the operations of the district terminated and the existence of the district discontinued. The commission may conduct such public meetings and public hearings upon the petition as may be necessary to assist it in the consideration thereof.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 13; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 14.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-46 (2008)

§ 2-6-46. Discontinuance of district -- Referendum

(a) Within 60 days after a petition has been received by the commission, it shall hold a referendum on the issue. The commission shall give due notice of the holding of the referendum, shall supervise such referendum, and shall issue appropriate regulations governing the conduct thereof. The question shall be submitted by ballots, upon which the words:

"[ ] YES Shall the existence of the (name of
[ ] NO district) be terminated?"

shall appear, with directions that all persons desiring to vote for termination of the district shall vote "Yes" and all persons desiring to vote against termination of the district shall vote "No."

(b) All owners of lands lying within the boundaries of the district, and only such landowners, shall be eligible to vote in the referendum.

(c) No informalities in the conduct of the referendum or in any matters relating thereto shall invalidate the referendum or the result thereof, if notice thereof was given substantially as provided in this Code section and if the referendum was conducted fairly.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 13; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 15.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-47 (2008)

§ 2-6-47. Discontinuance of district -- Publication of referendum results; determination of feasibility of continuance

The commission shall publish the result of the referendum. It shall consider and determine whether the continued operation of the district within the defined boundaries is administratively practicable and feasible. If the commission determines that the continued operation of such district is administratively practicable and feasible, it shall record such determination and deny the petition; provided, however, that the commission shall not have the authority to determine that the continued operation of the district is administratively practicable and feasible unless at least a majority of the votes cast in the referendum were cast in favor of the continuance of such district. If the commission determines that the continued operation of such district is not administratively practicable and feasible, it shall record such determination and shall certify such determination to the supervisors of the district. In making its determination, the commission shall give due regard and weight to the attitudes of the owners and occupiers of lands lying within the district, the number of landowners eligible to vote in such referendum who voted, the proportion of the votes cast in such referendum in favor of the discontinuance of the district to the total number of votes cast, the approximate wealth and income of the landowners and occupiers of land of the district, the probable expense of carrying on erosion control operations within such district, and such other economic and social factors as may be relevant to such determination, having due regard to the legislative findings set forth in Code Section 2-6-21.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 13; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 16.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-48

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-48 (2008)

§ 2-6-48. Discontinuance of district -- Certification from committee; termination of affairs; application for dissolution; certificate of dissolution

(a) Upon receipt from the commission of a certification that the commission has determined that the continued operation of the district is not administratively practicable and feasible, the supervisors shall proceed forthwith to terminate the affairs of the district. The supervisors shall dispose of all property belonging to the district at public auction and shall pay the proceeds of such sale into the state treasury.

(b) The supervisors shall thereupon file an application, duly verified, with the Secretary of State for the discontinuance of such district and shall transmit with such application the certificate of the commission setting forth the determination of the commission that the continued operation of such district is not administratively practicable and feasible. The application shall recite that the property of the district has been disposed of and that the proceeds were paid as provided in this Code section and shall set forth a full accounting of such properties and of the proceeds of the sale.

(c) The Secretary of State shall issue a certificate of dissolution to the supervisors and shall record such certificate in an appropriate book of record in his office.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 13; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 17.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-49 (2008)

§ 2-6-49. Discontinuance of district -- Effect of dissolution

(a) Upon issuance of a certificate of dissolution under Code Section 2-6-48, all land use regulations theretofore adopted by a district and in force therein shall be of no further force and effect.

(b) All contracts entered into prior to the dissolution of a district, to which the district or supervisors are parties, shall remain in force and effect for the period provided in such contracts. The commission shall be substituted for the district or supervisors as party to such contracts. The commission shall be entitled to all benefits and subject to all liabilities under such contracts and shall have the same rights and liability to perform, to require performance, and to modify or terminate such contracts by mutual consent or otherwise as the supervisors of the district would have had.

(c) Such dissolution shall not affect the lien of any judgment entered under Code Section 2-6-39 nor the pendency of any action instituted under such Code section. The commission shall succeed to all the rights and obligations of the district or supervisors as to such liens and actions.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 13; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 18.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-50 (2008)

§ 2-6-50. Discontinuance of district -- Frequency of discontinuance attempts

The commission shall not be required to entertain petitions for the discontinuance of any district, to conduct referenda upon such petitions, or to make determinations pursuant to such petitions more often than once in five years.

HISTORY: Ga. L. 1937, p. 377, § 13; Ga. L. 1988, p. 269, § 19.
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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-51 (2008)

§ 2-6-51. District not liable for loss, damage, injury, or death

Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no district shall have any liability for loss, damage, injury, or death resulting from the location of structures or dwellings on state owned or controlled property in violation of properly recorded easements when all legal recourse to remove such structures or dwellings has been exhausted and property rights in favor of the person infringing upon the easement have been upheld on a final judgment with no appeal or review pending. The provisions of this section shall only apply to soil and water conservation districts and their easements.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 2-6-51, enacted by Ga. L. 2000, p. 420, § 1.

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-52

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O.C.G.A. § 2-6-52 (2008)

§ 2-6-52. Creation of Agricultural Water Conservation Incentive Program; purpose; participation; funding

(a) There is created the Agricultural Water Conservation Incentive Program. The program shall be developed, implemented, and supervised by the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

(b) The purpose of the program shall be to provide incentives to agricultural producers to foster water conservation and enhance water quality.

(c) Participation in the program shall be voluntary.

(d) The program shall include all 159 counties and 40 soil and water conservation districts.

(e) Priority designations for inclusion in the program shall be under the authority of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

(f) Areas shall be included in the program as the funds are appropriated and the technical assistance becomes available from the local soil and water conservation district or the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

(g) Funding may be provided to assist practices including but not limited to diversions, filter strips, fencing along streams, field borders, alternative watering systems, critical area plantings, grassed waterways, terraces, surface-water retention structures, heavy-use areas, closures of farm animal manure lagoons, riparian buffers or equivalent controls, animal manure waste systems and application, manure stack houses and other manure-holding structures, irrigation system enhancements, and other projects that foster water conservation and enhance water quality.

(h) Priority designation for inclusion in this program for state funding shall be given to projects that foster water conservation and enhance water quality. To be eligible for cost share funds under this Code section, a project shall be evaluated before funding is awarded and after the project is completed to determine the impact on water quality.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 2-6-52, enacted by Ga. L. 2004, p. 341, § 1.

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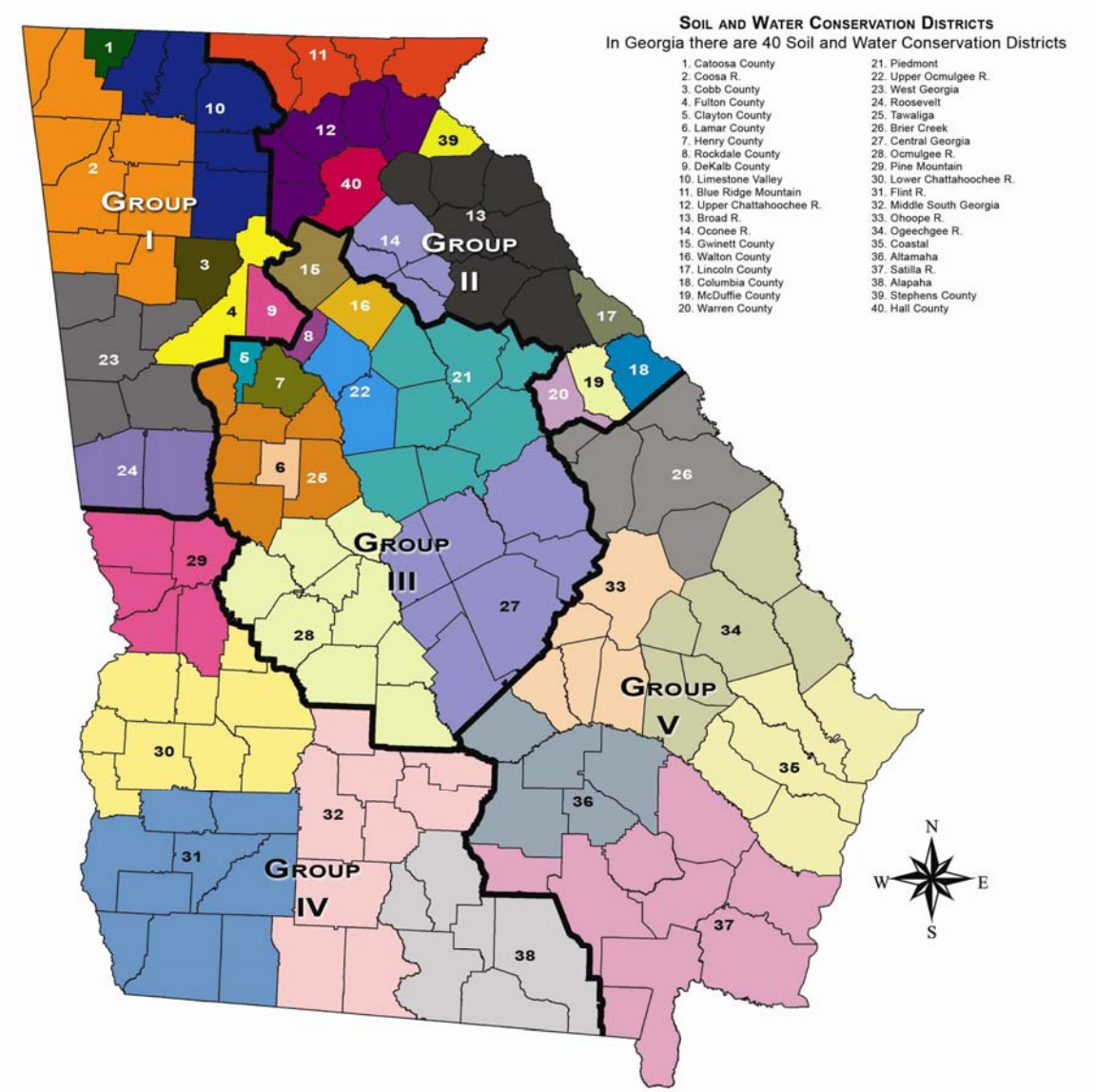
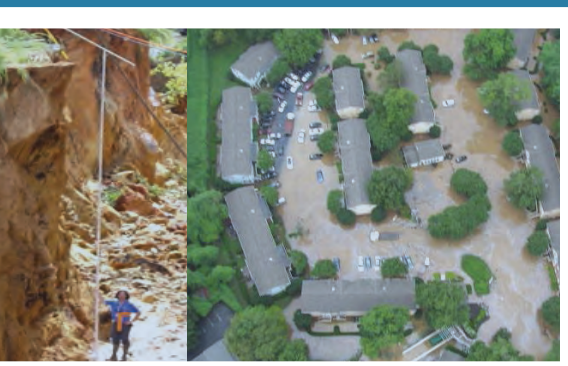

Soil and Water Conservation Districts
In Georgia there are 40 Soil and Water Conservation Districts
1. Catoosa County
2. Coosa R.
3. Cobb County
4. Fulton County
5. Clayton County
6. Lamar County
7. Henry County
8. Rockdale County
9. DeKalb County
10. Limestone Valley
11. Blue Ridge Mountain
12. Upper Chattahoochee R.
13. Broad R.
14. Oconee R.
15. Gwinett County
16. Walton County
17. Lincoln County
18. Columbia County
19. McDuffie County
20. Warren County
21. Piedmont
22. Upper Ocmulgee R.
23. West Georgia
24. Roosevelt
25. Tawaliga
26. Brier Creek
27. Central Georgia
28. Ocmulgee R.
29. Pine Mountain
30. Lower Chattahoochee R.
31. Flint R.
32. Middle South Georgia
33. Ohoope R.
34. Ogeechgee R.
35. Coastal
36. Altamaha
37. Satilla R.
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
40. Hall County
Group I
Group II
Group III
Group IV
Group V
N
W
E
S



water. water. everywhere!

After years of drought, 23 counties in Georgia suffered an epic flood event in 2009. Look inside to learn about the NRCS and its Emergency Watershed Protection Program can be used to assist in recovery efforts.

NRCS

Helping People Help the Land

2009 — 2010 Program Guide

Athens, Georgia

December 2009

Mission

75 Years of Helping People Help the Land

For 75 years we have provided leadership in a partnership effort to help America's private land owners and managers conserve their soil, water, air, land and other natural resources.

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) was established by an act of the 74th Congress on April 27, 1935 when Congress passed Public Law 46 (Soil Conservation Act) which declared that soil erosion was a menace to the national welfare and authorized broad powers to the new agency to attack the problem.

Our name was changed October 20, 1994, as part of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

From the date of our establishment, NRCS employees have provided technical assistance based on sound science, suited to a customer's specific needs and we have provided financial assistance for many conservation practices and will continue to do so.

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Did you know?

NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2009 to develop 2,275 conservation plans on 278,377 acres throughout the state. See feature stories at www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov. Click on news/success stories.

NRCS Organizational Structure

State Conservationist

Administrative Assistant to the State Conservationist

Office Automation Clerk

AREA 1
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

AREA 2
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

AREA 3
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

AREA 4
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

State Conservation Engineer

State Administrative Officer

Assistant State Conservationist (Programs)

Assistant State Conservationist (Operations)

State Public Affairs Specialist

State Soil Scientist

State Resource Conservationist

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*Complete directory available online at **www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov**

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Designated District Conservationists

Area	Soil and Water Conservation District	NRCS District Conservationist
1	Catoosa County	Cindy P. Askew, LaFayette
	Coosa River	Sheri E. Teems, Rome
	Limestone Valley	Cindy P. Askew, LaFayette
	West Georgia	Sam Sharpe, Carrollton
	Fulton County	Valerie Pickard, Marietta
	Cobb County	Valerie Pickard, Marietta
	Gwinnett County	Julius George, Lawrenceville
	Henry County	Shaun Ford, McDonough
	Clayton County	Shaun Ford, McDonough
	Pine Mountain	Jack L. Fokes, Jr., Buena Vista
	Rockdale County	Julius George, Lawrenceville
	DeKalb County	Julius George, Lawrenceville
	Roosevelt	Kevin Keel, Newnan
	Towaliga	Carmen Westerfield, Barnesville
	Lamar County	Carmen Westerfield, Barnesville
2	Blue Ridge Mountain	Douglas Towery, Blairsville
	Hall County	George Belflower, Gainesville
	Stephens County	Russell F. Biggers, Eastanollee
	Upper Chattahoochee River	Russell F. Biggers, Eastanollee
	Broad River	Forrest W. Ferguson, Hartwell
	Lincoln County	Rory Richardson, Washington
	McDuffie County	Craig Bevan, Louisville
	Oconee River	Carol Boss, Commerce
	Piedmont	Dennis Brooks, Madison
	Warren County	Craig Bevan, Louisville
	Brier Creek	J. Cread Brown, Augusta
	Columbia County	J. Cread Brown, Augusta
	Upper Ocmulgee River	Dennis B. Brooks, Madison
	Walton County	Jose' V. Pagan, Monroe
3	Ocmulgee River	Calvin Essex, Perry
	Flint River	Vontice Jackson, Albany
	Lower Chattahoochee River	Richard Hosmer, Dawson
	Middle South Georgia	Mary Leidner, Tifton
4	Alapaha	Harold B. Simpson, Jr., Nashville
	Altamaha	Zack Railey, Douglas
	Satilla River	Rita Barrow, Brunswick
	Coastal	James Austin, Richmond Hill
	Ogeechee River	William G. Thrift, Statesboro
	Ohoopee River	Sidney Lanier, Swainsboro
	Central Georgia	Chuck McCranie, Eastman

Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations

Area 1	Griffin	Michael Watson	Area 2	Athens	Jack Lewis
Area 3	Americus	Natasha Brown	Area 4	Waycross	David Ferrell

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Boss	Carol	706-335-7145
Brooks	Dennis	706-342-1315
Brown	Cread	706-554-5183
Brown	Jerome	770-339-6071
Cabe	Doug	706-625-7044
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Collins	Marcus	229-246-8282
Essex	Calvin	478-987-2280
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Futch	Joey A.	912-367-4368
Hall	Graylen	229-268-9106
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Haygood	Cindy	770-749-0444
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Hosmer	Richard	229-995-5811
Jackson	Vontice	229-430-8509
Jones	Luther D.	706-769-7922
Jones	Ray	478-956-6490
Keel	Kevin	770-251-4283
Lanier	Sidney C.	478-237-8037
Leidner	Mary	229-382-4776
Long	Paul	229-985-5399
George	Julius	770-963-9288
McCranie	Charles V.	478-374-8140
Moore	Stan	912-367-7679
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Nichols	Elizabeth	912-285-5975
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Pagan	Jose	770-267-1359
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Parker	Britt S.	478-275-0425
Pickard	Valerie	770-792-0647
Railey	Zack	912-384-4811
Reese	Karen	229-732-6211
Richardson	Rory	229-263-4909
Sharpe	Sam	770-832-8942
Simmons	Machelle	706-629-2582
Simpson	Harold B.	229-686-2363
Philip	Smith	229-228-0459
Teems	Sheri	706-291-5651
Thompson	Kimberly C.	912-529-6652
Thrift	William G.	912-871-2605
Towery	Doug	706-745-2794
Westerfield	Carmen	770-358-3223
Wilson	Galen	478-552-6073
Yancey	Frank	229-723-3841

Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors

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Program Highlights

In 2009 Georgia Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funded $88,000 for the Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES) program. This program is designed to meet employers' needs for competent workers by providing access to individuals age 55 and older, and to enhance lifelong employment opportunities of experienced workers through training, job placement, education, research and advocacy. ACES is a program administered by the USDA-NRCS from a bigger program run by the National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC), a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Arlington, VA. Georgia currently has seven ACES employees across the state.

Dilbeck, holding a survey rod, is helping the District Conservationist survey a stream crossing.

Fred Dilbeck started work for the Soil Conservation Service in April 1967 as a Soil Conservation Aide in Homer. Dilbeck worked on watershed structures as a construction inspector/engineering aide mainly in North Georgia until 1979 when he moved to the State office as a civil engineering aide on the Soil and Water River Basin Study. He worked on the Banks Habersham County flood plain management study and then continued his work as soil conservation technician in Banks County. He then moved to Montezuma in South Georgia where he helped with the Conservation Reserve Program workload and served as a Beaverdam Creek watershed specialist in Macon County.

His last assignment was with the Carnesville/Hartwell Field office until he retired in January 2006.

Dilbeck decided to return to the NRCS as an ACES employee in the Hartwell office in April of 2008 because he missed the work and his colleagues.

His familiarity with all the programs and expertise in implementing NRCS conservation practices allowed him to jump right in and help with the heavy workload. He spends his time surveying and designing practices and field inspection of ongoing technical practices. His many years of experience are still being passed on to the present NRCS employees.

ACES enhances lifelong employment opportunities of experienced workers through training, job placement, education, research and advocacy.

ACES employee Clarence Trent standing next to a water trough in a heavy use area.

Clarence Trent started his career with NRCS in 1985 as an Earth Team volunteer in Newport, Rhode Island, as a surveying assistant. Trent went on to volunteer as an Earth team volunteer in Georgetown and York, SC., and Harrisonburg, VA.

When the NRCS started the pilot project for ACES, he applied, was accepted and was assigned to work in the Rockingham County Service Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia. covering three counties in the Shenandoah Valley River Basin.

He worked as a soil conservation technician aiding the District Conservationist with all programs, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) plan mapping for conservation plans, topography, and soils. He has conducted surveys, practice installation checks and completed "As Built" drawings for designed practices. He completed all Highly Erodible Land (HEL) determinations for the District Conservationist and distributed copies to the Farm Service Agency and the participants.

In September 2008, Clarence was transferred to the Watkinsville Service Center as an ACES employee – where he continues to implement Farm Bill Programs. Trent continues to conduct surveys/designs, GIS mapping, HEL determinations and assist with conservation planning and contracts.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

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Program Highlights

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality. As part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), AWEP operates through contracts with producers to plan and implement conservation practices in project areas established through partnership agreements.

Under AWEP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) enters into partnership agreements with eligible entities that want to promote ground and surface water conservation or improve water quality on agricultural lands. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated the authority for AWEP to the NRCS Chief.

During 2009, NRCS entered into partnership agreements with two entities: the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (Flint District), and the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC).

Through the Flint District partnership, NRCS is working to improve irrigation efficiency. A total of 263 contracts valued at $1.9 million were awarded to farmers for the purpose of improving irrigation efficiency on 24,000 acres.

NRCS' partnership with the GSWCC will help a number of organic producers, and those making the transition to organic production, install conservation practices to include water savings. Funding for this initiative is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2010.

Conservation Security Program

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Program Highlights

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary program that rewards farmers with a history of good farmland conservation through stewardship and incentive payments. The program is designed to reward the best conservation stewards of the soil, water and other natural resources in targeted watersheds through 5-10 year contracts. The program provides equitable access to benefits for all producers, regardless of size or type of farm operation.

The CSP came to a close during fiscal year 2008. Between 2004 and 2008, NRCS rewarded 261 participants $22.8 million on 154,000 acres. Because contracts can last up to 10 years, this program will continue to offer payments through 2018. The 261 existing CSP contracts with Georgia producers continue to provide environmental benefits improving Georgia's soil, water and wildlife by implementing their CSP conservation plans.

Conservation tillage, cover crops, nutrient and pest management were the primary practices being utilized through the CSP. We still have farmers in this program.

Conservation Stewardship Program

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Program Highlights

Through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in the program is voluntary.

CSP encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. The NRCS will make CSP available nationwide on a continuous application basis.

The CSP allows both agricultural producers and Non-Industrial Private Forest (NIPF) landowners to enroll. However, the two different land-user groups do not compete for funding. Georgia received an allocation of agricultural acres for applicants, and a separate allocation of forest land acres for NIPF applicants.

Conservation Technical Assistance

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Program Highlights

The purpose of the Conservation Technical Assistance is to provide technical assistance supported by science-based technology and tools to help people conserve, maintain, and improve their natural resources. Conservation Technical Assistance provides the technical capability, including direct conservation planning, design, and implementation assistance, that helps people plan and apply conservation on the land. This assistance is provided to individuals, groups, and communities who make natural resource management decisions on private, tribal and other non-federal lands.

Laptop & printer mounted in a Mobile Field Office enables NRCS to apply technological advancements at the farm.

Conservation Technical Assistance provides the proven and consistent conservation technology and delivery infrastructure needed to achieve the benefits of a healthy and productive landscape, and has the following purposes:

- Reduce soil loss from erosion.
- Solve soil, water quality, water conservation, air quality, and agricultural waste management problems.
- Reduce potential damage caused by excess water and sedimentation or drought.
- Enhance the quality of aquatic and wildlife habitat.
- Improve the long term sustainability of all lands, including cropland, forestland, grazing lands, coastal lands, and developed and/or developing lands.
- Assist others in facilitating changes in land use as needed for natural resource protection and sustainability.

Conservation planning is a process for evaluating resource concerns on the landscape and developing alternatives to overcome the issues. It is the precursor for implementing conservation practices, with or without financial assistance. In fiscal year 2009, in Georgia, there were 2,275 conservation plans written on 278,377 acres.

E-Government

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Landowners and others wanting to do business with the government can do it on-line! NRCS is one of three United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center agencies that offers online services.

To learn more, visit the web site at
http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov

The USDA has implemented a process for registering customers who choose to conduct electronic transactions with USDA agencies. Under this process, a customer can register for access to eGov applications by visiting:

http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov

At this site, the application will take the customer through a simplified registration process.

When registered, the customer will need to visit their local service center and have their identity verified by presenting one of four forms of identification; state driver's license; state issued identification card; U.S. passport or a military identification card.

The service center staff will then be able to activate the account and provide the customer with access to many current and future eGov applications.

Please note that the USDA will only accept eAuthentication accounts from individuals. The USDA does not have the mechanism to issue accounts to businesses.

http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

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Program Highlights

The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program provides local communities with emergency technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns resulting from a natural disaster. An example would be downed trees blocking road crossings at creeks. These impediments cause blockage to creeks or small drainage ways, threatening damage to roads, bridges and other structures and increasing risk to human life.

Rain runoff washed out material about three feet back from under Daugherty Gap Road in Walker County during the September 2009 flood.

In 2009, NRCS offered technical and financial assistance to 36 communities in response to flooding. In April 2009, major flooding hit south Georgia causing widespread damage. Early, Miller, Tift, and Worth Counties; as well as the Cities of Arlington, Nashville, and Valdosta requested over $1.8 million for recovery measures associated with road-stream crossings along with other threats to life and property.

During September 2009, an epic flood hit the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, as well as other parts of Georgia. Over $500 million in damages occurred in 23 counties. To date, 29 communities have requested NRCS technical and financial assistance in response to this disaster. The communities include: Cobb, Douglas, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties; as well as the Cities of Atlanta, Austell, Berkley Lake, Duluth, John's Creek Milton, Mountain Park, Roswell, Sandy Springs, Stone Mountain, Trion, and Warner Robbins.

Local units of government have requested NRCS assistance under the agency's EWP Program to remove debris from rivers, streams, and creeks to protect life and property. They also requested help in stabilizing streambanks at bridges, culverts, other road crossings, and utilities to prevent further damage of public infrastructure.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program - Floorplain Easement Program

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Program Highlights

Section 382 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Public Law 104-127, amended the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) to provide for the purchase of floodplain easements as an emergency measure. Since 1996, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has purchased floodplain easements on lands that qualify for EWP assistance. Floodplain easements restore, protect, maintain and enhance the functions of the floodplain; conserve natural values including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, ground water recharge and open space; reduce long-term federal disaster assistance; and safeguard lives and property from floods, drought and the products of erosion.

NRCS may purchase EWP easements on any floodplain lands that have been impaired within the last twelve months or that have a history of repeated flooding (i.e., flooded at least two times during the past 10 years).

Hay field in Gordon County that is within a flood plain.

During a two week sign-up period in April 2009, NRCS received 98 applications totaling $107 million for the Floodplain Easement Program, third highest amount requested in the country. The popularity of this program nationally surpassed all expectations as landowners across the country requested over $1.5 billion. Competition for this program is keen, so only 5 applicants in Georgia were funded to restore 563 acres back to its original floodplain condition for some $3.5 million. Landowners accepted into the program will restore floodplains to natural vegetation through tree planting, and protect this area with use exclusion (fencing).

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

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Program Highlights

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

- *On private lands with farmers and ranchers,*
- *On a voluntary basis,*
- *Using local, state, tribal and federal partnerships,*
- *Providing flexible technical, educational and financial assistance,*
- *Assisting Farmers and Ranchers in complying with federal, state and tribal environmental laws and*
- *Encouraging environmental enhancement.*

Heavy use area (HUA) built to keep cattle out of the mud and helps in keeping the cattle healthier. EQIP was used to build this HUA.

In 2009, 1,129 farmers benefited from $14.8 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds. These producers enrolled over 96,000 acres in the program. Livestock producers received over 60 percent of the EQIP dollars, with cattle operators utilizing $8.9 million in financial assistance to improve Georgia's water quality.

These livestock producers will implement grazing plans that include rotational grazing, alternative watering facilities, fencing and heavy use areas along with improve pasture plantings.

Water conservation continues to be a primary resource concern in South Georgia as producers sign up to retrofit 286 center pivot irrigation systems from high pressure to low pressure systems, while following an irrigation water management plan. This will reduce water usage by over 20 percent.

Greenview Farms Continue Conservation Efforts

A cornfield where conservation tillage was used to improve the soil quality and keep moisture in the soil.

Located in Wayne County outside of Screven is a family farm that has been operating since 1860. "Great-grandfather's farm started out at 765 acres.

"The farm has 1,100 acres of timberland, 1,000 acres in row crops and 700 in pasture," according to Jonny Harris, president of Greenview Farms, Inc.

Using the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), fences, heavy use areas, and watering facilities are being installed to help with the cattle and water quality. "We're trying to fence those areas off at about two miles a year. We are trying to improve the water quality, the land and the high pressure areas; it's a continuing process," said Harris.

Harris likes the flexibility of EQIP. It allows him to do a conservation project through the NRCS or on his own. "It comes with a certain amount of flexibility on how you can manage things," said Harris.

Harris has seen the benefits of EQIP and will continue to see the benefits in the future. "We were able to go to strip tillage farming. Every year we realize more and more benefits from that practice."

Harris added, "the cross fencing, the management of the pastures, the rotation, keeping the cattle out of the streams and getting the fresh water, the herds health, the timberland -- they have assisted us in burns (prescribed burns)."

He went on to say, "It has been beneficial in so many ways that it would take a while to describe them all. There are benefits that we won't realize right now or don't realize we've got and there will be some more coming up in the years to come as long as we follow these practices."

Greenview Farms is so embedded with conservation that it won the Governor's Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Award in 2007. This year it's a finalist in the 2009 National Cattlemen Association Environmental Stewardship Award to be announced in February 2010.

Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program

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Program Highlights

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market value for the conservation easement. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governmental organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements or other interests in land.

In 2009, NRCS worked with partners in Oconee and Carroll County to close on two easements for over 300 acres. These easements utilized funding from FRPP along with a match from the Georgia Land Conservation Program. Since this program began in 2002, NRCS, through various partnerships, has protected over 2,900 acres in permanent easements at a value of over $9 million. NRCS has contributed $4.2 million for this purpose during this period.

Cattle grazing in one of the pastures on Wiley Farm. Homestead is in the background.

Landowner Adds His Land to The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

Dale Wiley, a third generation farmer and the owner and operator of Wiley Farm, placed 50 acres of his land into FRPP.

The farm is located outside of the community of Jersey in southern Walton County. The 175-acre farm is primarily a cattle and hay production farm.

"If other farmers are interested in doing the same thing I have done just remember, it's not about making a lot of money or getting public recognition. It's a long and difficult process. But, if you really love your land and farm, it's the best feeling in the world when it's complete. I told my wife when this was complete I could go to my grave with a smile on my face! There is one lesson I have learned in my life - friends, family, neighbors and people will let you down but, if you show respect and take care of your farm or land, it will never fail you!," said Wiley.

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

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Program Highlights

NRCS in cooperation with Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) encourage forage and livestock producers to adopt practices that promote the efficient use of their grazing land resources, while conserving soil and protecting water quality through maintenance of healthy forage systems. Accomplishing the objectives is facilitated through on-farm financial assistance demonstration projects, area- and state-wide conferences, development and distribution of grazing management resources, and funding of innovative research and land management projects. Several years ago, the University of Georgia Extension estimated the seasonal forage production area on private land in the state at 4.3 million acres, with an annual value of approximately $254 million, making forages a major economic crop for Georgia.

In 2009, grassland conservationists stationed in Carrollton and Washington assisted the NRCS Field Office personnel and landowners throughout the state in developing conservation grazing plans which helped livestock producers determine proper stocking rates, seasonal forage availability, and approaches for reducing dependence on stored forage.

In addition, NRCS grazing specialists participated in field days and county farmer meetings where they had the opportunity to educate stakeholders concerning soil, forage, and livestock management that improves both resource conditions and the farm bottom-line.

Beef cattle grazing native warm season grasses.

This year, GGLCC embarked on a new project with the objective of educating livestock producers about adjustments they can make to their farms that could improve efficiency and reduce costs. Central to the project is the establishment of model farms to be used for field days and workshops. Through minor changes to the system on the model farms, neighbors will be able to show neighbors how they not only increase the number of days they can graze, but also create the potential for environmental benefits.

Funds made available to NRCS through Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) will be used on the model farms to cost-share with owners for making the improvements.

The Coastal Plain Grazing System Demonstration Project entered its second year at the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus.

A herd of 22–25 beef cows have been residents of the system since March 2008.

Activities this past year included stockpiling a bermudagrass and a tall fescue pasture, dividing paddocks to increase stocking density and improve utilization and planting winter annuals that are somewhat novel for the Coastal Plain – forage turnips and chicory.

A successful producer-targeted field day that highlighted the past year's results was held in June.

Grasslands Reserve Program

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Program Highlights

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary conservation program that emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to other uses.

Participants voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding, subject to certain restrictions during nesting seasons of bird species that are in significant decline or are protected under Federal or State law. A grazing management plan is required for participants.

GRP allows for conservation easements and for rental contracts. In 2009, 46 acres in Oconee County were placed into a permanent easement for $237,000. On the rental contract side, NRCS entered into 17 contracts for 2,500 acres across six counties in north Georgia.

Healthy Forest Reserve Program

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Program Highlights

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) is a voluntary program established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to: 1) promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, 2) improve biodiversity; and 3) enhance carbon sequestration. Program implementation has been delegated to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Sample of a prescribed burn. A forester starts a fireline during a prescribed burn at the Rum Creek Wildlife Reserve in Morgan County.

In 2009, HFRP was implemented in the 26-county fall line of the Sand Hill area of Georgia. We received 33 applications for over 11,000 acres.

Ranking was completed on all applications and appraisals done on the top 6 applications with funding for approximately 1,000 acres.

The proposed restoration will be longleaf pine planting, controlling hardwoods in existing longleaf pine stands and prescribe burning.

National Resources Inventory

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Program Highlights

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistical survey of land use and resource condition on nonfederal lands in the United States. It is designed to be consistent over the whole nation and over time.

NRI is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) tool to provide Congress and the Nation with natural resources information - especially concerning the nation's farmland. Since the early 1980's, resource data has been gathered on a random sample of 160-acre land units.

Three points within those units are studied more intensively. As of 2005, this work is divided between three national Remote Sensing Laboratories and local field offices. Field office personnel in Georgia surveyed 2,099 of these points on two separate occasions in 2009. Crews from Grazing Lands and Soils also participated in a pilot project of the NRI On-Site Grazing Lands Study – doing on-site visits and intensive vegetative characterizations.

Resource information available in NRI includes:

Crop year 1997 – Land Use in broad categories of Cropland, Pastureland, Forestland, Urban Land, Transportation, Federal Land, and Permanent Water. In addition to the broad categories, land use can be further subdivided into approximately 200 finer categories of crop types, forest types and other types of land use. Resource condition is mainly erosion estimates. In current NRI work, a transition from the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) to the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE II) is a major emphasis. Wetland loss and gain is another of NRI's data points.

Crop year 2003 – Broad Land Use, Erosion and Wetlands on the national level (no sub-state estimates available). This data showed Georgia losing prime farmland to development at the third fastest rate in the nation. In good news, the nation showed its first net gain of agricultural wetlands since the NRI began in 1982.

Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) – this initiative to correlate NRI data with Agricultural Research Service (ARS) study watersheds began with the 2002 Farm Bill.

Several very interesting publications have been released through this program. Releases in 2009 are:

- Wetlands: Assessing Wetland Restoration and Creation Practices Implemented under U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Programs in the Southeastern Coastal Plain, October 31, 2009 (PDF; 0.1 MB)
- Wildlife: National Evaluation of Wildlife Benefits of CRP practice CP33 (Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds) October 2009 (PDF; 3.1 MB)
- Wildlife: Analysis of Missouri Wetlands Reserve Program Easement Monitoring Data. May 2009 (PDF; 2.5 MB)
- Wildlife: Conservation Reserve Program Bird Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 2007 Annual Report, May 2009 (PDF; 3.1 MB)
- Wetlands: CEAP Wetlands Assessment in California's Central Valley: Progress Report, March 31, 2009 (PDF; 0.4 MB)
- Wildlife: The CRP Enhances Landscape-level Grassland Bird Species Richness, CEAP Conservation Insight, January 2009 (PDF; 0.2 MB)
- Overview: Enhancing conservation on agricultural landscapes: A new direction for the Conservation Effects Assessment Project, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, 63:6, pp. 198A-203A. November 2008 (PDF; 0.6 MB)
- Overview: The first five years of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, 63:6, pp. 185A-197A. November 2008 (PDF; 1.9 MB)
- Watersheds: CEAP Watershed Studies are highlighted in CEAP Special Issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, November 2008
- Wetlands: Background summaries for the Wetlands Component Collaborative Studies, CEAP Backgrounders, November 2008

A complete library of CEAP publications since 2002 and all the data listed here can be found at the NRI website: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/

Plant Materials Program

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Program Highlights

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a branch of the USDA-NRCS. It is one of 27 plant materials centers located throughout the United States. The Center is located on the Northwest corner of Americus, Georgia, in Southwestern Georgia and is approximately 40 miles North of Albany. Areas served include Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Florida. Its mission is to develop plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology to solve natural resource problems and meet the objectives of environmental programs. The emphasis of the PMC is using native plants, developing test and release and providing superior adapted plants to commercial growers along with production and management technology.

Malcome Kirkland, agronomist with the PMC in Americus and Lee Davis, Dooly County farmer, discuss using native warm season grasses in cattle rotation systems.

The PMC worked with 11 different studies and eight Field Plantings in Alabama and Georgia in the past year. Some of the highlights are as follows;

- Increasing a promising line of big bluestem for possible future use as forage and or biofuel.
- A cattle rotation study was continued with Dennis Chessman, grazing specialist, NRCS Athens, to demonstrate a year round cattle grazing system and silvopasture establishment.
- Assisted Dr. Brad Morris PhD in Agronomy, legumes researcher with USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Griffin, in studying legumes for future pharmaceutical use.
- A Bobwhite restoration study was conducted between Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the NRCS Biologists in Alabama and Georgia on ten acres of land at the PMC. Wildlife biologists have evaluated the study for wildlife use and benefit.

A field of AU Sunup Crimson Clover at the PMC.

- The PMC is working on a release with South Carolina called Penn Center switchgrass for use along South Carolina coastal area between high marsh and maritime forest. Seeds from sweetgrass population on Sapelo Island, GA was collected and planted at the PMC to help support basket making industry along coast.
- Four field days were hosted covering Conservation Practice-36, wildlife, prescribed burn and grazing systems training for NRCS landowners and others.
- PMC staff participated in ecological site descriptions in Georgia flatwoods with Regional team to describe the understory and overstory of longleaf pine communities.
- PMC had a total of 20 presentations and or training events, produced 11 technical documents, and a new plant release called Au Sunup crimson clover with Auburn University.
- A new study with Tropic Sun Hemp was conducted to determine dry matter production for green manure and nitrogen production in crop lands.
- The PMC is working on nature trail plant identification for Hawkinsville, GA with University of Georgia, Pine Country Resource Conservation and Development Council and Pulaski County, GA.

Prescribed burn in native warm season grass

Resource Conservation & Development

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Program Highlights

Over 40 years ago, Congress established a unique program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture that empowered rural people to help themselves. The USDA focus was to assist local people by providing tools and technical support to stabilize and grow their own communities, while protecting and developing natural resources. To carry out the Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) concept, diverse groups of local volunteers (The RC&D Council) are brought together in a unique partnership to find solutions to their problems. Local people are best able to determine local needs, and create local solutions for their Community. The focus on the local direction and control has made RC&D one of the most successful rural development programs of the Federal Government.

During 2009, RC&D Councils created 35 businesses for the state of Georgia. They completed 11 watershed or area-wide plans, totaling over 47,000 acres. It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 265 projects totaling over $14 million in assistance during the year.

This year, Georgia's 11 RC&D Councils are implementing Area Plans for their respective jurisdictions. Area Plans are guideposts to direct Council activities. To complete an Area Plan, each Council solicited public input about resource and economic needs from individuals and organizations within their Council Area.

Over 1,200 individuals supported the process by offering suggestions on how the quality of life can be improved within their respective area. As a result, Georgia's eleven RC&D Councils have identified over 600 new projects to pursue between 2008 and 2013. Examples of projects Councils will be pursuing include, but are not limited to:

- Water Quality Improvement Projects
- Wildlife Enhancement Projects
- Energy Conservation Projects
- Economic Development Projects
- Water Supply Projects
- Conservation Education Assistance
- History and Tourism Projects, and
- Philanthropic Assistance

The diversity of RC&D is unmatched by any other organization. As 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, RC&D Councils enjoy the support of a full-time federal employee, along with additional program resources from the federal government. At the same time, RC&D Councils enjoy flexibility to provide local assistance in many ways beyond the ability of all units of government.

RC&D Councils in Georgia

Central Savannah River
501 N. Main St., Wrens,
Georgia 30833
(706) 706 547-4045
Fax: (706) 547-7606

Chestatee-Chattahoochee
170 Scoggins Drive, Demorest,
Georgia 30535
(706) 894-1591
Fax: (706) 894-1597

Coastal Georgia
185 Richard Davis Dr., Ste 204
Richmond Hill, GA 31324
(912) 459-2070
Fax: (912) 459-2071

Golden Triangle
822-R Jesse Johnson Street Blakely, Georgia 39823
(229) 723-3841
Fax: (229) 723-3842
www.enhancinggeorgia.org

Limestone Valley
125 Red Bud Road, N.E. Suite 7
Calhoun, Georgia 30701
(706) 625-7044
Fax: (706) 625-9943

Oconee River
1291 Greensboro Highway
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
(706) 769-7922
Fax: (706) 769-3184

Pine Country
105 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Soperton, Georgia 30457
(912) 529-6652
Fax: (912) 529-6000

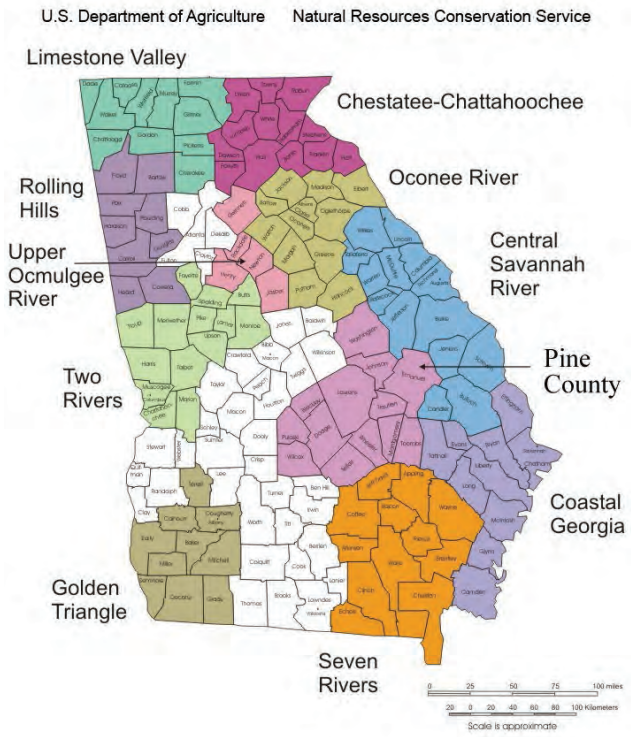
Rolling Hills RC&D Council, Inc.
512 Main Street
Cedartown, GA 30125
(770) 749-0444
Fax: (770) 749-9444
www.rollinghillsrcd.org

Seven Rivers
239 N.E. Park Avenue, Suite E
Baxley, Georgia 31513
(912) 367-7679
Fax: (912) 367-1184

Two Rivers
100 Ridley Avenue
LaGrange, Georgia 30240
(706) 885-0101
Fax: (706) 885-0103
www.tworiversrcd.org

Upper Ocmulgee River
750 S. Perry Street, Suite 212
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045
(770) 339-6071
(678) 442-1329

Georgia's 11 Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils Achieves The Circle of Diamonds Designation



All of Georgia's 11 Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils achieved the 2009 Circle of Diamonds Designation from the National Resource Conservation and Development Council Board of Directors.

This announcement was made during the National Association of RC&D Councils national conference this past June in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"This exemplary designation shows the level of professionalism and hard work that the RC&D Councils in Georgia have exhibited. I again commend them for their commitment to the farmers and landowners in their communities and across this state," said Georgia's State Conservationist, James E. Tillman, Sr.

RC&D Councils play an important role in the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.

They work to improve the general level of economic activity and to enhance the environment and standard of living in the local communities.

They provide a system of rural development to encourage the best use of our natural resources and improve the quality of life.

"The members in the Circle of Diamonds reflect work provided by the RC&D program to the citizens of Georgia. The fine professionals and volunteers involved in the RC&D program have benefited farmers, landowners, and communities, both urban and rural.

This reflects the excellent working relations we have with our partners and the State Office of the NRCS. My sincere congratulations to all involved," said Jeanette Jamieson, president of the Georgia RC&D Council.

The Circle of Diamonds program is designed to honor RC&D Councils by highlighting their exemplary actions in their own community, and to give recognition to those councils for the good work they do in their local communities.

Soil Survey

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Program Highlights

The Soil Survey Program is authorized under law and regulation, and guided by executive order and secretary's memoranda. The Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1896 established the soil survey, and subsequent laws (1903, 1928, and 1935) clarified the purpose. In 1966, Congress expanded the scope and further clarified the intent of the Soil Survey Program in Public Law 89 560, known as the Soil Survey for Resource Planning and Development Act. This law, now codified under the Public Health and Welfare 42 USC, provides detailed expectations for the soil survey program and is the principal basis for the soil survey mission.

The authorities define the mission of the Soil Survey Program. Taken together, the authorities direct the Secretary of Agriculture to:

1. *make an inventory of the soil resources of the United States;*
2. *keep the soil survey relevant to ever-changing needs;*
3. *interpret the information and make it available in a useful form; and*
4. *promote the soil survey and provide technical assistance in its use for a wide range of community planning and resource development issues related to non-farm and farm uses.*

The soil survey program of the United States is a cooperative effort conducted by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other Federal agencies in collaboration with states and other entities. Leadership for the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey is delegated to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service by the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (7 CFR 2.61).

The NRCS will complete the initial inventory of all the soils in Georgia in 2011. After the initial inventory is completed, the Georgia Cooperative Soil Survey will begin to focus toward the three remaining core mission functions mentioned above.

Nationally, efforts have already begun within the Soil Survey Division to redirect its focus toward continually improving soil survey information to meet ever-changing needs for new data and analysis, delivering soil survey analysis and data in more useful forms to a more diverse clientele, promoting soil survey, and providing technical assistance in its use. The focus will be to deliver the soil survey on a Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) basis.

To achieve this mission, the NRCS has begun to restructure the soil survey program that focuses on initial mapping to a program that will focus on updating and maintenance of the soil inventory gathered over the past five decades.

In FY 2009, the Georgia Cooperative soil survey published new or updated soil surveys for Crawford and Taylor Counties; completed field work in Paulding County and posted the SSURGO (Soil Survey Geographic Database) for Webster County and Stewart County Soil Surveys.

All digitized soil surveys are available to the public through the web soil survey, an interactive, web-based delivery system.

Soil survey reports and soil data downloads are available at http://www.soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/.

More information can be found at

http://www.soils.usda.gov/.

Technical Service Providers

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Program Highlights

The Technical Service Provider (TSP) program was outlined in the 2002 Farm Bill. The TSP program requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow producers to receive technical assistance by individuals and entities other than NRCS. This provision is designed to ensure NRCS has the capacity to address the significant workload associated with implementing Farm Bill programs. TSP assistance is another tool for NRCS to use in the implementation of conservation programs.

In fiscal year 2009, NRCS obligated $320,400 in the TSP program throughout Georgia. These funds were disbursed to 17 counties for use in the Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES) program, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) agreement, and the Flint River SWCD for implementation of Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) contracts. Through these obligated funds, hundreds of conservation practices have been installed while providing field offices a significant saving of time to address workload needs.

This program assisted in the installation of practices such as cover crop, critical area planting, fence, hedgerow planting, irrigation water management, nutrient management, pasture and hayland planting, prescribe grazing, residue management, riparian forest buffer, heavy use area, well, pipeline, tank and trough and stream crossing.

Individuals may apply to NRCS to become a Technical Service Provider. Additional information about this process and credential requirements may be found online at http://techreg.usda.gov/.

The TSP program has played a significant role in Georgia by providing an additional avenue for NRCS to help people help the land.

Watershed Planning

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Program Highlights

The Watershed Program helps sponsoring organizations in the development of a plan on watersheds 250,000 acres or less. Resource concerns associated with impaired water quality, limited water supply, flooding, land management, sedimentation, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitats are eligible for evaluation. Watershed Plans and Environmental Assessments propose alternative courses of action to alleviate identified problems. Public benefits, costs, and cost-sharing rates are identified as a necessary prerequisite to justify Federal financial assistance for installing works of improvement.

A lake formed by a watershed dam

In 2009, NRCS in Georgia provided technical assistance to nine communities with technical watershed planning.

Community needs for water supply projects have become the most common resource concern generating request for assistance from NRCS.

Other community scale resource concerns addressed this year include water quality degradation, agricultural irrigation deficiencies, and excessive erosion.

Five watershed, or area-wide, plans were processed during the year for local communities including Banks County, Dawson County, Hancock County, Oglethorpe County, and Paulding County for water supply.

Watershed Rehabilitation Program

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Program Highlights

The Watershed Program helps sponsoring organizations in the development of a plan on watersheds 250,000 acres or less. Resource concerns associated with impaired water quality, limited water supply, flooding, land management, sedimentation, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitats are eligible for evaluation. Watershed Plans and Environmental Assessments propose alternative courses of action to alleviate identified problems. Public benefits, costs, and cost-sharing rates are identified as a necessary prerequisite to justify Federal financial assistance for installing works of improvement.

Rehabilitation of the Marbury Creek -22 dam will prevent flooding.

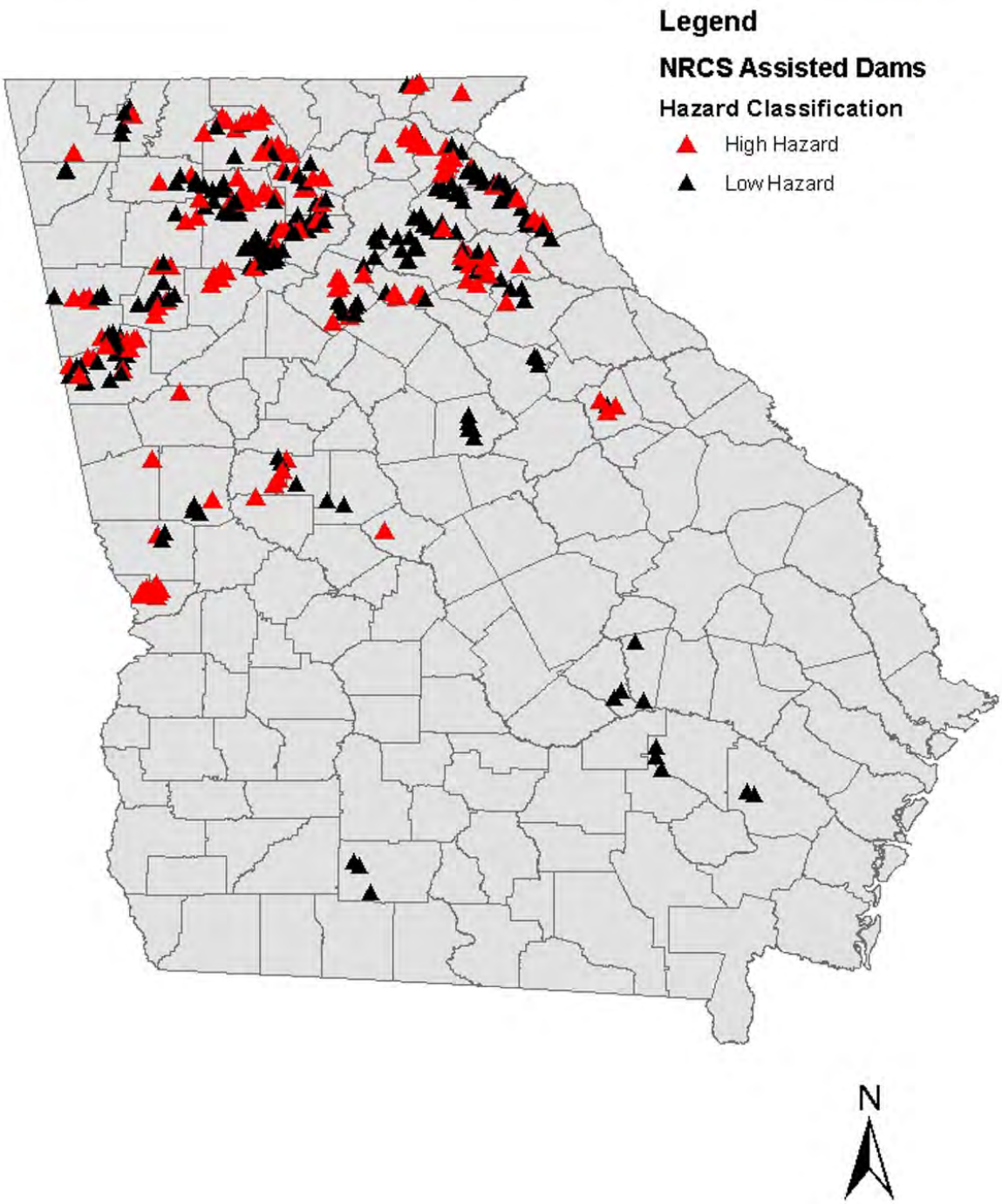
Since 1953, 357 project dams have been built in Georgia. Currently, 189 of these are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail. Preliminary investigations indicate that some $120 million will be needed to upgrade these structures and ensure compliance with current dam safety legislation.

NRCS project dams annually provide $21 million of benefits to local communities by providing flood protection, water based recreation, municipal water supply, and other water uses. Property values for land associated with these floodwater retarding structures have also increased. Homes and property adjacent to one of these reservoirs averages 25% higher than home and property without such amenities.

One of the major issues involved with aging dams is the safety and health of an estimated 17,000 people downstream from the dams. Many dams were originally built in rural areas to protect agricultural lands; but homes, business, and roads have now been built downstream thereby increasing the impacts if they were to fail. Congress passed legislation in 2000 that authorized NRCS to provide financial and technical assistance for rehabilitation of dams that were originally constructed under NRCS water resource programs.

Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured $11 million under this program to upgrade six watershed dams. Additionally, 44 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards. Emergency Action Plans are being developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

NRCS Assisted Dams



Wetland Reserve Program

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Program Highlights

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. NRCS provides landowners the technical and financial support to make restoration possible. The NRCS goal is to restore the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife habitat protection.

In 2009, 11 new easements equalling 2,248 acres were enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program.

An additional 375 acres were restored in existing WRP easements.

Restoration included tree planting, cattle exclusion and the construction of ditch plugs that restores the hydrology in wetlands that where drained years ago.

Grady pond in Clay County was drained years ago. Through WRP, the landowner plugged the ditch and created the wetland.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

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Program Highlights

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) develops or improves wildlife habitat on privately owned land. Through WHIP, NRCS provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land.

Georgia received $1.1 million in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. With this funding, 123 contracts were approved in 59 counties covering over 7,700 acres.

Tree and Shrub plantings, prescribed burning and early successional habitat management continue to be the primary practices being used to improve Georgia's wildlife on private lands.