

plant materials

By Mike Owsley & Jim Lathem

In July of 2010, NRCS released Circular No. 6, Part 527, Appendix to the National Food Security Act Manual (NFSAM). This appendix provided guidance to states that NRCS would utilize Part IV-Methods of the 1987 Manual and approved Regional Supplements- but only after consideration of specific "FSA Variances" included in the FSA Procedures. The "FSA variances" were included to assure that all NRCS wetland identification decisions meet unique definitions provided by the law and by USDA regulation. As part of the requirements to retain state Job Approval Authority for wetland determinations, NRCS employees must receive wetland determination update training for these methods and variances. This update training was provided to several NRCS employees from Area 2 and Area 3 April 11-April 13 in Dawson, Georgia. Training was provided by Jim Lathem (Resource Soil Scientist, Athens). He was assisted by Mike Owsley (Jimmy Carter PMC, Americus) and Sherry Carlson (Resource Soil Scientist, Tifton). Participants were Ray Jones, Karen Reese, Melissa Golden, Darrell Clayton, Jackie Busby, Del Braziel, Alan Woodward, Daniel Baker, Tom Bell, Calvin Essex, Vontice Jackson, Steve Cleland, and David Rudisail.



Jim Lathem and Students in Classroom

Instruction was provided in the classroom and at several wetland delineation field sites. Topics included methods to determine a wetland delineation. This included utilizing wetland hydrology, wetland plant identification and hydric soil determinations.



Jim Explains Hydric Soils

Many documents were distributed to the class including websites and a cd that covered areas of wetland determination.



Vegetation Site Determination

Emphasis at the field sites was placed on hydrology, hydric soils, and wetland plant identification.



Fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*) and climbing hydrangea (*Decumaria barbara*) were two of the wetland plants identified at the field determination sites.

The course also covered NRCS wetland responsibilities, wetland compliance policy and procedures, wetland labels, and interagency cooperation. Many specific examples of wetland determinations in several counties were discussed.