

Senator Saxby Chambliss



Introduction

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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

To Till or Not to Till?

Georgia farmers reached a major conservation milestone in 2004.

For the first time, over 1 million acres of row crops were produced with no-till/strip-till conservation.

Conservation tillage practices leave the soil largely undisturbed, preventing soil erosion and improving air and water quality.



Vidalia onions using conventional tillage.

Cotton makes up the most no-till/strip till in Georgia with over 523,000 acres (or 40%) of the cotton acreage.

Twenty years ago, only about 700 acres were planted using no-till.

In 2004, a vidalia onion no-till trial demonstration project was funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The crop, pictured below, is expected to be harvested in March.



Vidalia onions using strip-till.

2004 Quick Facts for Georgia

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	22,780
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	22.7 Mil
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$17.99 Mil
• Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	\$1.2 Mil
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$520,000
• Wetlands Reserve Program	\$2.1 Mil
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$950,000
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$19 Mil
Technical Service Providers are providing service to 82 producers.	
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the State	\$6.86 Mil

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	256,244 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	321,471 Acres

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

Conservation Security Program

Georgia's Little River Watershed was selected for participation in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) being implemented in eighteen watersheds nationwide. This program seeks to reward farmers that are utilizing sound conservation practices on their farms. Thirty-seven CSP participants in the Little River Watershed contracted to implement a conservation plan for a minimum of five years. This program will impact 32,000 acres in the Tifton area. To date, these participants have shared in \$915,000 of CSP payments. Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

Environmental Quality Incentive Programs

In 2004, approximately twelve hundred Georgia Farmers utilized \$13.3 million in EQIP cost share funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 73% of the EQIP dollars. Those involved with Confined Animal Feeding Operations will install 173 Waste Storage Facilities, 87 Mortality Facilities, and 45 Composting Facilities. Grazing Operators will use their EQIP funds to install 226 miles of fence, 304 Heavy Use Areas, and 383 Livestock Watering Facilities. Interest in addressing water conservation concerns continued to rise in 2004. Over \$950,000 in EQIP funds were approved for water conservation contracts. These funds will be used to retro-fit irrigation systems to more efficient low pressure systems. Also, 2004 was Georgia's first year to receive any EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation funds.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protected

Closing on two easement purchases from last year occurred in March 2004, providing permanent protection for a fifty-seven acre farm in Oconee County and a seventy-five acre farm in Walker County. Georgia NRCS received requests for funding from three separate entities during 2004, with a total of seven farms being submitted for funding consideration. Three Carroll County farms were selected for funding, encompassing seven hundred fifty acres altogether.

Grazing Land Conserved

The Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition continues its "practice demonstration project," a cost-share program designed to demonstrate innovative practices on existing forage and livestock operations. To date, this project has assisted sixty-five producers and has utilized \$929,000 of Georgia's Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative funds. The Georgia NRCS "Model Farm" project is in its final phase, with thirteen of the fifteen model farms completed.

Technical Service Providers Hired

Fiscal Year 2004 saw improvements to the new and successful Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program in Georgia. An improved website (<http://techeg.usda.gov>) consolidates all Technical Service Provider activity, including web-based self-certification, Certification Agreements, and customer progress reporting. Seventy-six individuals have been certified to provide technical services in Georgia. This is up from 54 last year, and, there are another sixteen certifications pending. Eighty Georgia producers received technical assistance on

EQIP contracts impacting over 30,000 acres this year. This is up from 56 producers in 2003.

Watershed Operations Program

Two new watershed projects, Chattooga River and Big Cedar Creek, are being initiated to address water quality impairments. A total of seventy-three small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia to date under this program. There are currently two active flood prevention projects, and seven watershed protection projects.

Watershed Rehabilitation Program

Georgia received \$6.2 million in construction cost-share funds under the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. The funds will be used to upgrade dams in the Yellow River Resource Conservation and Development Project area located in Gwinnett County.

Watershed Planning Program

In 2004, NRCS provided technical watershed planning assistance to eleven local Georgia communities at a cost of over \$350,000.

Wetlands Reserve Program

7 landowners were approved to enroll 1872 acres in the Wetland Reserve Program during 2004. A recent closing on a Burke County site increased protection to almost 4000 acres of riparian wetland along three miles of the Savannah River.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Georgia received \$415,000 in Wildlife Habitat Incentive Programs funds this year. 105 contracts were approved in 53 counties. The major practices implemented at these sites were prescribed burning, disking, longleaf pine, and shrub planting.



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Litter Stackhouse Helps Keep Water Bodies and Wetlands Clean

By: Lynn Nichols, District Conservationist

When Christine Bagley became concerned about runoff from her chicken litter polluting water bodies, she contacted USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service for assistance.

Bagley, with the assistance of her nephew, Ricky, manages a chicken farm in Ware County.

Bagley stored the chicken litter and later contracted with local farmers to pick up her chicken litter for use in fertilizing their cropland.

This arrangement was a win-win situation for everyone, but Bagley was concerned about letting the litter sit between the time the chicken houses were cleaned out and the time the farmers came to pick up the litter.

She was concerned that the litter was getting wet and runoff from the litter would pollute water bodies and wetlands.

Bagley did not have proper storage facilities for the litter

and did not have the money to construct one on her own.

Upon the recommendation of her brother, also a chicken farmer, she contacted the Seven Rivers Resource



Christine Bagley



Stackhouses like this one keep harmful nutrients out of the water supply.

2004 Quick Facts for District 1

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	5,832
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$1,508,503
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$1,428,750
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$79,753
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$142,000
Total Producers using TSP Services	23
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	57,181 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	63,523 Acres

Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) Office for assistance.

Seven Rivers RC & D Office worked with Christine to develop a grant request to construct a stackhouse for storage of the poultry litter.

The stackhouse will prevent harmful nutrients from getting into the water supply.

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

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funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 73% of the EQIP dollars. Those involved with Confined Animal Feeding Operations will install 173 Waste Storage Facilities, 87 Mortality Facilities, and 45 Composting Facilities. Grazing operators will use their EQIP funds to install 226 miles of fence, 304 Heavy Use Areas, and 383 Livestock Watering Facilities.

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Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

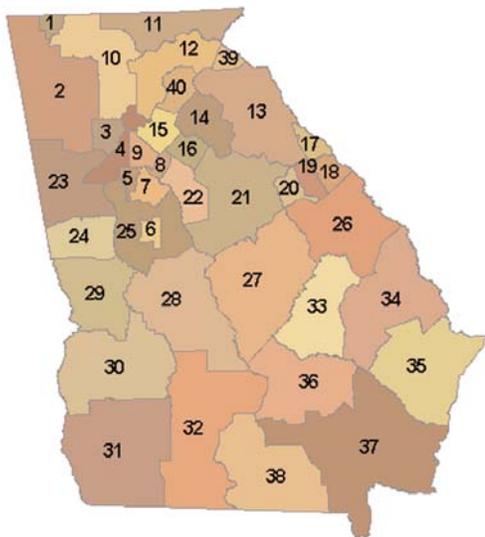
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Watershed Rehabilitation Program

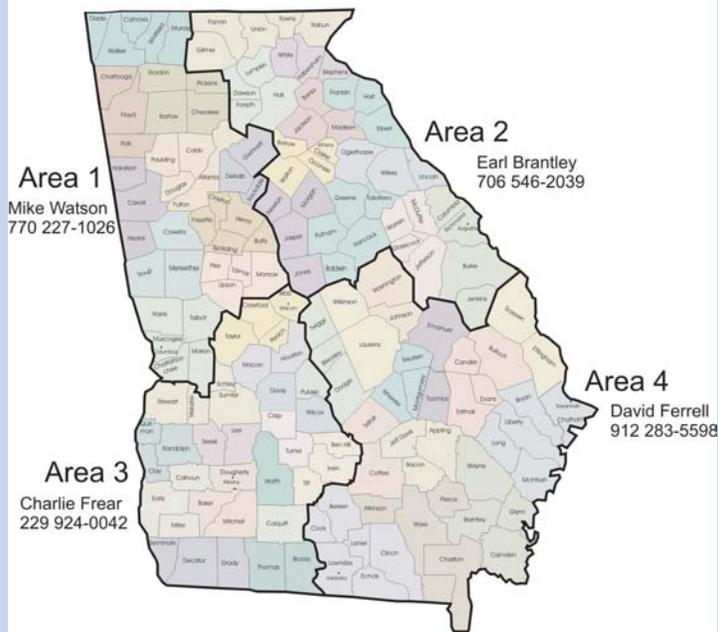
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Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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2. Coosa River
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
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16. Walton County
17. Lincoln County
18. Columbia County
19. McDuffie County
20. Warren County
21. Piedmont
22. Upper Ocmulgee River
23. West Georgia
24. Roosevelt
25. Towaliga
26. Brier Creek
27. Central Georgia
28. Ocmulgee River
29. Pine Mountain
30. Lower Chattahoochee River
31. Flint River
32. Middle South Georgia
33. Ohoope River
34. Ogeegee River
35. Coastal
36. Altamaha
37. Satilla River
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
40. Hall County



Natural Resources Conservation Service Administrative Areas Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

District	Chairperson	Phone
Alapaha	Johnny Swilley	229-242-5318
Altamaha	Travis Cook	229-868-6268
Coastal	Daniel Hawthorne	912-437-4526
Middle South Georgia	Brian Ponder	229-528-4714
Ocmulgee River	James Willis	912-862-5949
Satilla River	William Alexander	912-729-2458

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NRCS Admin. Area

Area	Conservationist	Phone
Waycross	Harold Simpson	229-686-2363
Waycross	Bo Bannister	912-384-4811
Waycross	Rebecca Stephens	912-459-2350
Americus	Mary Leidner	229-382-4776
Waycross	Graylen Hall	229-268-9106
Waycross	Lynn Nichols	912-283-6420

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Congressman Sanford Bishop

Three New Native Grasses Released by the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center

By Don Surrency

Newberry Germplasm Indiangrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash.] is a native perennial warm season grass from Newberry County South Carolina.

It is a tall robust native which produces dense foliage with an attractive golden panicle of blooms.

This new germplasm was released through a cooperative effort with the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC), USDA-NRCS, USDA-USFS, and the South Carolina Native Plant Society.

Its primary use will be to restore eroded areas in Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests in South Carolina with a well adapted native grass.

Other uses include conservation buffers, wildlife habitat improvement, and urban landscape improvement.



Newberry Germplasm Indiangrass

Union Germplasm Purpletop [*Tridens flavus* (L.) Hitchc.] is a native perennial warm season grass from Union County South Carolina.

Purpletop also known as tall redtop is a slender inconspicuous grass until fall when it produces brilliant purple panicles.

It was released through the same cooperative effort as the Newberry germplasm.

2004 Quick Facts for District 2

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	1,330
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$4,136,200
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$3,223,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$71,200
• Wetlands Reserve Program	\$597,000
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$245,000
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$133,500
Total Producers using TSP Services	21
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	44,446 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	64,653 Acres

Restoration work in Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests will be the main use of this plant with other uses similar to the Newberry material.

Durham Germplasm Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* L.) is a perennial rhizomatous warm season grass from Durham, North Carolina.

It is a tall vigorous grass which produces a whitish panicle of blooms in the fall.

The Jimmy Carter PMC in cooperation with the North Carolina USDA-NRCS released this plant especially for North Carolina.

It will be used for soil conservation, restoration, conservation buffers, wildlife habitat improvement, and urban landscape improvement.

PMC Begins New Study to Help Southern Longleaf Pine

By Don Surrency

The longleaf pine ecosystem of the Southeast is one of the most threatened in the United States.

The loss of longleaf pine forests and related plant communities not only jeopardizes the extant plant species but also the native fauna that depend on the resources and structure provided by the vegetation.

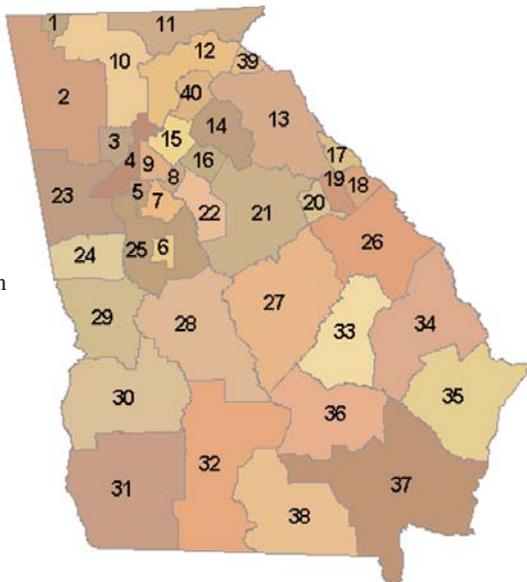
In summer and fall of 2004, the PMC staff began collecting seed of understory species in Southwest Georgia. The seed will be planted to increase pine forest stands.



Native warm season grasses developed by the PMC will be used to control edges and bank erosion around ponds like this one.

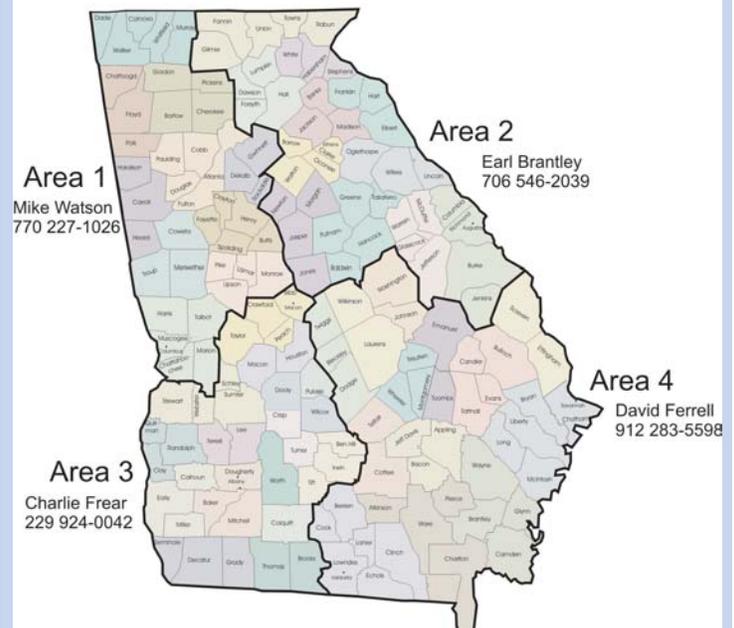
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Natural Resources Conservation Service Administrative Areas Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Pine Mountain
Middle South Georgia
Flint River
Alapaha
Lower Chatt. River

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

Sam T. Rigdon Sr.
Brian Ponder
Martin L. McLendon
Johnny O. Swilley
Jack Hufstetler

Phone

229-649-7547
229-528-4714
229-881-2767
229-242-5318
229-828-6887

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Americus
Americus
Waycross
Americus

NRCS District Conservationist

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Rebecca Stephens
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No-till Leads to a Reduction in Soil Erosion in Laurens County

By Britt Parker, District Conservationist

Reggie Faulk has land alongside Gator Creek in Laurens County. For several generations, the land was conventionally tilled growing tobacco, peanuts and corn. Residue from these crops, were harrowed each fall which resulted in severe erosion in many areas on his land. Reggie wanted to stop the erosion that was occurring and increase the productivity of his land. He read about the

"No-till has helped me to eliminate the erosion that was occurring on my farm. I can now say that all my land is producing crops and is more productive than ever."-- Reggie Faulk

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in a farm magazine and visited the Dublin NRCS Office to sign up for this program. Reggie was accepted into EQIP and has never looked back.



Britt Parker (L), District Conservationist poses with farmer Reggie Faulk

NRCS has developed conservation plans on all his farms that will protect his soils and increase his soil's production potential. He is also participating in the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Bob White Quail Initiative and has seen an increase in the number of quail

as well as other non-game bird species. "No-till has helped me to eliminate the erosion that was occurring on my farm.

I can now say that all my land is producing crops and is more productive than ever" Reggie said.

Williamson Swamp Creek Demonstration Project now has approximately 50 participating agricultural producers who are implementing Best Management Practices like this fenced heavy use area on approximately 25,000 acres of pasture and croplands.

2004 Quick Facts for District 3

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2,556
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$2,532,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$2,400,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$112,000
• Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative	\$20,000
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$281,000
Total Producers using TSP Services	59
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	80,339 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	100,982 Acres

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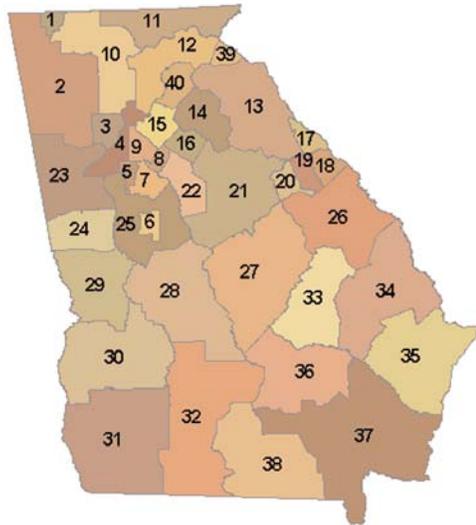
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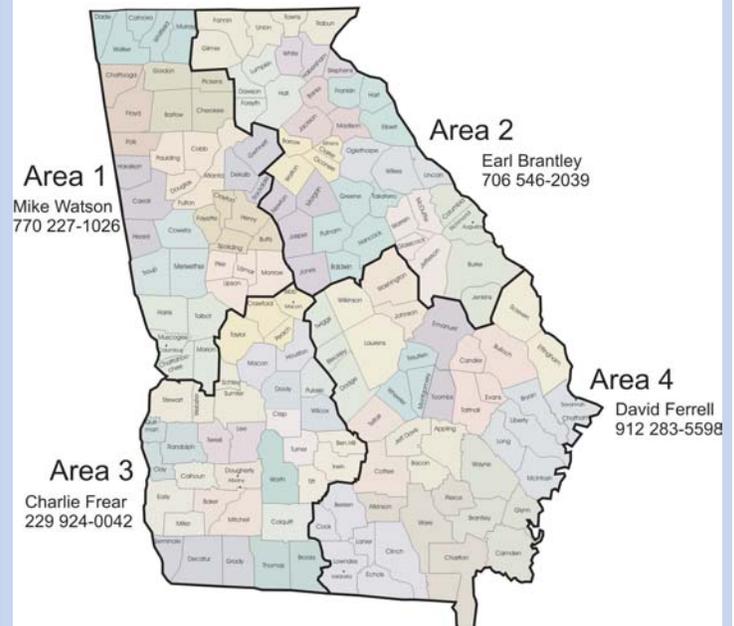
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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

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Piedmont	Patrick Hardy	706-342-1448
Towaliga	Walter Cliff Futral Jr.	770-227-7017
Ogeechee River	Wendell Arnsdorff	912-754-3475
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Altamaha	Travis P. Cook	229-868-6268
Central Georgia	Alton White	478-945-3069
Lower Chatt. River	Jack H. Hufstetler	229-828-6887

NRCS Admin. Area

Athens
Griffin
Waycross
Americus
Griffin
Waycross
Waycross
Waycross
Americus

NRCS District Conservationist

Conservationist	Phone
Bryan Barrett	706-453-7021
Carmen Westerfield	770-358-0787
William Thrift	912-764-6780
Ray Jones	229-924-9324
Jack Fokes, Jr.	229-649-3131
Sidney Lanier	478-237-8037
Bo Bannister	912-384-4811
Britt Parker	478-374-4259
Lyndon McCavitt	229-995-5811



Introduction

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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney

Metro-Atlanta Farmer Finds a Nitch in Alternative Livestock

by Ray Rozier, Soil Conservationist

Retha Logan, a small urban farmer in DeKalb County, is a perfect example of how conservation works just as well on small acreage as on large farms.

Alpacas are non-traditional animals that are rare in Georgia.

products that can be worn on the body or displayed in the home.

Their soft, crimped fleece is taken once a year with no harm to the animal.

The fiber is processed into valuable retail products, ranging from socks to coats and teddy bears to rugs.

It is documented that the hypoallergenic fiber never wears out or stains, is lightweight and incredibly warm.



Originally from the Andean Mountains, Alpacas are captivating, mystical creatures that seem to soothe one's soul with their beauty.

Alpacas are the rarest of all domestic livestock, and their fiber is used to create valuable, durable, alpaca

The fiber is warmer, lighter and stronger than wool. Alpaca farming provides a more relaxing farm experience, which is perfect for Logan as a self-employed computer contractor.

Also, Alpacas can be raised on small acreage, such as the 5.5 acres Logan has developed.

2004 Quick Facts for District 4

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	204
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$108,580
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$108,580
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	135 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	205 Acres

Even though Logan grew up on a livestock (cattle) farm in west Georgia near LaGrange, she needed professional help such as forages for grazing, animal health, fencing, watering system, and resource concerns, such as, water quality.

She contacted the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Lawrenceville and requested assistance to address the water quality concern and information on fencing and water system.

Ray Rozier and Jeremy Means of NRCS explained the programs provided under the 2002 Farm Bill and encouraged her to apply for assistance in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

She met the program requirements and was approved.

Logan received technical assistance to complete the conservation plan which identified the practices needed to address the resource concerns.

A fenced area was needed to build the paddocks for the rotational grazing system, watering system and to plant adapted forages for grazing. The EQIP program also provided cost-share assistance (50%) to offset the cost of applying the practices.

To address the forage concerns for the grazing areas, the NRCS field office representative requested assistance from Donald Surrency, plant materials specialist, for recommendations. He provided plant information for grazing and stabilization. In addition, the plant materials program will provide seed to establish a demonstration planting of native grasses for

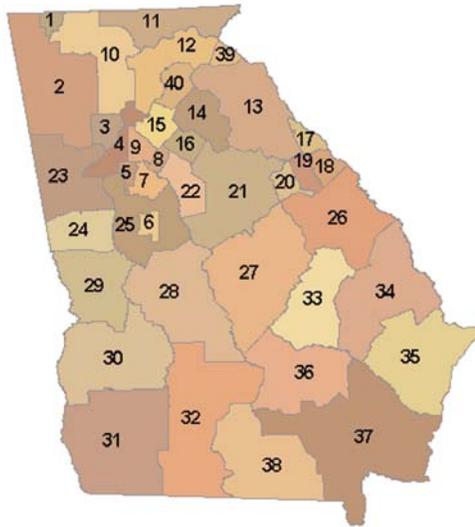
grazing. He also provided commercial sources of endophyte free fescue.



Rotational grazing and controlled water access helps both the animals and the environment

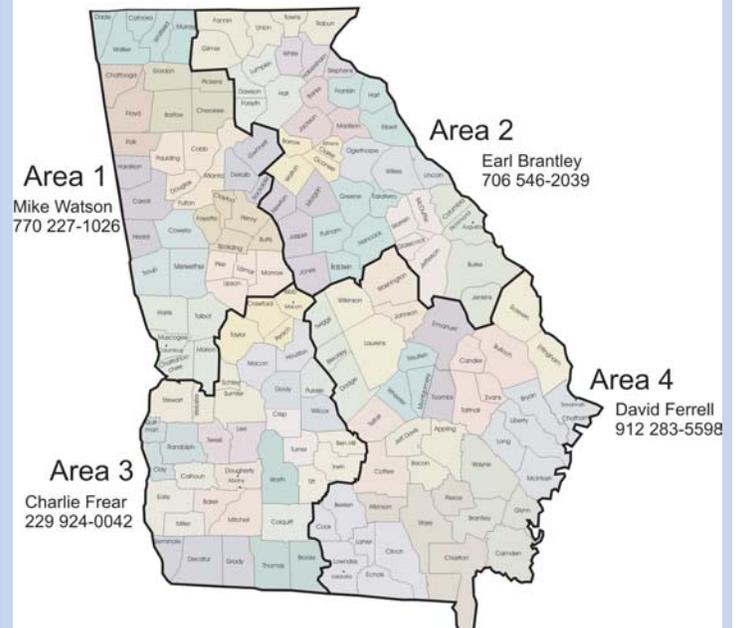
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

1. Catoosa County
2. Coosa River
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5. Clayton County
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7. Henry County
8. Rockdale County
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27. Central Georgia
28. Ocmulgee River



29. Pine Mountain
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32. Middle South Georgia
33. Ohooppe River
34. Ogeecgee River
35. Coastal
36. Altamaha
37. Satilla River
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
40. Hall County

Natural Resources Conservation Service Administrative Areas Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation

District

Gwinnett County
DeKalb County

Soil & Water Conservation District

Chairperson

Judy A. Waters
Dell MacGregor

Phone

770-982-9183
404-378-6040

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin

NRCS District

Conservationist

Stephen Leslie
Stephen Leslie

Phone

770-963-9288
770-963-9288



Introduction

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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman John Lewis

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2004, approximately twelve hundred Georgia Farmers utilized \$13.3 million in EQIP cost share funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 73% of the EQIP dollars.

Those involved with Confined Animal Feeding Operations will install 173 Waste Storage Facilities, 87 Mortality Facilities, and 45 Composting Facilities.

Grazing operators will use their EQIP funds to install 226 miles of fence, 304 Heavy Use Areas, and 383 Livestock Watering Facilities.

Interest in addressing water conservation concerns continued to rise in 2004. Over \$950,000 in EQIP funds were approved for water conservation contracts.



The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps install watering ramps like this one to control livestock access to the water supply.

These funds will be used to retro-fit irrigation systems to more efficient low pressure systems.

Also, 2004 was Georgia's first year to receive any EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation funds.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protected

Closing on two easement purchases from last year occurred in March 2004, providing permanent protection for a fifty-seven acre farm in Oconee County and a seventy-five acre farm in Walker County.

2004 Quick Facts for District 5

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	1,375
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$37,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$37,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	409 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	490 Acres

Georgia NRCS received requests for funding from three separate entities during 2004, with a total of seven farms being submitted for funding consideration. Three Carroll County farms were selected for funding, encompassing seven hundred fifty acres altogether.

Conservation Security Program

Georgia's Little River Watershed was selected for participation in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) being implemented in eighteen watersheds nationwide.

This program seeks to reward farmers that are utilizing sound conservation practices on their farms.

Thirty-seven CSP participants in the Little River Watershed contracted to

implement a conservation plan for a minimum of five years.

This program will impact 32,000 acres in the Tifton area. To date, these participants have shared in \$915,000 of CSP payments.

Grazing Land Conserved

The Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition continues its "practice demonstration project," a cost-share program designed to demonstrate innovative practices on existing forage and livestock operations.

To date, this project has assisted sixty-five producers and has utilized \$929,000 of Georgia's Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative funds. The Georgia NRCS "Model Farm" project is in its final phase, with thirteen of the fifteen model farms completed.

National Resources Inventory

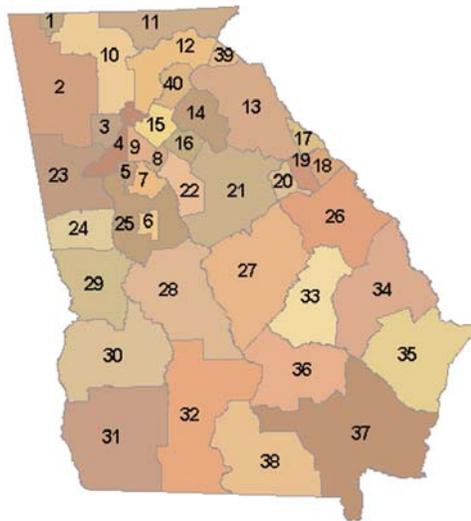
The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistically based survey to assess the trends in soil, water, and related resource conditions on non-federal lands in the United States. It is the Department of Agriculture's tool to provide Congress natural resources information. Resource data is gathered based on a random sample 160 acre land tracts. The 2004 NRI data collection will begin in the summer of 2005. The entire 1997 NRI database is now available to the public on CD.

Watershed Planning Program

In 2004, NRCS provided technical watershed planning assistance to eleven local Georgia communities at a cost of over \$350,000.

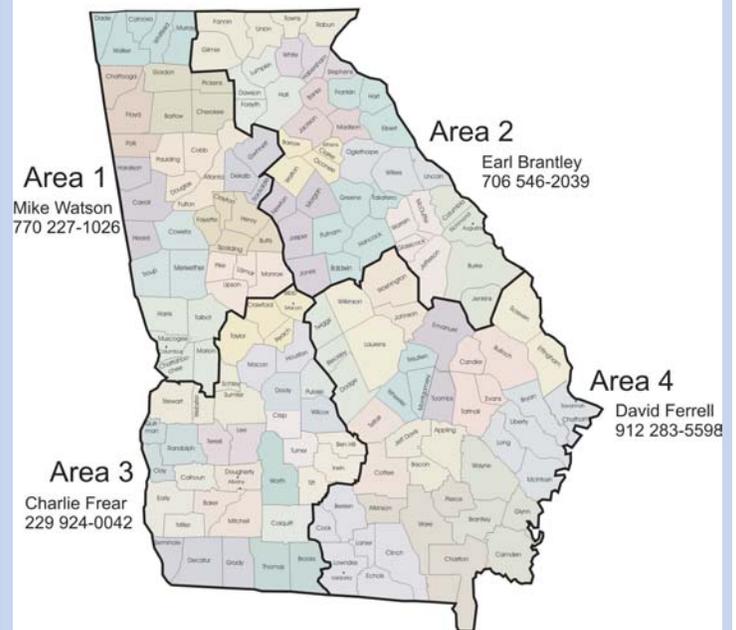
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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38. Alapaha
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40. Hall County

Natural Resources Conservation Service Administrative Areas Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Fulton County
Cobb County
DeKalb County
Clayton County

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

Alan O Toney
Fred W. Snell, III
Dell MacGregor
Vacal Dee Caldwell

Phone
404 252-9218
770 993-9992
404 378-6040
770 474-0876

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin
Griffin
Griffin

NRCS District

Valerie Pickard
Valerie Pickard
Stephen Leslie
Vacant

Phone
770 792-0594
770 792-0594
770 963-9288
770 957-5705



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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman Tom Price

Progress On Little River Watershed in Fulton County

The Fulton County Soil & Water Conservation District (FCSWCD) sponsors eleven watershed dam structures in Fulton County.

During the severe storms in 2003 and 2004, the district became seriously concerned about the condition of these dam structures because of the threat of loss of life and property that could occur if the dams were not safely maintained.

Consequently, the FCSWCD has taken a proactive position on informing Fulton County of the issues and concerns they have about the condition of the Little River Watershed Dams.

The majority of the Fulton Watershed Dams have reached their 50-year lifespan threshold, although



they still provide adequate flood protection.

There has been increased construction around and near these watershed dams; however, and homeowners



were unaware that the lake was built for flood control.

As education is a major component of the FCSWCD annual plan, they developed an educational pamphlet to let homeowners know the "do's" and "don'ts" around the watershed dams in Fulton County.

They also worked with Fulton County to make and install noticeable signs near the watershed dams so that the residents in the community would know who to contact if they noticed any unusual activity occurring around the watershed structure.

2004 Quick Facts for District 6

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	440
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$12,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$12,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000
Conservation on the Ground	
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	20 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	112 Acres

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2004, approximately twelve hundred Georgia Farmers utilized \$13.3 million in EQIP cost share funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 73% of the EQIP dollars. Those involved with Confined Animal Feeding Operations will install 173 Waste Storage Facilities, 87 Mortality Facilities, and 45 Composting Facilities. Grazing Operators will use their EQIP funds to install 226 miles of fence, 304 Heavy Use Areas, and 383 Livestock Watering Facilities.

Interest in addressing water conservation concerns continued to rise in

2004. Over \$950,000 in EQIP funds were approved for water conservation contracts. These funds will be used to retro-fit irrigation systems to more efficient low pressure systems. Also, 2004 was Georgia's first year to receive any EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation funds.

Wetlands Reserve Program

Seven landowners were approved to enroll 1872 acres in the Wetland Reserve Program during 2004. A closing on a Burke County site increased protection to almost 4000 acres of riparian wetland along three miles of the Savannah River.

National Resources Inventory

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistically based survey

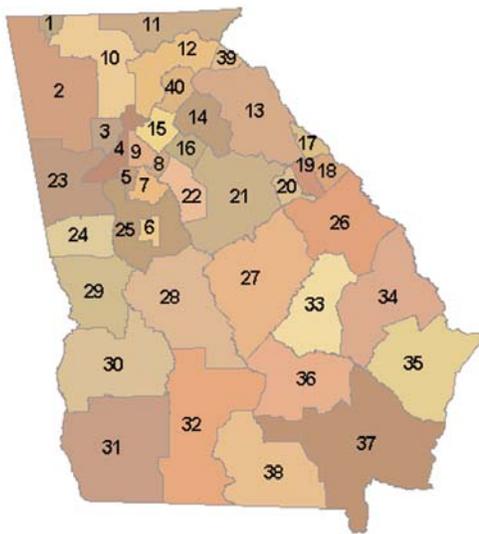
to assess the trends in soil, water, and related resource conditions on non-federal lands in the United States. It is the Department of Agriculture's tool to provide Congress natural resources information. Resource data is gathered based on random sample 160 acre land tracts. The 2004 NRI data collection will begin in the summer of 2005. The entire 1997 NRI database is now available to the public on CD.

Soil Surveys Progress

129 Georgia counties have published soil surveys, 12 counties have completed surveys that are being published, 10 are presently being surveyed, 1 county has been updated, and 2 other updates are in progress.

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

1. Catoosa County
2. Coosa River
3. Cobb County
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33. Ohooper River
34. Ogeecgee River
35. Coastal
36. Altamaha
37. Satilla River
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
40. Hall County

Natural Resources Conservation Service Administrative Areas Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Limestone Valley
Fulton County
Cobb County

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

Rozier Wingate
Alan O. Toney
Fred W. Snell, III

Phone

706-276-3432
404-252-9218
770-993-9992

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin
Griffin

NRCS District Conservationist

vacant
Valerie Pickard
Valerie Pickard

Phone

770-792-0594
770-792-0594



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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman John Linder

Rolling Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council Provides Landscape Design for Community.

By Cindy Haygood

In 2003-2004, the University of Georgia contracted with Rolling Hills and Limestone Valley to provide landscape architect interns from their Center for Community Design and Preservation, School of Environmental Design. Several excellent projects for both Councils were completed.

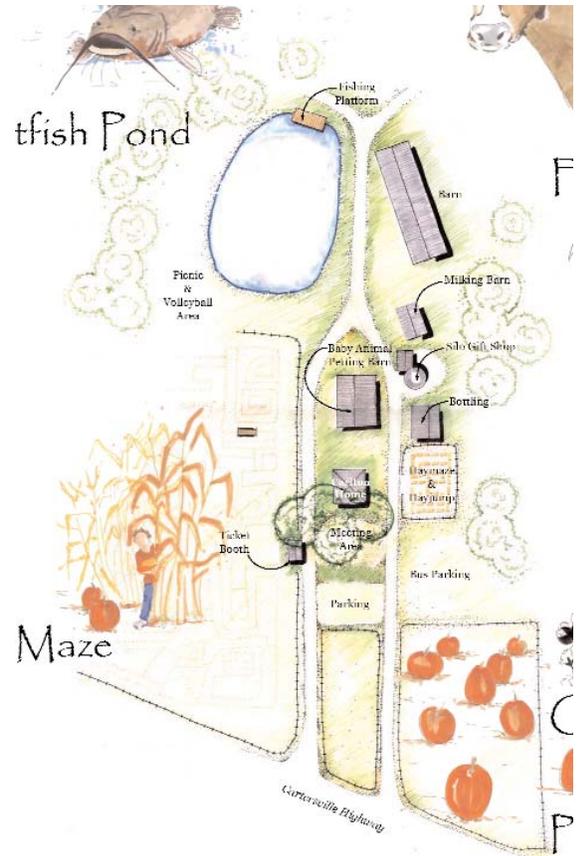
Additional funding from the Georgia Forestry Commission in the amount of \$19,550 has been approved to enable this program to be continued through 2005!

The new funding will allow each council at least three new projects and possibly, one large "charrette", team planning session. (*A charrette is a team planning event.*) In addition, some funds will be available to existing projects to purchase trees.

Rolling Hills RC&D Receives Grant for Food Cooperative

By Cindy Haygood

Rolling Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) recently received a USDA Community



Food Project Grant for \$105,120 to assist the Farmer's Fresh Food Network with their initial expenses as they begin their food cooperative.

The Farmer's Fresh Food Network is a cooperative that provides marketing opportunities to local producers in the counties of Carroll, Haralson, Coweta, Paulding, Heard, and Douglas Counties, as well as several counties in Alabama.

The network has been established for one year as a result of the success of the

2004 Quick Facts for District 7

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	293
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$66,800
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$61,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$2,600
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$3,200
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	1,343 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	1,713 Acres

Cotton Mill Farmer's Market, a local farmer's market that boasts only locally grown products.

This food network will pool agricultural products from various farms in this region to create a cooperative approach to selling locally grown products to restaurants and educational and medical institutions.

Rolling Hills acquired a \$2,500 grant from the West Georgia Community Foundation to get things started.

Many partners have joined the effort in support of this new Coop. Tanner Medical Center, a local hospital, has agreed to partner with the network to host a series of fund raising dinners over the next year.

The grant for \$105,120 will help fund the startup needs for the network for the first three years! Rolling Hills will administer this grant with Laurie Moore

serving as the Project Manager for the Network.

Poultry Waste Project Helps Water Quality in Chattahoochee Watershed

By: Cindy Haygood

Rolling Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council received a grant from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division for \$622,864.



Stackhouses and composters provide a safe way to handle poultry waste.

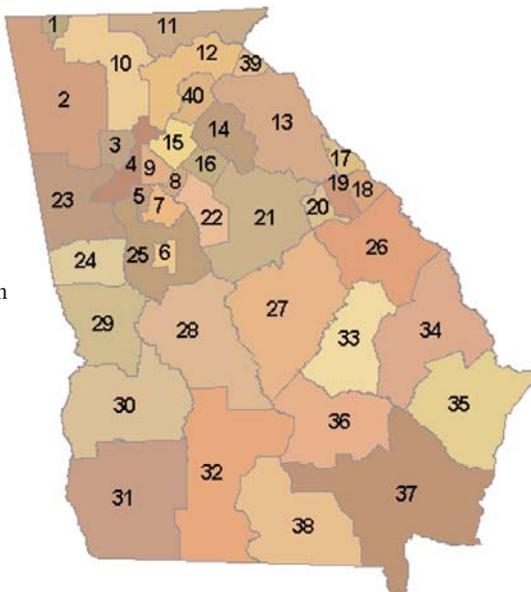
These funds are available to cost-share with poultry producers within the Upper Middle Chattahoochee Watershed Basin

to install dry litter stack houses and dead bird composters. This basin includes parts of Carroll County, as well as Coweta, Paulding, and Heard Counties. A full time Program Manager, Susan Pullen, has been hired by the RC&D Council to run this program and provide technical assistance to landowners.

Dead Bird Composter

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

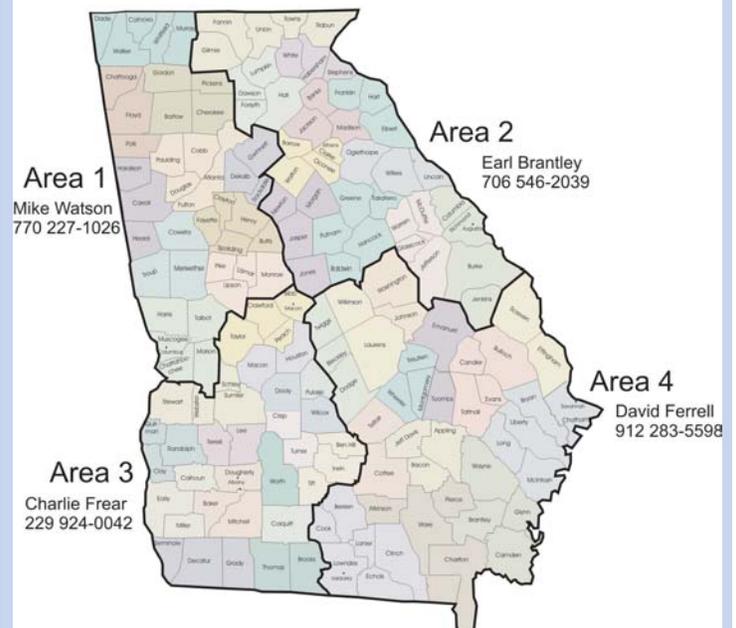
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39. Stephens County
40. Hall County

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Coosa River
Limestone Valley
Upper Chatt. River
Gwinnett County

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

Thad Rush
Rozier Wingate
Edsel R. Nix
Judy A. Waters

Phone

706-295-1511
706-276-3432
706-865-3567
770-982-9183

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin
Athens
Griffin

NRCS District Conservationist

Sheri Teems
Cindy Askew
Russell Biggers
Stephen Leslie

Phone

706-291-5651
706-278-7906
706-886-8223
770-963-9288



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Legislative Report
Georgia

Earth Team Volunteers Work on Wetland Pond

By Eunice Graham

On Wednesday, October 13, 2005, thirty-one 4-H Club members and adult volunteers gathered at the Wetland Trail pond behind the Lamar County Middle School for a community service project.

This was a continuation of the development of the Barnesville-Lamar County Wetland Trails and Ag Center Facility. Several local agencies, organi-



Allison Fuquay, McIntosh Trail Master Gardeners.

zations and individuals were involved with this successful effort.

Severely eroded pond banks were harrowed, limed, fertilized, sowed with seed and wheat straw was spread to prevent more erosion.

A large water oak tree that had fallen across the pond dam and trail during Hurricane Francis was cut and the trail cleared.

Trees and brush were cleared from around the pond site, trash was picked up and old, plastic tree protectors were removed.

The trail around the pond was cut and cleared so local groups and individuals can safely use the trail for exercise and



Octavia Jackson, 4-H Youth Coordinator, with 4-H members Courtney Jackson, Christen Jackson, and Emily Holcome.

educational activities. 4-H Club members then walked the system of trails picking up trash and debris from the recent storms.

Agencies and businesses involved were: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lamar County Soil and Water Conservation District, Lamar County Extension Service and 4-H Club, Lamar County Ag Authority and Wetland Trail Committee, State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, McIntosh Trail Master Gardeners, Akins Farm and Home, and County Line

2004 Quick Facts for District 8

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	400
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$933,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$ 742,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$34,000
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$157,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	11,276 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	17,420 Acres

Farms. Keith Lassiter, Lamar County Extension Coordinator, coordinated the work day event.

Watershed Education Program is a Success

By Eunice Graham

On November 30, 2004 Carol Oliver and Eunice Graham presented a program about watersheds to an Upson County 7th grade class.

The students visited five separate stations to learn about the different work of the agencies. Each session lasted 30 minutes. The watershed class consisted of a study about the definition of a watershed, how it works, the fact that we all live in a watershed, and

a discussion of topographic maps and what the lines indicated and the soils maps with drainage areas. Carol discussed the major watersheds in the



Carol Oliver, Soil Conservation Technician with students from Upson Lee North 7th Grade.

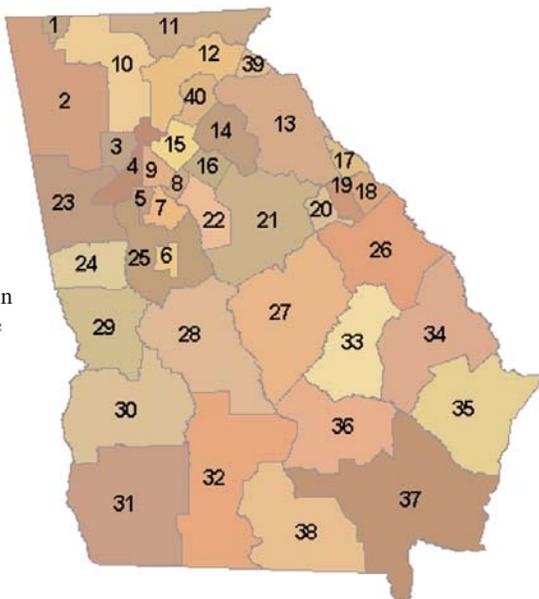
State of Georgia, and asked the children a number of questions. Following this introduction to watersheds, the group moved to a module to view a watershed.

They saw how water flows down to streams whether it comes from factories, farming, construction, or other sources. It all ends up in the lowest level; the waterways. Others participating included: Amanda Buice with GYSTC who coordinated the event; Jim Ozier, Department of Natural Resources, Lee Milby, Georgia Forestry; and Park Ranger Ken Lalumiere.

There were 22 children involved in the program held at Sprewell Bluff.

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

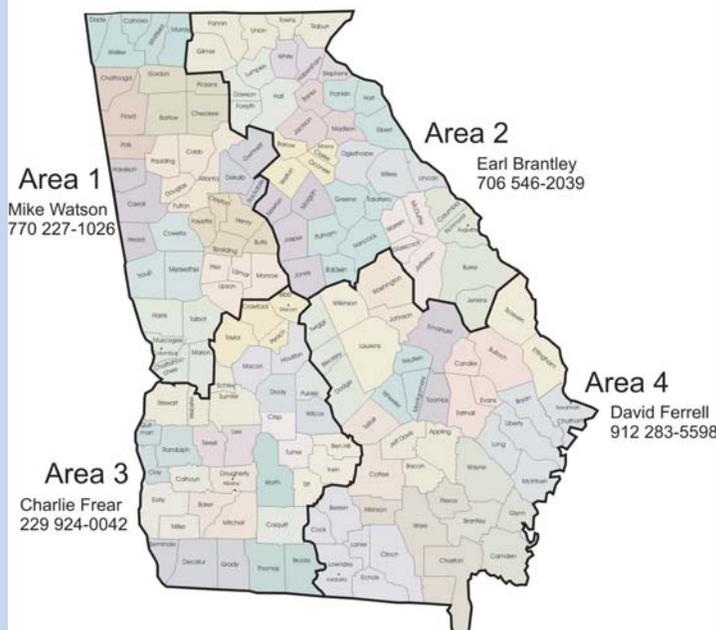
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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

West Georgia
Piedmont
Rockdale County
Upper Ocmulgee River
Henry County
Towaliga
Roosevelt
Lamar County
Pine Mountain

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

“Claude” Abercrombie
Vincent M. Duvall
Edward T. Alexander
Fulton R. Bell
James D. Almand
James Vernon Ham
Joel David Keith
Thomas H. Aiken
Sam T. Rigdon, Sr.

Phone

770 942-7128
706 453-4103
770 987-9797
706 468-2572
770 954-9930
478 994-0589
706 637-8818
770 358-4184
229 649-7547

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Athens
Griffin
Athens
Griffin
Griffin
Griffin
Griffin

NRCS District

Conservationist

Sam Sharpe
Bryan Barrett
Stephen Leslie
Dennis Brooks
Vacant
Carmen Westerfield
Kevin Keel
Carmen Westerfield
Lewis Fokes, Jr.

Phone

770 832-8942
706 453-7021
770 963-9288
706 342-1315
770 957-5705
770 358-0787
770 251-4283
770 358-0787
229 649-3131



Introduction

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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman Charles Norwood

Conservation Helps Keep Water Clean in Morgan County

By Galen Wilson, Soil Conservationist

Amos Jones, a farmer since 1962, had concerns about the condition of a dam on his property, the quality of water leaving his property, and the health of his herd which freely roamed in the creek and pond on his land.

The surface of the dam on his property had become deeply rutted and disturbed by heavy traffic of cattle moving from one pasture to another over the dam surface.

Cattle use of this area was causing soil erosion into the creek, as well as introducing animal waste into the water and his cattle had hoof and leg problems from standing in the water. Mr. Jones contacted NCRS for help.

Galen Wilson, Soil Conservationist for the Piedmont District, encouraged Mr. Jones to develop an Alternative Watering System and exclude cattle from natural water sources on his property. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was used to help offset the cost.

A Heavy Use Crossing with use exclusion was recommended to keep cattle away from the dam and out of the area that would contribute to introduction of sedimentation and animal waste into the

creek. Mr. Jones implemented many suggested solutions with cost-share assistance through EQIP and the Sugar Creek 319 Project with the partnership of the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation District

“Mr. Jones has made a good effort to improve the quality of his farming operation, not only for himself but as an example for all farmers in his area” said Pat Hardy, Piedmont District Chair Person.



Amos Jones

Mr. Jones, reflecting on the improvements, stated: “by adding these needed improvements, I feel that my fields are in better shape and I’m able to maintain a better forage crop for my livestock that will allow them to gain weight at a rate that is beneficial to my operation.”

He recommends that future generation farmers “work with the NCRS and the Districts to keep educated on current and future help, because without the farming community of the United States, there is no one left to feed the Nation.”

2004 Quick Facts for District 9

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	1,915
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$2,849,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$2,700,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$64,000
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$85,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	22,266 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	19,097 Acres

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

Conservation Security Program

Georgia's Little River Watershed was selected for participation in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) being implemented in eighteen watersheds nationwide.

This program rewards farmers that are utilizing sound conservation practices on their farms. Thirty-seven CSP participants in the Little River Watershed contracted to implement a conservation plan for a minimum of five years.

This program will impact 32,000 acres in the Tifton area. To date, participants have shared in \$915,000 of CSP funds.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2004, approximately twelve hundred Georgia Farmers utilized \$13.3 million in EQIP cost share funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 73% of the EQIP dollars.

Those involved with Confined Animal Feeding Operations will install 173 Waste Storage Facilities, 87 Mortality Facilities, and 45 Composting Facilities. Grazing Operators will use their EQIP funds to install 226 miles of fence, 304 Heavy Use Areas, and 383 Livestock Watering Facilities.

Interest in water conservation concerns continued to rise in 2004. Over \$950,000 in EQIP funds were approved for water

conservation contracts. These funds will be used to retro-fit irrigation systems to more efficient low pressure systems. Also, 2004 was Georgia's first year to receive any EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation funds.

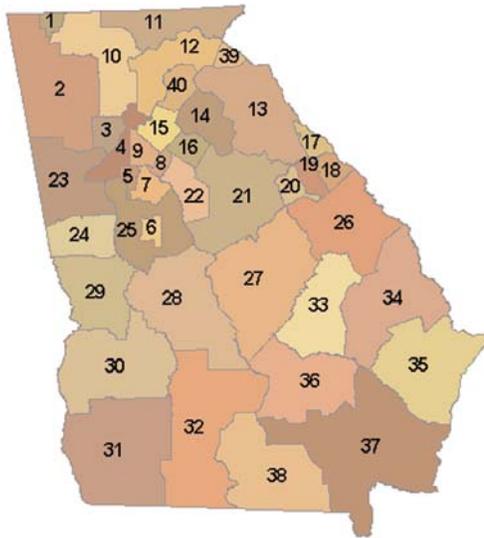
Watershed Operations Program

Two new watershed projects, Chattooga River and Big Cedar Creek, are being initiated to address water quality impairments. A total of seventy-three small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia to date under this program.

There are currently two active flood prevention projects, and seven watershed protection projects.

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

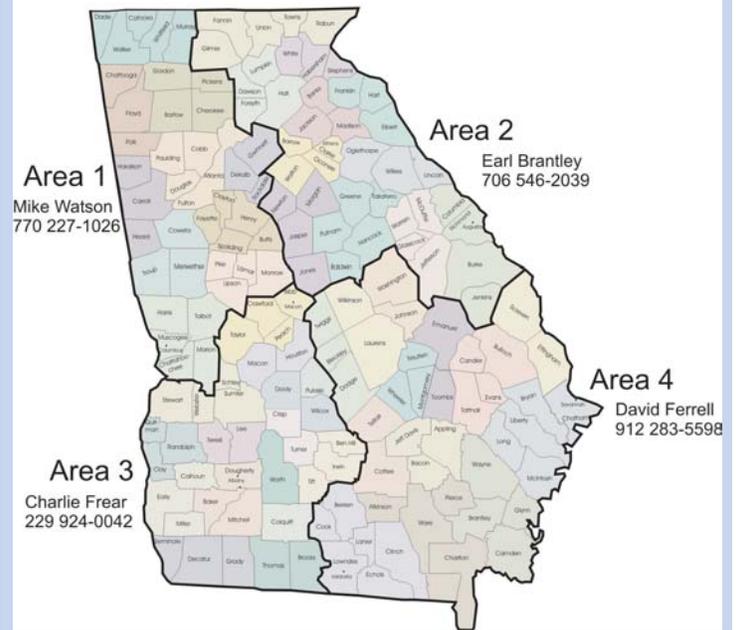
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33. Ohopee River
34. Ogeecgee River
35. Coastal
36. Altamaha
37. Satilla River
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
40. Hall County

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Blue Ridge Mountain
Upper Chattahoochee River
Stephens County
Broad River
Oconee River
Lincoln County
Walton County
Upper Ocmulgee River
Columbia County
McDuffie County
Brier Creek

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

James Dobson, Jr.
Edsel Nic
Henry Fields
Barbarianne Russell
David Hal Jackson
T. Olin Reed
John H. Redding
vacant
Rick Crawford, Jr.
Carrol C. Burton
P. Austin Rheney

Phone

706-745-2517
706-865-3567
706-886-1580
706-788-2904
706-867-5182
706-359-4677
706-267-5012
706-860-7850
706-595-3257
478-252-5625

NRCS Admin. Area

Athens
Athens

NRCS District

Douglas Towery
Russell Biggers
Russell Biggers
Forrest Ferguson
Carol Boss
Joseph Riley
Jose Pagan
Dennis Brooks
Leon Brooks
Cread Brown
Leon Brooks

Phone

706-745-2794
706-886-8223
706-886-8223
706-376-5451
706-335-7145
706-678-2630
770-267-8363
706-342-1315
706-798-4070
478-625-7771
706 798-4070



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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman Nathan Deal

Conservation Planning for Generations to Come

By Cindy Askew

The beef cattle farm of Timothy and Marshall Taylor of Catoosa County is an excellent example of one generation passing the heritage of the family farm on to the next generation.

In the midst of an area where many farms are being auctioned off and subdivided for residential development, the



Taylor's are making significant investments in the family farm.

The family has been working with the LaFayette-Dalton Field Office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil Conservation Technician Bill Henderson to develop a conservation plan that addresses the resource concerns on the farm.

Using that plan as a launching pad, the Taylor's have been in a position to benefit from participating in several USDA programs to install conservation practices as well as enhance the management of the farm.

The Taylor's currently are participating in the South Chickamauga Creek Land Treatment Watershed Project.

This Project is funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service under the authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, Public Law 83-566(PL-566) as amended (16 U.S.C. 1001-1008).



Cost share funds have been available to landowners in the South Chickamauga Creek watershed since the project was authorized in 2001.

Through this program, the Taylor's have been able to develop a spring on the property as an alternative source of water for the cattle along with the installation of the pipeline and troughs to distribute the water for better utilization of the land for grazing.

Fencing has been installed to divide the existing pastures into manageable sizes to allow for rotational grazing. Fencing is planned for excluding the cattle from Cherokee Branch, a tributary to Tiger Creek, and limiting access by equipment to a reinforced stream crossing.

2004 Quick Facts for District 10

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	1,454
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$1,432,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$1,330,000
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$102,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	11,224 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	12,855 Acres

All areas for feeding and watering the cattle will be protected with geotextile and gravel to prevent erosion and provide a stable base for managing waste that accumulates there. Existing areas that were eroding have been stabilized and treated with vegetation.

The efforts of the Taylors to be good stewards paid off when they decided to apply for USDA's Grassland Reserve



Program. This program provides an incentive payment for landowners to

make a long term commitment to keep grasslands as grasslands.

Applications for the program are selected by a ranking process that prioritizes based on the threat of land to be converted, existing management, and proximity to other high value resource areas.

The combination of their location with all of the structural and management improvements made on the farm culminated in a score that allowed them to enroll in the program.

When the Limestone Valley Resource and Conservation and Development Council's Coordinator, Doug Cabe, was



looking for a site to demonstrate a solar powered pump, the Taylor farm was a prime candidate. The RC&D had received funding through GEFA (Georgia Energy Facilities Act) to conduct the demonstration.

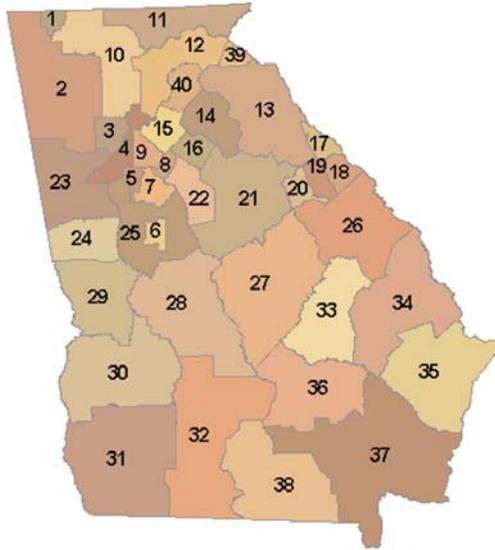
The pump has been installed at the spring development and will be evaluated to determine its suitability for providing reliable power in remote locations for watering facilities for livestock.

NRCS Field Office staff members, including six trainees, have had a valued opportunity to provide assistance to a family that is enthusiastically embracing the future of the family farm.

The contributions of the Taylor family to the long term sustainability and viability of the farm exceed our bureaucratic lingo of "in-kind".

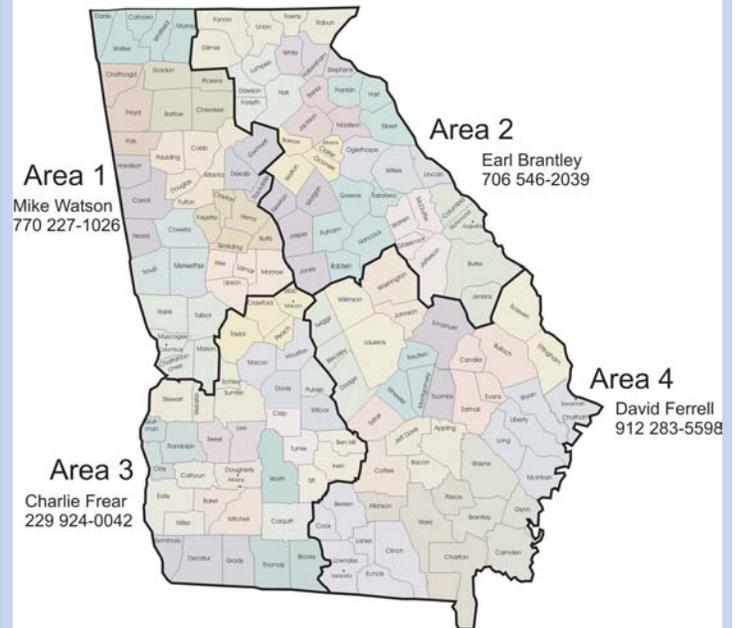
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Coosa River
Catoosa County
Limestone Valley
Blue Ridge Mountain
Upper Chattahoochee
Hall County
Gwinnett County

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

Thad Rush
J. M. Plemons
Rozier Wingate
James W. Dobson, Jr.
Edsel Nix
Mike Haynes
Judy Waters

Phone
706-295-1511
706-935-4324
706-276-3432
706-745-2517
706-865-3567
706-983-3035
706-982-9183

NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin
Griffin
Athens
Athens
Athens
Griffin

NRCS District Conservationist

Sheri Teems
Cindy Askew
Cindy Askew
Douglas Towery
Russell Biggers
George Belflower
Stephen Leslie

Phone
706-291-4849
706-638-2207
706-638-2207
706-745-2794
706-886-8223
706-536-6981
706-963-9288



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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman Phil Gingrey

The Right Grass Benefits the Land and the Animals that Live Upon it

By Sheri Teems

Dan Norton is a Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition farmer in Floyd County. He applied for the GLCC Cost Share Program in 2003 and was selected for funding.

While preparing his application, Dan came to decisions about plant adaptations for his farm. Instead of restoring bermudagrass to the upland areas as it was years ago, Dan established fescue



so that these well-drained areas can be grazed when it is wet during the winter.

The bottomland, previously in crops, will be planted to warm-season grasses and be used in summer when there is less likelihood of compaction.

As grass sods are rebuilt in the bottomlands, the ability to recover from heavy wet use will improve and the grazing days per year will increase.

Mr. Norton's project includes installing water lines and freeze proof faucets along fence line partitions in his upland grazing areas, which are planted in tall fescue. He removed old fences and re-laid them to create long strips, about 400 feet wide, which are subdivided into grazing paddocks by polywire.

In 2004, Mr. Norton removed 53 large brush piles to develop new pastureland. He also installed 8,119 feet of permanent cross fencing and 2,293 feet of pipeline for his rotational grazing system. In 2005, he plans to install an additional 1,235 feet of fencing and 3,450 feet of pipeline to complete the contract.

When asked how his cost-shared practices have changed his approach to management Dan responded, "These practices have improved our ability to focus on what is good for the grass first and the grazing animal second, while maintaining a high quality environment for the animal."

Robinson Completes Five Conservation Practices in One Year

By Shemekia Mosely

As a Soil Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), I frequently have the privilege of working with farmers and assisting with conservation practices. Recently, I was able to work with Mr. Charles Robinson, and he and his farm are a

2004 Quick Facts for District 11

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2,109
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$1,830,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$447,000
• Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	\$1,200,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$45,000
• Wetlands Reserve Program	\$14,000
• Grassland Reserve Program	\$124,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	9,244 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	13,803 Acres

great example of partnership between NRCS and local farmers.

Robinson has been a citizen of Carroll County for 81 years. Of those 81 years, he has been in the farming and cattle business for 55 years. Robinson says he is just a kid who loves to farm and play golf.

The farm is located in Bowdon, Georgia off of Kansas Jake Road. According to NRCS maps, the farm is approximately 72 acres. Robinson is the third generation of the Robinson family to farm this land.

Mr. Robinson first learned about NRCS in the late 1950's. Then it was referred to as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), and was widely known at that time for pond design. Mr. Robinson helped other farmers construct ponds designed by SCS, and recalls that as one of his earliest memories of the agency.

Robinson had water quality issues on his farm that prompted him to phone the Carrollton Field Office. I provided technical assistance on two stream crossings, a watering ramp for his pond, and two heavy use areas. These practices are frequently used by his cattle and farm equipment to allow for minimal disturbance to our water supply. They were financed, in part, through a program called EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program).

Robinson is to be commended on his conservation efforts. As a participant in EQIP, Robinson is required to complete only one practice within the first contract year; however, Robinson completed five of the six practices designed for his farm within the first year-- an impressive accomplishment for any farmer.

He stated that his farm has truly benefited from EQIP because NRCS worked very closely with him through the entire

process. He believes that EQIP and NRCS have helped him to meet the goals of the farm, and especially important to him, to prepare for future generations to come.

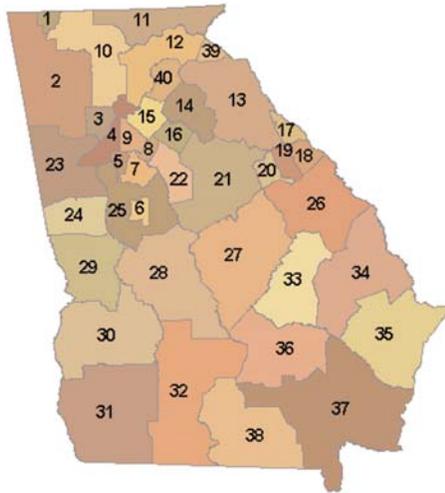
A recent conversation with Robinson came to mind as I thought about our experiences together. I remember him stating the following, "We are to be good stewards of the land, and it is our responsibility to take action to protect



our natural resources for future generations". Charles Robinson's farm truly is a "success story" of farmers and NRCS working together to preserve our land and natural resources.

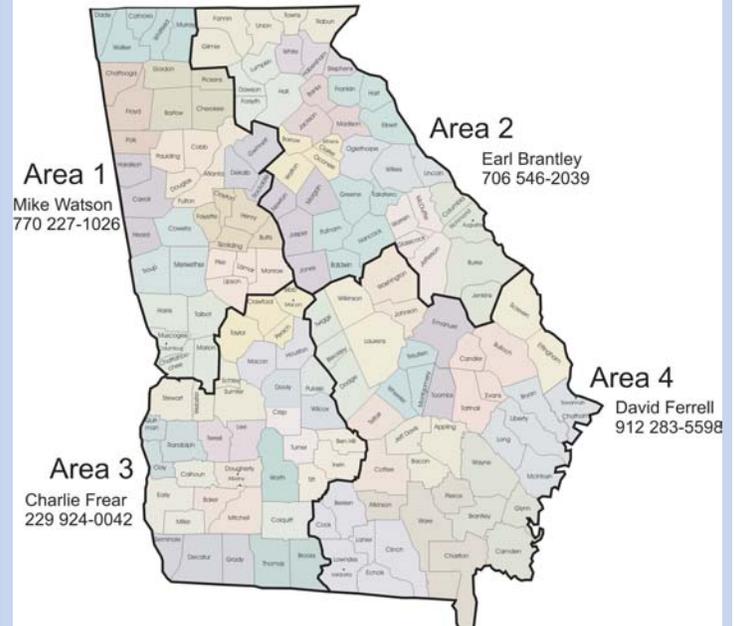
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36. Altamaha
37. Satilla River
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Coosa River
Cobb County
West Georgia
Towaliga
Roosevelt
Pine Mountain

Soil & Water Conservation District Chairperson

Thad Rush
Fred W. Snell, III
Mac Abercrombie, Jr.
Walter Cliff Futral, Jr.
Joel David Keith
Sam T. Rigdon, Sr.

Phone
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NRCS Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin
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Griffin

NRCS District Conservationist

Sheri Teems
Valerie Pickard
Sam Sharpe
Carmen Westerfield
Kevin Keel
Lewis Fokes, Jr.

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Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman John Barrow

Bulloch County Farmer Converts to Conservation Tillage

By Glyn Thrift

Clarence Prince, a life long row crop farmer from Bulloch County, has had tremendous success with his conservation tillage system.

Prince produces 400 acres of peanuts along with 1,100 acres of cotton. Of this 1,500-acre farming operation, 350 acres is under irrigation.



Prince's farm was highlighted on the Burns-Goodlatte Congressional Agriculture Tour in March of 2004 where he discussed the importance and benefits of cropland irrigation.

Prince started strip-tilling 400 acres five years ago. Two years later, he was convinced and determined that this system was the way to go. He then converted his whole cotton and peanut operation to 100% strip-till.

He has added various other conservation practices to his operation such as terraces, tile outlets, and grass waterways.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service assisted with the technical expertise of planning, applying, and managing these conservation practices throughout the farming operation.

Mr. Prince has noticed an abundant amount of benefits that come with these conservation efforts including the increase of wildlife population, reduction in soil erosion, protection of water quality, and an increase in production.

Restoring Wetlands in Jenkins County

By Eunice Graham

Don I. Burke has enrolled an 81.6 acre tract adjacent to Big Dukes Pond in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Big Dukes Pond is a 1300-acre Grady Cypress Pond and was acquired in 1999



by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA-DNR).

It is home to the endangered wood stork as well as the Canby's dropwort, a plant found only in Georgia.

Working in partnership with GA-DNR, other landowners with property totaling 444 acres adjacent to Big Dukes Pond have applied to enroll their land into WRP.

2004 Quick Facts for District 12

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2,538
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$2,519,000
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$974,000
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$45,000
• Wetlands Reserve Program	\$1,500,000
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	14,887 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	21,065 Acres

The goal of the WRP program is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled.

NRCS will develop and implement a conservation plan to address restoring this site to its natural hydrology. Work to be done will include plugging a drainage ditch as well as using prescribed burning to control unwanted vegetation and enhance wildlife habitat.

In exchange for establishing this permanent easement, Burke receives a one time payment up to the appraised agricultural value of the land and 100 percent of the restoration costs.

Benefits of WRP include improved water quality, reduced flood risk, and the creation of waterfowl and shorebird habitats in areas of critical habitat need.

Landowners profit from recreational activities and lease hunting while maintaining control of access to the land.

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

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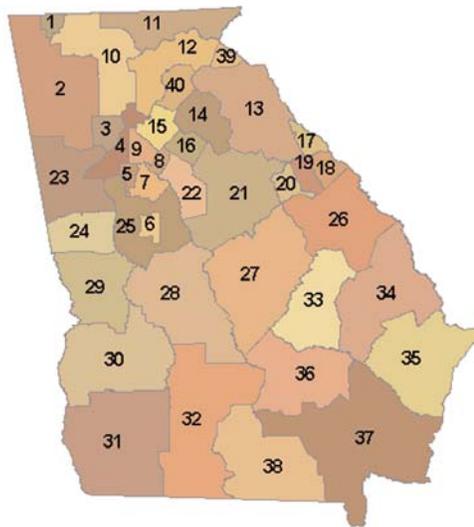
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Wetlands Reserve Program

Seven landowners were approved to enroll 1,872 acres in the Wetland Reserve Program during 2004. A recent closing on a Burke County site increased protection to almost 4000 acres of riparian wetland along three miles of the Savannah River.

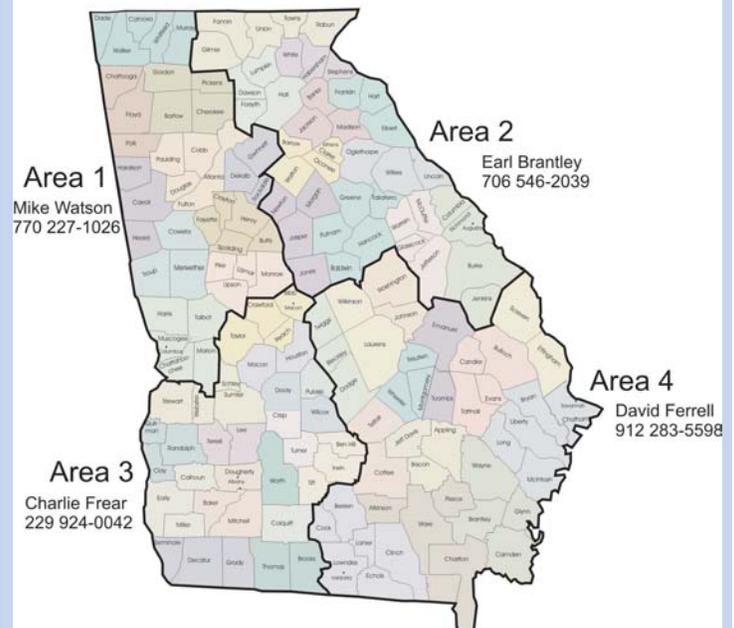
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40. Hall County



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Broad River
Oconee River
Piedmont
Warren County
Ogeechee River
Coastal
Brier Creek

Soil & Water Conservation Chairperson

Barrienne Russell
David Hal Jackson
Patrick Hardy
Edgar Joe Shurley
Wendell Arnsdorff
Daniel Hawthorne
P. Austin Rheney

Phone

706-788-2904
706-867-5182
706-342-1448
706-465-2054
706-754-3475
912-437-4526
478-252-5625

NRCS District Admin. Area

Athens
Athens
Athens
Athens
Waycross
Waycross
Athens

NRCS District Conservationist

Forrest Ferguson
Carol Boss
Dennis Brooks
Cread Brown
William Thrift
Rebecca Stephens
Leon Brooks

Phone

706-376-5451
706-335-7145
706 342-1315
478-625-7771
912-764-6780
912-459-2350
706-798-4070



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The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) delivers conservation through a unique partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout Georgia.

At the heart of the conservation delivery system are conservation plans--developed by NRCS staff on the land with farmers and ranchers--and approved by the local conservation district.

In addition to basic conservation planning assistance from NRCS experts, producers may also be eligible for cost-share assistance to install the recommended practices through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, etc.

The new Conservation Security Program is designed to reward conservation stewardship. The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program helps prevent the conversion of working agricultural land to non-agricultural uses.

This report includes a breakdown of conservation assistance provided in Fiscal Year 2004 and project highlights and features.



Spring 2005
Legislative Report
Georgia

Congressman David Scott

New Wetland Wildlife Preserve to be Created

By Carole Towe

A wetland wildlife preserve is being created next to the South River at Panola Mountain State Conservation Park in Rockdale County.

This project will establish a sanctuary for birds including Sandhill Cranes and wetland wildlife along a migratory flyway in Georgia where little suitable habitat remains.

It will also create accessible wildlife observation and education opportunities for the residents of Metro-Atlanta.

Funding for this project has been provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Southern Company in the form of a \$55,000 grant to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Historic Sites and Division of Wildlife Resources.

The Parks Division will match the gift with \$55,000 making a total of \$110,000 available to develop the wetland wildlife preserve.

The Griffin office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is designing a constructed wetland to impound 8-10 acres of shallow water within the 30-acre project site.

Food plots will be grown to provide sustenance for flocks of migrating birds

in the fall. The wetland design will allow water levels to be managed to flood the food plots in the winter to complement natural bird migration and provide habitat for winter waterfowl.



The proximity to the South River, 70 acres of upland meadow and borders of mixed hardwood forest surrounding the site make the creation of this wetland especially valuable.

The Panola Mountain Wetland Project was facilitated by the Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D Council, which recruited Elaine Nash about three years ago to provide leadership to a worthy project that could be developed as a memorial to the late Edward T. Alexander, a prominent Rockdale County Landscape Architect and RC&D Board Member.

This project grew out of the studies, the miles of hiking and the days of meetings conducted by Nash and her work group.

In addition to Georgia DNR and RC&D, assistance is being provided by

2004 Quick Facts for District 13

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2,334
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$32,500
• Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$32,500
Total RC&D Funds Brought into the District	\$528,000

Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	3,404 Acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	5,623 Acres

USDA/NRCS, Audubon Society (Atlanta Chapter), Steven M. Jones-Environmental Services Inc., Rockdale County SWCD, Georgia Native Plant Society and the Arabia Mountain Heritage Alliance.

2004 Conservation Program Highlights

Conservation Security Program

Georgia's Little River Watershed was selected for participation in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) being implemented in eighteen watersheds nationwide.

This program seeks to reward farmers that are utilizing sound conservation practices on their farms. Thirty-seven CSP participants in the Little River

Watershed contracted to implement a conservation plan for a minimum of five years.

This program will impact 32,000 acres in the Tifton area. To date, these participants have shared in \$915,000 of CSP payments.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2004, approximately twelve hundred Georgia Farmers utilized \$13.3 million in EQIP cost share funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 73% of the EQIP dollars. Those involved with Confined Animal Feeding Operations will install 173 Waste Storage Facilities, 87 Mortality Facilities, and 45 Composting Facilities. Grazing Operators will use their EQIP funds to install 226 miles of fence, 304 Heavy

Use Areas, and 383 Livestock Watering Facilities.

Interest in addressing water conservation concerns continued to rise in 2004. Over \$950,000 in EQIP funds were approved for water conservation contracts.

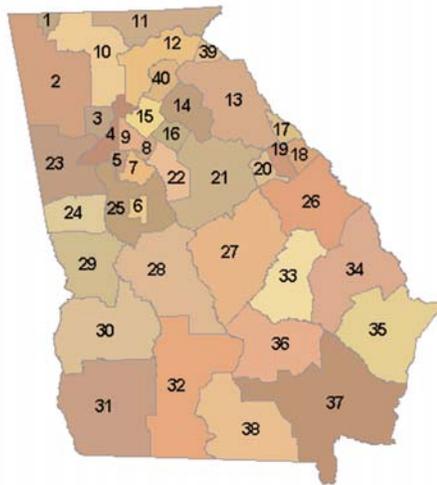
These funds will be used to retro-fit irrigation systems to more efficient low pressure systems. Also, 2004 was Georgia's first year to receive any EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation funds.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protected

Closing on two easement purchases from last year occurred in March 2004, providing permanent protection for a 57-acre farm in Oconee County and a 75-acre farm in Walker County.

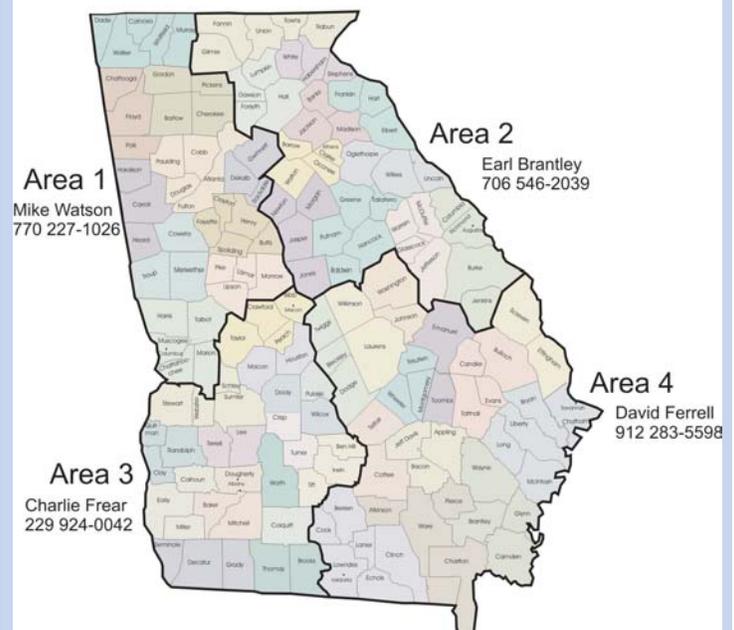
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts

1. Catoosa County
2. Coosa River
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 River
13. Broad River
14. Oconee River
15. Gwinnett County
16. Walton County
17. Lincoln County
18. Columbia County
19. McDuffie County
20. Warren County
21. Piedmont
22. Upper Ocmulgee River
23. West Georgia
24. Roosevelt
25. Towaliga
26. Brier Creek
27. Central Georgia
28. Ocmulgee River
29. Pine Mountain
30. Lower Chattahoochee River
31. Flint River
32. Middle South Georgia
33. Ohoopce River
34. Ogeecgee River
35. Coastal
36. Altamaha
37. Satilla River
38. Alapaha
39. Stephens County
40. Hall County



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Administrative Areas
Georgia



Soil & Water Conservation District

Fulton County
Gwinnett County
DeKalb County
Walton County
Rockdale County
Upper Ocmulgee County
Clayton County
Henry County
Towaliga

Soil & Water Conservation Chairperson

Alan Toney	404-252-9218
Judy A. Waters	770-982-9183
Dell MacGregor	404-378-6040
John H. Redding	770-267-5012
Michael Breedlove	770-922-2547
vacant	
Vacal Dee Caldwell	770-474-0876
James D. Almand	770-954-9930
Walter Cliff Futral, Jr.	770-227-7017

NRCS District Admin. Area

Griffin
Griffin
Griffin
Athens
Griffin
Athens
Griffin
Griffin
Griffin

NRCS District Conservationist

Valerie Pickard	770-792-0594
Stephen Leslie	770-963-9288
Stephen Leslie	770-963-9288
Jose Pagan	770-267-8363
Stephen Leslie	770-963-9288
Dennis Brooks	706-342-1315
Vacant	770-957-5705
Vacant	770-358-0787
Carmen Westerfield	770-358-0787