



Spring 2007  
Legislative  
Report  
Georgia



## Helping People Help the Land

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Local conservation districts approve custom-designed conservation plans developed by NRCS personnel who provide technical expertise to farmers to help them with their natural resource concerns.

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# Senator Saxby Chambliss

## Organizations Partner to Meet Needs of Man and Nature

With the common goal of maintaining an abundant water supply in the lower Flint River basin, conservationists and agriculture met near Albany to celebrate Earth Day 2006: A Celebration of Water.

Conservationists, educators and members of the agriculture community celebrated the successful partnership that resulted in the installation of cutting-edge irrigation technology that will improve water conservation and preserve the diverse life found in the lower Flint River.

The variable rate irrigation system, developed by UGA-NESPAL, is a new technology that will enable users to irrigate their crops as needed, yet save approximately 10 to 20 percent of the water used in standard irrigation practices.

Using funding from the Farm Bill, NRCS is providing 75 percent of the cost of the purchasing and installing the variable rate irrigation system equipment.

To date, 23 agricultural water users, representing a combined 3,500 acres, have enrolled in this project.

"The 2002 Farm Bill encourages the use of innovative approaches to address

resource concerns, said James E. Tillman, Sr., state conservation for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"The variable rate irrigation technology is one of many conservation approaches to use the latest technology to address water conservation issues in South Georgia."

Other conservation practices of the program include working with agricultural users to develop irrigation management plans, implement best management practices, and installing efficient farming practices such as a low pressure drop nozzles and end gun cut offs.

"The natural resources of the Flint River Basin are being strained to support the needs of farmers and the environment," said Marty McLendon, chairman of the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District.

"The variable rate irrigation system is a proactive way to reduce the amount of water needed by the agriculture community without jeopardizing their livelihood.

Anything we can do to ensure that the water resources of the Flint River basin will be around for our children, grandchildren and future generations is a worthwhile endeavor."

### 2006 Quick Facts for Georgia

<b>Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance</b>	<b>16,069</b>
<b>Total Conservation Cost-share Funds</b>	<b>\$20,571,296</b>
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$14,700,000
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$305,323
* Conservation Security Program	\$4,594,000
* Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	\$790,000
* Grassland Reserve Program	\$181,973
<b>Number of Community Nutrient Management Facilities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Conservation Innovation Grants</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds</b>	<b>\$16,699,767</b>
<b>Total RC&amp;D Funds Brought to the State</b>	<b>\$4,427,380</b>
<b>Technical Service Providers provided assistance to 29 producers.</b>	
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments</b>	<b>224,786 acres</b>
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned</b>	<b>319,386 acres</b>
<b>Irrigation Efficiency Improved</b>	<b>3,840 acre-ft</b>
<b>Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>57,758 acres</b>
<b>Soil Erosion Reduced</b>	<b>780,453 tons</b>
<b>Conservation Plans Created for Air or Water Quality</b>	<b>448,250 acres</b>
<b>Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced</b>	<b>581 acres</b>



## Conservation Planning

NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2006 to develop 2,119 conservation plans on 257,568 acres throughout the state.

## Conservation Security Program

The Little Ocmulgee Watershed was selected for the 2006 CSP. It is located in parts of Dodge, Laurens, Telfair and Wheeler counties. 58 of the 64 applications received were selected for funding, with 55 meeting all Tier 3 criteria.

These farmers split \$1.1 million in CSP payments for having applied a high level of conservation practices on over 24,000 acres.

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2006, approximately 1,000 Georgia Farmers benefited from \$14.7 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share funds. Livestock producers received over 66% of the EQIP dollars.

Over 150 inefficient center pivots systems were retro-fitted to low pressure drop nozzle systems. There were also seven new subsurface micro irrigation systems installed.

Over 450 applications were received for the poultry litter transfer project. 52 contracts were awarded, resulting in 25,000 tons of poultry litter being transferred.

## Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Georgia received over \$2.79 million dollars of EWP funding in November of 2004. These funds are being used to apply emergency conservation measures in three counties: Gilmer, Rabun, and Towns. These counties suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan, Jeanne, and other storms that occurred in 2004.

## Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

In 2006, two proposals were selected and will provide permanent protection of 300 acres of Georgia farmland in Bartow and Oconee Counties valued at \$1.8 million.

## Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

In 2006, \$200,000 of GLCI funds were obligated to three projects that con-

tinue the emphasis of improving the management of Georgia's grazing lands.

## Plant Materials Program

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) has eight active studies involving plants native to the Southeastern U.S. Emphasis is technology development on seeding rates, establishment, growth, management and culture of native warm season grasses.

'Tropic Sun' Sunn Hemp, a potentially new cover crop adapted to the Southeast, can produce sufficient biomass to provide ground cover and Nitrogen to a following summer cash crop. Seed should be available in 2007 or 2008 in commercial seed sources in the Southeast.

## Resource Conservation & Development

During 2006, RC&D Councils in Georgia created 8 businesses and 29 new jobs for the state of Georgia. Four watersheds were planned totaling over 200,000 acres; and technical and financial assistance were administered for about 2,200 acres of wildlife habitat creation.

It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 265 projects totaling over \$14 million in assistance during the year.

## Technical Service Providers

Seventy four individuals and organizations are certified through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program to provide technical services in Georgia. Twenty eight Georgia producers were funded to receive technical assistance on EQIP contracts on Residue Management and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans this year.

## Watershed Planning and Surveys Program

In 2006, NRCS in Georgia provided \$79,000 in technical assistance to 11 communities. The Chattooga River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment was completed. It was determined through the planning process that agricultural influences on water quality in this watershed are minimal.

## Watershed Operations Program

Since 1952, a total of 77 small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia. Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recre-

ation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

NRCS has received over \$7 million to help local landowners install conservation practices for water quality improvement in the 77 projects. Through 2006, over \$4 million of financial assistance has been provided.

## Watershed Dam Operation and Maintenance:

To date, the maintenance on 93 dams has been brought up to date. Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program

189 of Georgia's 357 project dams are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail. Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured \$9.5 million to upgrade six watershed dams.

Additionally, 32 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards. Emergency Action Plans will be developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

## Wetlands Reserve Program

Georgia was one of six pilot states to pilot a new concept in selecting participants for the Wetland Reserve Program. Using a market analysis to establish a bid cap on a per acre basis, participants then completed a self-ranking form that required them to answer specific questions about the acreage they are trying to restore. The Satilla River in Brantley County was selected as the pilot area and 8 offers were received. The reverse auction lowered the average per acre bid from \$1700 to \$1200. This resulted in 7 sites being selected for funding a total of 2,000 will be protected by WRP easements.

## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Georgia received \$334,704 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. 55 contracts were approved in 29 counties.

Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants on 1,200 acres, who will use \$40,000 in WHIP cost-share. Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Cogon grass. Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 28 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 34 sites.



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# Congressman David Scott

## Farming Continues in the Midst of Urbanization

by Valerie Pickard,  
District Conservationist

Most people would think that there were no farms left in Cobb County. However, Gerald W. Wallace would beg to differ. Wallace moved to this 80 acre tract of land in Powder Springs in 1969.

When he moved here, there was no development around him and there was very little traffic to disturb his quaint environment.

Over time, development began to creep toward the southwest corner of Cobb County. Land Prices increased making it difficult to continue farming.

Due to increased development, flooding along Sweetwater Creek began to affect portions of Wallaces lower pastures. Despite all of all the challenges, Wallace continues to make a go of his farm.

At first, Wallace was skeptical about working with government programs – too much paper work- too much government intervention. After several meetings, he agreed to let us develop a basic conservation plan for his farm.

After explaining and reviewing our programs and his conservation plan, Wallace gained favor for working with government programs.

In 2002, Wallace requested information from our local Marietta Field Office on the

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP). Wallace applied for CCRP and was approved to fence out 15.8 acres of bottom land pasture to restore a riparian buffer along Sweetwater Creek near his pasture. Not only did this provide an avenue to increase wildlife habitat but it removed livestock from having access to Sweetwater Creek and reduced stream bank erosion.

Additional practices such as a watering facility and pipeline were installed to provide adequate water for his livestock. In addition to CCRP, he applied for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to assist him with additional practices that were not funded under CCRP.

Under EQIP, additional measures were funded such as, a well, pasture and hayland planting, heavy use protection, fencing and prescribed grazing to aid in Wallace's objectives. Wallace stated that, "without programs such as EQIP and CCRP, most farmers would not be able to put conservation on the land".

"The cost of materials, labor and gasoline has increased so much that these cost –share program helps us to protect our land and be good stewards of what we have," says Wallace.

"Thanks to these programs, I have clean water for my livestock to drink, management of my pastures has improved through rotational grazing and soil erosion of the streambank has been reduced and the growth of vegetation in the

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 13

<b>Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Total Conservation Cost-share Funds</b>	<b>\$23,216</b>
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$23,216
<b>Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds</b>	<b>\$187,399</b>
<b>Total RC&amp;D Funds Brought to the State</b>	<b>\$7,900</b>
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments</b>	<b>2,552 acres</b>
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned</b>	<b>2,085 acres</b>
<b>Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>685 acres</b>
<b>Soil Erosion Reduced</b>	<b>41,010 tons</b>



riparian buffer has made a difference since I have fenced out the livestock from the stream.”

## **Conservation Planning**

NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2006 to develop 2,119 conservation plans on 257,568 acres throughout the state.

## **Conservation Security Program**

The Little Ocmulgee Watershed was selected for the 2006 CSP.

It is located in parts of Dodge, Laurens, Telfair and Wheeler counties.

Fifty-eight of the 64 applications received were selected for funding, with 55 meeting all Tier 3 criteria.

These farmers split \$1.1 million in CSP payments for having applied a high level of conservation practices on over 24,000 acres.

## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

In 2006, approximately 1,000 Georgia Farmers benefited from \$14.7 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share funds. Livestock producers received over 66% of the EQIP dollars.

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Over 450 applications were received for the poultry litter transfer project. Fifty-two contracts were awarded, resulting in 25,000 tons of poultry litter being transferred.

## **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**

Georgia received over \$2.79 million dollars of EWP funding in November of 2004.

These funds are being used to apply emergency conservation measures in three counties: Gilmer, Rabun, and Towns.

These counties suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan, Jeanne, and other storms that occurred in 2004.

## **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**

In 2006, two proposals were selected and will provide permanent protection of 300 acres of Georgia farmland in Bartow and Oconee Counties valued at \$1.8 million.

## **Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative**

In 2006, \$200,000 of GLCI funds were obligated to three projects that continue the emphasis of improving the management of Georgia's grazing lands.

## **Plant Materials Program**

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) has eight active studies involving plants native to the Southeastern U.S.

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## **Resource Conservation & Development**

During 2006, RC&D Councils in Georgia created 8 businesses and 29 new jobs for the state of Georgia.

Four watersheds were planned totaling over 200,000 acres; and technical and financial assistance were administered for about 2,200 acres of wildlife habitat creation.

It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 265 projects totaling over \$14 million in assistance during the year.

## **Technical Service Providers**

Seventy-four individuals and organizations are certified through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program to provide technical services in Georgia.

Twenty-eight Georgia producers were funded to receive technical assistance on EQIP contracts on Residue Management and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans this year.

## **Watershed Planning and Surveys Program**

In 2006, NRCS in Georgia provided \$79,000 in technical assistance to 11 communities. The Chattooga River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment was completed.

It was determined through the planning process that agricultural influences on

water quality in this watershed are minimal.

## **Watershed Operations Program**

Since 1952, a total of 77 small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia.

Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

NRCS has received over \$7 million to help local landowners install conservation practices for water quality improvement in the 77 projects.

Through 2006, over \$4 million of financial assistance has been provided.

## **Watershed Dam Operation and Maintenance**

To date, the maintenance on 93 dams has been brought up to date. Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

## **Watershed Rehabilitation Program**

One hundred eighty-nine of Georgia's 357 project dams are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail.

Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured \$9.5 million to upgrade six watershed dams.

Additionally, 32 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards.

Emergency Action Plans will be developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

## **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**

Georgia received \$334,704 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. Fifty-five contracts were approved in 29 counties.

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# Congressman Sanford Bishop

## River of Mud to Stream of Traffic

by Lewis Fokes, District Conservationist

Armored tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles maneuvering on Fort Benning bring a whole new meaning to what NRCS terms heavy use area protection. With a little rain, just getting these ground shaking vehicles out to the training area can leave a dirt road or tank trail virtually impassable to a standard 4x4 truck. When it rains, these trails can literally become a river of mud.

NRCS was asked to assist in permanently correcting the damage and stabilizing the site to provide all weather access for mechanized vehicles.

After a thorough investigation of the site, a plan was developed by NRCS with representatives of the Army to remedy the problem. To stabilize the site, it was first necessary to remove approximately 2 feet of unconsolidated mud and soil. Once the sub-grade preparation was complete, a 12 inch layer of No.3 coarse aggregate stone was put down on a geo-textile fabric to form a

foundation. The coarse aggregate stone also provided drainage relief for wet weather seepage. This stone was then covered with 9 inches finely graded aggregate base material, crowned, and compacted to provide a smooth durable two lane driving surface. The ditches, shoulders and road banks were reshaped to provide for stable surface drainage and all disturbed areas were vegetated.

By extending NRCS's traditional concept of heavy use protection to accommodate the foot print of a 60 ton tank, the A7 tank trail is back in use and is holding up well in all types of weather. Part of the planning on this site included the consideration of the maintenance capabilities of Fort Benning. An advantage to the type treatment used is that it can be maintained through their normal trail grading program and easily repaired should it become damaged.

The river of mud on the A7 tank trail has been replaced by a steady stream of traffic.



Before...



After

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 2

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2477
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$5,934,613
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$3,394,404
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$50,302
* Conservation Security Program	\$2,400,000
* Grassland Reserve Program	\$89,907

Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds \$3,012,734

Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State \$647,000

Technical Service Providers provided assistance to 10 producers.

#### Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	56,635 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	75,109 acres
Irrigation Efficiency Improved	1,665 acre-ft
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	8,314
Soil Erosion Reduced	169,899 tons
Conservation Plans for Water or Air Quality	3,125 acres
Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced	26 acres



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# Congressman Lynn Westmoreland

## UGA Soils Lab-Griffin Campus Bledsoe Farm

by Margaret Dunn, Area Coordinator

A soils lab was held at the Bledsoe Farm in Pike County on September 11, 2006. Carol Oliver, SCT and Jimmy Pettigrew, Pike County Employee assisted Jim Lathem, Area Resource Soil Scientist, with the class. The Crop and Soil Science 3060L class of Larry M. Shuman, at the Griffin campus of the University of Georgia consist of 4 students all pursuing a degree in Environmental Sciences.

The objective of the lab taught by Jim Lathem was for the students to describe a soil profile by identifying soil horizons. They were to use skills taught in preceding labs on soil texture and color and were to evaluate other soil and landscape characteristics observed in the field.



**Students get hands-on experience at soils lab in Pike County**

Jim Lathem, Soil Scientist, performed an excellent job in teaching the students about soil color, texture, and structure and how to delineate various soil horizons. The students filled out a field sheet that gave characteristics for each horizon observed. This was carried out for a Cecil soil that is characteristic of the Piedmont region in Georgia.

The class also observed a poorly drained soil (Helena) at a nearby soil pit. This soil demonstrated the typical grey colors of a poorly drained soil.

The students enjoyed the class and learned many valuable skills and concepts that are important to their education about soils.

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 3

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	4618
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$4,662,181
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$2,523,040
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$39,141
* Conservation Security Program	\$2,100,000
Conservation Innovation Grant	1
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$1,873,441
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$647,000
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	54,966 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	85,424 acres
Irrigation Efficiency Improved	1,489 acre-ft
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	18,078 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	252,536 tons
Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced	24 acres



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Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

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Through 2006, over \$4 million of financial assistance has been provided.

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One hundred eighty-nine of Georgia's 357 project dams are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail.

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Additionally, 32 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards.

Emergency Action Plans will be developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

## Wetlands Reserve Program

Georgia was one of six pilot states to pilot a new concept in selecting participants for the Wetland Reserve Program.

Using a market analysis to establish a bid cap on a per acre basis, participants then completed a self-ranking form that required them to answer specific questions about the acreage they are trying to restore.

The Satilla River in Brantley County was selected as the pilot area and 8 offers were received. The process lowered the average per acre bid from \$1700 to \$1200.

This resulted in 7 sites being selected for funding with a total of 2,000 acres to be protected by WRP easements.

## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

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Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants on 1,200 acres, who will use \$40,000 in WHIP cost-share. Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Cogon grass.

Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 28 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 34 sites.

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# Congressman Hank Johnson

## Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance

*by Steve Leslie, District Conservationist*

The biggest success that NRCS has been involved with in Dekalb County lately has been the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance.

The Alliance is a collection of private citizens, civic groups, localities and State and Federal agencies that have joined together to protect and enhance the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve and the surrounding area which is under strong development pressure due to a new mall.

NRCS first became involved in 1998 when the Alliance successfully applied for a grant from the Urban Resources Partnership (URP) in Atlanta to put up educational signage at the Preserve.

URP was a coalition of local conservation agencies funded primarily by the NRCS and the Forest Service that provided cost-share grants for locally led conservation projects in many metropolitan areas across the country.

Butch Goff and Steve Leslie, began attending Alliance meetings and talking to the group about the conservation programs that are available and what technical services we might provide.

Since then Steve Leslie has continued to participate with the group and provided an assessment of a pond dam on the property, as well as, soil survey information.

Later the Alliance successfully applied for another URP grant to produce a video that introduces school



children to the Nature Preserve before they visit. Both URP projects have since been completed.

The Nature Preserve has grown along with the Alliance through land acquisitions funded by over 30 million dollars of private, County and State, as well as, in-kind services.

Most recently an additional \$10 million in Federal funding through the Park Service was approved by President Bush to officially designate it as a National Heritage Area.

A smart growth plan has been drawn up for the area, which includes plans for an environmental magnet school and a trail system that would link the Preserve with Panola Mountain State Park and with other public properties along the South River.

For more information please go to <http://www.arabiaalliance.org/>

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 4

**Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds**

**\$14,826**

**Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State**

**\$647,000**



## Conservation Planning

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## Conservation Security Program

The Little Ocmulgee Watershed was selected for the 2006 CSP. It is located in parts of Dodge, Laurens, Telfair and Wheeler counties.

Fifty-eight of the 64 applications received were selected for funding, with 55 meeting all Tier 3 criteria.

These farmers split \$1.1 million in CSP payments for having applied a high level of conservation practices on over 24,000 acres.

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2006, approximately 1,000 Georgia Farmers benefited from \$14.7 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share funds.

Livestock producers received over 66% of the EQIP dollars.

Over 150 inefficient center pivots systems were retro-fitted to low pressure drop nozzle systems. There were also seven new subsurface micro irrigation systems installed.

Over 450 applications were received for the poultry litter transfer project. Fifty-two contracts were awarded, resulting in 25,000 tons of poultry litter being transferred.

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Georgia received over \$2.79 million dollars of EWP funding in November of 2004.

These funds are being used to apply emergency conservation measures in three counties: Gilmer, Rabun, and Towns.

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Emphasis is technology development on seeding rates, establishment, growth, management and culture of native warm season grasses.

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# Congressman John Lewis

## Little River Watershed Dams in Fulton County

by Valerie Pickard, District Conservationist  
The State Soil and Water

Conservation District-Fulton County (SSWCD-FC) 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 dams since the loss of life and property could occur if they were not maintained.

As a result, the SSWCD-FC has taken a proactive position on informing Fulton County of the issues and concerns of the Little River Watershed Dams.

“The majority of the Fulton County watershed dams have reached their 50-year lifespan threshold, although they still provide adequate flood protection,” said Dee West, Chair, SSWCD-FC.



**Increased construction around flood controlled dams makes maintenance of the structures even more critical.**

There has been increased construction around and near these watershed dams, however, and homeowners were unaware that the lake was built for flood control.

Since education is a major component of the SSWCD-FC annual plan, they developed an educational pamphlet to let homeowner's know the do's and don't's around the watershed dams in Fulton County.

They have successfully lobbied Fulton County to create and install noticeable signs near the watershed structures so the residents in the community will know who to contact if they notice any unusual activity occurring around the watershed structures.

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 5

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	54
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$19,474
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$19,474
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$41,300
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$34,403
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	1191 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	1191 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	26,428 tons



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# Congressman Tom Price

## Conservation Farming Through the Generations

by Mabelle Simmons,  
District Conservationist

John Bennett Jr. of Bennett Farms in Waleska (Cherokee County), is a third generation "model" of conservation farming. His family has owned and operated their farm for approximately 100 years.

It began with his grandfather who was a row cropper. Then his father took over the farm and began to convert from row cropping to pastures and poultry. His father first realized the value of utilizing assistance from federally sponsored programs to improve the quality of his land. He received assistance to install drainage tiles in some of his pasture areas. This allowed him to utilize more of his land for his beef cattle.

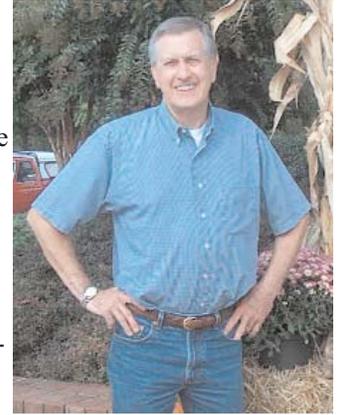
After John took over the farm, one of his main goals was to "preserve and improve the land for his grandchildren." He has been actively involved with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for many years now. He has received technical and financial assistance for fencing, heavy use areas, stream crossings, prescribed grazing, nutrient and pest management and a poultry litter stack house. He has also been approved for assistance with an animal mortality incinerator, which he expects to start working on this winter. By installing the modern

incinerator, he will be reducing soil pollution and improving the land.

When asked if he feels the EQIP program is meeting the needs of the farming community, he replied "Yes, it's a

very good program that gives a lot of encouragement in today's economy."

He also stated, "The local NRCS people have been very helpful, and I'm



John Bennett of  
Waleska, GA



Bennett's new stackhouse provides a safe storage area for poultry waste until it can be transported for use,

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 6

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	17
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Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$11,337
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* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$11,337
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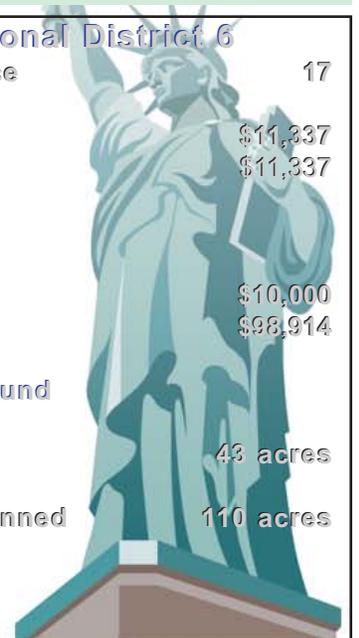
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$10,000
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Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$98,914
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### Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	43 acres
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Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	110 acres
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# Congressman John Linder

## Watershed Dam Rehabilitated in Gwinnett County

by Stephen Leslie, District Conservationist

A multi-year cooperative effort between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Gwinnett County, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC), Upper Ocmulgee RC&D Council, and Gwinnet Soil and Water Conservation District has resulted in the upgrade of Yellow River Dam Number 17 (Y-17).

This dam was originally constructed in 1967 when Gwinnett was still predominantly rural. As such, it was designed to protect flooding of farmland but because of urbanization, now protects homes and major infrastructure. This change in land use precipitated the need to evaluate this structure to determine if it should be removed or upgraded to meet more stringent criteria.

Designers and planners involved in this process evaluated many alternatives including some as drastic as removal of the dam and purchasing the homes in the downstream failure zone.

Approximately \$1.7 million dollars, six months of construction, and several years of planning have yielded a safer dam. Y-17 is now armored with a roller

compacted concrete overlay to protect the dam and its downstream residents from a sudden deluge of water caused by failure.

Except for the visible armoring on the top of the dam, residents might never know this change has taken place; because the lake is in a park setting, the decision was made to cover the back steps with earth fill and vegetation. This dam is the first of its kind in Georgia.

There are ongoing cooperative efforts between NRCS and Gwinnett County to complete the rehabilitation of two additional dams in 2006.

Many are benefiting from the tireless efforts in cooperation and coordination spearheaded by Jimmy Bramblett, NRCS, Water Resources Program Leader and Sam Fleming, Gwinnett County, Department of Public Utilities.



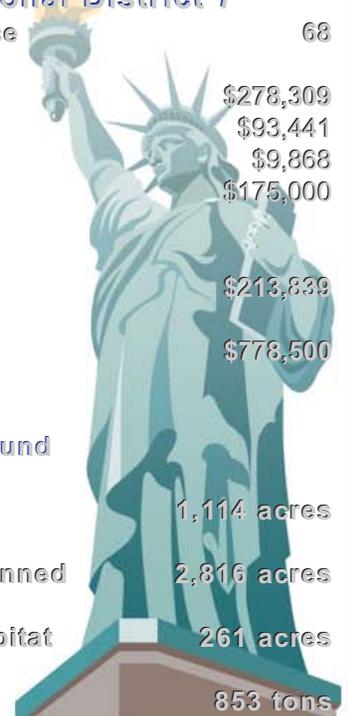
Completed dam

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 7

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	68
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$278,309
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$93,441
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$9,868
* Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	\$175,000
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$213,839
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$778,500

### Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	1,114 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	2,816 acres
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	261 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	853 tons



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Since 1952, a total of 77 small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia. Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

NRCS has received over \$7 million to help local landowners install conservation practices for water quality improvement in the 77 projects. Through 2006, over \$4 million of financial assistance has been provided.

## Watershed Dam Operation and Maintenance

To date, the maintenance on 93 dams has been brought up to date. Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program

One hundred eighty-nine of Georgia's 357 project dams are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail. Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured \$9.5 million to upgrade six watershed dams.

Additionally, 32 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards. Emergency Action Plans will be developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Georgia received \$334,704 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. Fifty-five contracts were approved in 29 counties.

Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants on 1,200 acres, who will use \$40,000 in WHIP cost-share. Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Cogon grass. Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 28 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 34 sites.

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# Congressman Jim Marshall

## Wilkinson County Farmer Converts Saves Time, Money, and Energy with Conservation Tillage

by Britt Parker, District Conservationist

Jason Howell grew up farming, but it wasn't until 1985 after he graduated from North Georgia Technical School that he began doing it for himself. Howell grows corn, peanuts, cotton, wheat, and rye and has about 80 head of beef cattle.

Howell has 1,200 acres of farmland in Wilkinson County and lives on a road named after his grandfather J. D. Howell. "I am a 4th generation farmer and my son will be the 5th," Howell said.

About 4 years ago Howell started hearing about conservation programs that could help his farm operation—programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and more recently the Conservation Security Program. He was interested in saving time and labor and reducing erosion in his fields.

After visiting with neighbors and the local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office, Howell and District Conservationist Britt Parker developed a conservation plan to help take care of the land.

"The main thing was erosion," Howell said when asked about the natural resource concerns he had on his property. He was particularly concerned about cattle walking on the banks of his pond and contributing to soil erosion and degradation of water quality.

To address these concerns, Parker designed a conservation plan that includ-

ed farming his row crops with conservation tillage and fencing cattle out of his irrigation pond and nearby stream.

Howell was especially interested in conservation tillage because he had heard other farmers were having good results and that it would help him reap more benefits from the Conservation Security Program—a relatively new program that rewards farmers for their conservation efforts.

"I started talking to people that were already doing it and they were saying that it worked well for them," he said. He decided to try it to save time and labor and reduce erosion in the fields.

Today, Howell has all of his 1,200 acres in strip-till and is a big fan! "We recently got 5 inches of rain here and there is no erosion in the strip-till," Howell said. He also likes strip-till because it reduces the amount of times he has to till his fields. It saves time for one thing. "We used to make 4, 5, or 6 passes through the fields; now, we make one pass," he said.

"In the long-term, it's (conservation tillage) better for the soil as well as to try to save money," Howell said. "If you plant crops and let them get to the "doty" stage, then spray it and plant into it year after year, you won't need water as much. We use less chemicals than we did in the past," he added.

Every time a farmer develops a conservation plan and implements the conservation practices in the plan, it costs him something.

Most cost-share programs require a 25 percent match.

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 8

<b>Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance</b>	<b>1,107</b>
<b>Total Conservation Cost-share Funds</b>	<b>\$860,946</b>
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$777,369
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$31,769
* Grassland Reserve Program	\$51,808
<b>Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds</b>	<b>\$1,264,160</b>
<b>Total RC&amp;D Funds Brought to the State</b>	<b>\$533,849</b>
<b>Technical Service Providers provided assistance to 14 producers.</b>	
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments</b>	<b>13,985 acres</b>
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned</b>	<b>21,389 acres</b>
<b>Irrigation Efficiency Improved</b>	<b>122 acre-ft</b>
<b>Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>6,672 acres</b>
<b>Soil Erosion Reduced</b>	<b>28,151 tons</b>



## Conservation Planning

NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2006 to develop 2,119 conservation plans on 257,568 acres throughout the state.

## Conservation Security Program

The Little Ocmulgee Watershed was selected for the 2006 CSP.

It is located in parts of Dodge, Laurens, Telfair and Wheeler counties.

Fifty-eight of the 64 applications received were selected for funding, with 55 meeting all Tier 3 criteria.

These farmers split \$1.1 million in CSP payments for having applied a high level of conservation practices on over 24,000 acres.

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2006, approximately 1,000 Georgia Farmers benefited from \$14.7 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share funds.

Livestock producers received over 66% of the EQIP dollars.

Over 150 inefficient center pivots systems were retro-fitted to low pressure drop nozzle systems.

There were also seven new subsurface micro irrigation systems installed.

Over 450 applications were received for the poultry litter transfer project.

Fifty-two contracts were awarded, resulting in 25,000 tons of poultry litter being transferred.

## Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Georgia received over \$2.79 million dollars of EWP funding in November of 2004.

These funds are being used to apply emergency conservation measures in three counties: Gilmer, Rabun, and Towns.

These counties suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan, Jeanne, and other storms that occurred in 2004.

## Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

In 2006, two proposals were selected and will provide permanent protection of 300 acres of Georgia farmland in Bartow and Oconee Counties valued at \$1.8 million.

## Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

In 2006, \$200,000 of GLCI funds were obligated to three projects that continue the emphasis of improving the management of Georgia's grazing lands.

## Plant Materials Program

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) has eight active studies involving plants native to the Southeastern U.S.

Emphasis is technology development on seeding rates, establishment, growth, management and culture of native warm season grasses.

'Tropic Sun' Sunn Hemp, a potentially new cover crop adapted to the Southeast, can produce sufficient biomass to provide ground cover and Nitrogen to a following summer cash crop.

Seed should be available in 2007 or 2008 in commercial seed sources in the Southeast.

## Resource Conservation & Development

During 2006, RC&D Councils in Georgia created 8 businesses and 29 new jobs for the state of Georgia.

Four watersheds were planned totaling over 200,000 acres; and technical and financial assistance were administered for about 2,200 acres of wildlife habitat creation.

It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 265 projects totaling over \$14 million in assistance during the year.

## Technical Service Providers

Seventy four individuals and organizations are certified through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program to provide technical services in Georgia.

Twenty-eight Georgia producers were funded to receive technical assistance on EQIP contracts on Residue Management and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans this year.

## Watershed Planning and Surveys Program

In 2006, NRCS in Georgia provided \$79,000 in technical assistance to 11 communities. The Chattooga River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment was completed.

It was determined through the planning process that agricultural influences on water quality in this watershed are minimal.

## Watershed Operations Program

Since 1952, a total of 77 small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia. Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

NRCS has received over \$7 million to help local landowners install conservation practices for water quality improvement in the 77 projects. Through 2006, over \$4 million of financial assistance has been provided.

## Watershed Dam Operation and Maintenance

To date, the maintenance on 93 dams has been brought up to date. Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

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## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Georgia received \$334,704 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. Fifty-five contracts were approved in 29 counties. Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants on 1,200 acres, who will use \$40,000 in WHIP cost-share. Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Cogon grass. Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 28 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 34 sites.

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# Congressman Nathan Deal

## Soil Historian Conserves Family Land

by *Mary Ann McQuinn,*  
*State Public Affairs Specialist*

Joe Russell's land has been in his family since the Cherokee Indians helped his great-grandfather, John R. Westbrooks, build his log cabin about a century ago. A gully, left over from the time the land was used to produce cotton, was eroding and contributing to poor water quality. Russell needed good grazing land for his cattle and a way to provide water for them without polluting the stream.

With technical assistance from NRCS and partial funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Programs, a conservation plan was developed and conservation measures were installed to reach all of these goals. Fields were fenced. Water troughs were installed. Wildlife habitat was created. The gully was plugged. No-till was introduced. Nutrient and pest management was incorporated into the plan as well.

According to Russell, "The level of soil erosion in Forsyth County is at the lowest level it has ever been." What was once a cotton field is now pasture land for Russell's purebred cattle giving his busi-

ness a chance to become more prosperous and protecting the environment at the same time.

Russell and his family were named Upper Chattahoochee River Soil & Water Conservation District Family of the year as a reward for the efforts in conservation.

District Supervisor Leonard Ridings of the Upper Chattahoochee River SWCD said of Russell, "We need more farmers like Joe Russell. Not only does he want to preserve his farm as farmland not land for development, but he also is very concerned about protecting all natural resources on his farm."



Joe and Helen Russell

### 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 9

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2,705
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$3,644,099
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$2,937,151
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$51,690
* Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program	\$615,000
* Grassland Reserve Program	\$40,258
Number of Community Nutrient Management Facilities	1
Conservation Innovation Grants	1
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$1,761,409
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$40,000
Technical Service Providers provided assistance to 2 producers.	

### Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	32,262 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	19,564 acres
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	4,488 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	43,470 tons
Coinconservation Plans Created for Water or Air Quality	291,580 acres
Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced	2 acres



## Conservation Planning

NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2006 to develop 2,119 conservation plans on 257,568 acres throughout the state.

## Conservation Security Program

The Little Ocmulgee Watershed was selected for the 2006 CSP. It is located in parts of Dodge, Laurens, Telfair and Wheeler counties. Fifty-eight of the 64 applications received were selected for funding, with 55 meeting all Tier 3 criteria.

These farmers split \$1.1 million in CSP payments for having applied a high level of conservation practices on over 24,000 acres.

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In 2006, approximately 1,000 Georgia Farmers benefited from \$14.7 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share funds. Livestock producers received over 66% of the EQIP dollars.

Over 150 inefficient center pivots systems were retro-fitted to low pressure drop nozzle systems. There were also seven new subsurface micro irrigation systems installed.

Over 450 applications were received for the poultry litter transfer project. Fifty-two contracts were awarded, resulting in 25,000 tons of poultry litter being transferred.

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Georgia received over \$2.79 million dollars of EWP funding in November of 2004. These funds are being used to apply emergency conservation measures in three counties: Gilmer, Rabun, and Towns. These counties suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan, Jeanne, and other storms that occurred in 2004.

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In 2006, two proposals were selected and will provide permanent protection of 300 acres of Georgia farmland in Bartow and Oconee Counties valued at \$1.8 million.

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tinue the emphasis of improving the management of Georgia's grazing lands.

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'Tropic Sun' Sunn Hemp, a potentially new cover crop adapted to the Southeast, can produce sufficient biomass to provide ground cover and Nitrogen to a following summer cash crop. Seed should be available in 2007 or 2008 in commercial seed sources in the Southeast.

## Resource Conservation & Development

During 2006, RC&D Councils in Georgia created 8 businesses and 29 new jobs for the state of Georgia. Four watersheds were planned totaling over 200,000 acres; and technical and financial assistance were administered for about 2,200 acres of wildlife habitat creation.

It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 265 projects totaling over \$14 million in assistance during the year.

## Technical Service Providers

Seventy-four individuals and organizations are certified through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program to provide technical services in Georgia. Twenty-eight Georgia producers were funded to receive technical assistance on EQIP contracts on Residue Management and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans this year.

## Watershed Planning and Surveys Program

In 2006, NRCS in Georgia provided \$79,000 in technical assistance to 11 communities. The Chattooga River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment was completed. It was determined through the planning process that agricultural influences on water quality in this watershed are minimal.

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Since 1952, a total of 77 small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia. Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

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To date, the maintenance on 93 dams has been brought up to date. Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

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One-hundred eighty-nine of Georgia's 357 project dams are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail. Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured \$9.5 million to upgrade six watershed dams. Additionally, 32 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards. Emergency Action Plans will be developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

## Wetlands Reserve Program

Georgia was one of six pilot states to pilot a new concept in selecting participants for the Wetland Reserve Program. Using a market analysis to establish a bid cap on a per acre basis, participants then completed a self-ranking form that required them to answer specific questions about the acreage they are trying to restore. The Satilla River in Brantley County was selected as the pilot area and 8 offers were received. This process lowered the average per acre bid from \$1700 to \$1200. This resulted in 7 sites being selected for funding with a total of 2,000 acres to be protected by WRP easements.

## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Georgia received \$334,704 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. Fifty-five contracts were approved in 29 counties.

Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants on 1,200 acres, who will use \$40,000 in WHIP cost-share. Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Cogon grass. Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 28 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 34 sites.

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# Congressman Charlie Norwood

## Conservation Helps Keep Water Clean in Morgan County

by Galen Wilson,  
Soil Conservationist

Amos Jones, a farmer since 1962, was concerned 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. Jones contacted Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for help.

The Madison County NRCS Field Office Staff encouraged Jones to develop an Alternative Watering System and exclude cattle from the natural water sources.

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

Jones implemented many suggested solutions with cost-share assistance through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Sugar Creek 319

Project with the partnership of the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission.

Pat Hardy, Piedmont District Chair Person, noted Jones' accomplishments, explaining that "by utilizing programs that are available, Jones has improved the quality of his fields and herd health.

He has used Heavy Use Areas to better work his herd to improve their health and in conjunction with these areas, made watering troughs available to his cattle to keep them out of the creeks and ponds."

By keeping the herd out of the creek and pond, he has eliminated hoof and leg problems and improved the water quality that leaves his property.

Jones has also incorporated cross fencing and rotational grazing on his fields to improve forage quality and quantity.

He has planted trees along farm boundaries to create silvo-pasture and act as a buffer area between his field and neighbors.



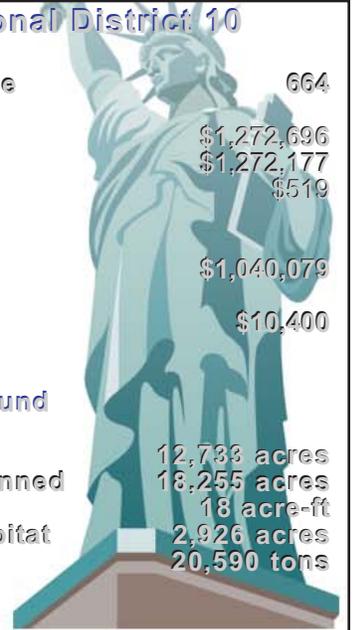
Dennis Brooks, Madison DC; Amos Jones; Margaret Jones; and Earl Brantley, ASCFD at Jones' farm

## 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 10

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	664
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$1,272,696
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$1,272,177
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$519
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$1,040,079
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$10,400

## Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	12,733 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	18,255 acres
Irrigation Efficiency Improved	18 acre-ft
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	2,926 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	20,590 tons



“Jones had 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.

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 NRCS 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.”

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NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2006 to develop 2,119 conservation plans on 257,568 acres throughout the state.

### **Conservation Security Program**

The Little Ocmulgee Watershed was selected for the 2006 CSP. It is located in parts of Dodge, Laurens, Telfair and Wheeler counties. Fifty-eight of the 64 applications received were selected for funding, with 55 meeting all Tier 3 criteria.

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### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**

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### **For More Information**

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# Congressman Phil Gingrey

## Carroll County Success

by *Sam Sharpe, District Conservationist*

Steve Lovvorn owns and operates a cattle and poultry farm in the Lower Little Tallapoosa River (LLTR) watershed.

The LLTR is in an active PL-566 Watershed Project with a large concentration of poultry and cattle operations within the watershed.

Concerns have been raised about excess nutrients and sediment having an impact on the LLTR.

The construction of the poultry houses on the rolling topography in Carroll County resulted in substantial fill being required for several of the houses.

The concentrated roof runoff from the houses caused erosion on the side slopes of the pads.

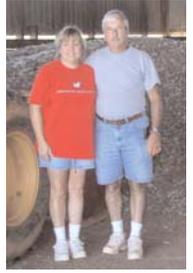
Lovvorn requested assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to alleviate this erosion problem. In addition to causing offsite sedimentation problems, the erosion also threatened the structural integrity of the poultry houses.

Grade Stabilization Structures were installed to collect the roof runoff water at the top of the slope and safely pipe the water to the bottom of the slope.



Before...

Lovvorn has been very pleased with the solution to the situation. "Before installing the structures, I was unable to safely mow the slopes of the pads due to the gullies, now I can easily maintain the slopes without fear of the tractor turning over in one of the gullies."



Lovvorn has also installed a Dead Bird Compost Facility and a Dry Stack Facility to handle the poultry mortality and poultry litter generated by the operation.

Application of the litter and compost material to the pasture fields was applied according to a Comprehensive Waste Management Plan.

With these practices, he has been able to store and compost the material in an environmentally friendly manner and retain valuable nutrients that would have been lost.

To improve the condition of the pastureland, Lovvorn has cross fenced the pasture to provide more control over the grazing characteristics of the livestock. This practice has reduced overgrazing of the grass and improved the utilization of the available forage.



After

## 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 11

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	470
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$870,262
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$836,802
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$33,460
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$610,764
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$655,900
Technical Service Providers provided assistance to 3 producers.	

### Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	11,656 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	17,697 acres
Irrigation Efficiency Improved	10 acre-ft
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	2,846 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	16,878 tons



Livestock Water Facilities and Heavy Use Areas were installed to provide alternate water to livestock, thus reducing impacts to streams on the property.

## **Conservation Planning**

NRCS has provided technical assistance to producers in 2006 to develop 2,119 conservation plans on 257,568 acres throughout the state.

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These farmers split \$1.1 million in CSP payments for having applied a high level of conservation practices on over 24,000 acres.

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It was determined through the planning process that agricultural influences on

water quality in this watershed are minimal.

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Since 1952, a total of 77 small watershed projects have been approved for operations in Georgia.

Some \$189 million of water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, flood protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat establishment have been planned on 5.2 million acres.

NRCS has received over \$7 million to help local landowners install conservation practices for water quality improvement in the 77 projects. Through 2006, over \$4 million of financial assistance has been provided.

## **Watershed Dam Operation and Maintenance**

To date, the maintenance on 93 dams has been brought up to date. Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

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One hundred eighty-nine of Georgia's 357 project dams are "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail.

Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured \$9.5 million to upgrade six watershed dams.

Additionally, 32 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards. Emergency Action Plans will be developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.

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Georgia received \$334,704 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. Fifty-five contracts were approved in 29 counties.

Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants on 1,200 acres, who will use \$40,000 in WHIP cost-share.

Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Cogon grass. Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 28 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 34 sites.

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# Congressman John Barrow

## Landis Dairy in Burke County

by *Richard Barrett,*  
*Resource Conservationist*

All dairies face the issue of waste management. New regulations in Georgia required many dairies to complete a comprehensive nutrient management.

Beryl Landis owns and operates a 500-head dairy in Burke County. Landis is very concerned about operating in a manner that protects the environment and meets all regulatory requirements.

A 20-year farmer, he sought the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service for assistance with a nutrient management plan to meet the Georgia regulations.

NRCS helped Mr. Landis develop a conservation plan to help him comply with the regulations and improve the quality of the natural resources in his



**Beryl Landis owns and operates a 500-head dairy**



**“We want to do a good job here at the Dairy!”**

**– Beryl Landis**

care. Conservation practices include nutrient management, crop rotation, conservation tillage, and a holding pond for manure.

Liquid waste is pumped onto cropland to grow silage through a center pivot. Scraped manure solids are now applied to fields and pasture with a solids spreader.

Conservation tillage helps to build the soil. With silage crops, there is so much organic matter removed, that whatever is left becomes even more important to the soil.

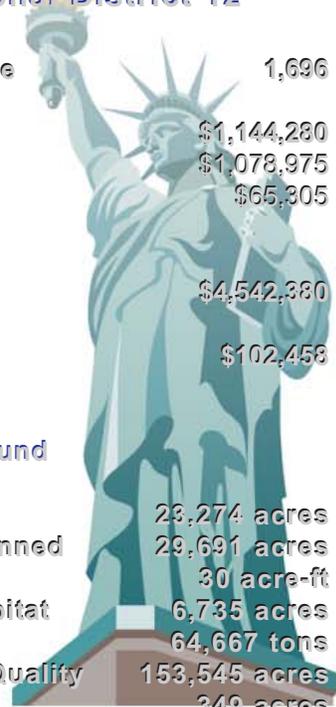
The two stage holding pond separates solids from liquids so they can be pumped out, leaving less volume to haul with a wagon. This saves time and money.

## 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 12

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	1,696
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$1,144,280
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$1,078,975
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$65,305
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$4,542,380
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$102,458

### Conservation on the Ground

Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	23,274 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	29,691 acres
Irrigation Efficiency Improved	30 acre-ft
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	6,735 acres
Soil Erosion Reduced	64,667 tons
Conservation Plans Created for Water or Air Quality	153,545 acres
Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced	349 acres



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Georgia was one of six pilot states to pilot a new concept in selecting participants for the Wetland Reserve Program. Using a market analysis to establish a bid cap on a per acre basis, participants then completed a self-ranking form requiring them to answer specific questions about the acreage they are trying to restore. The Satilla River in Brantley County was selected as the pilot area and 8 offers were received. This process lowered the average per acre bid from \$1700 to \$1200. This resulted in 7 sites being selected for funding with a total of 2,000 acres to be protected by WRP easements.

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# Congressman Jack Kingston

## Strip-tilling in Wheeler County

by Alex Comegys, District Conservationist

Mr. Emmitt Gillis has been a district supervisor with the Ohoopsee River Soil & Water Conservation District for 20 years.

After serving in the U. S. Army, Mr. Gillis started farming in 1947 and has acquired over 500 acres in Wheeler County that is in cropland, pastureland, and woodland.

Gillis is 77 years old and does all of the farm work with no outside help. His wife, Jewell, helps with the farm paper work, besides making great biscuits.

Gillis plants 46 acres of corn, 112 acres of soybeans, small grain and 51 acres of peanuts. Gillis has 60 head of brood cows and manages 50 acres of pastureland and 50 acres of hayland. He has four center pivots and irrigates all of the crops.



Emmitt Gillis and Alex Comegys, District Conservationist



Emmitt Gillis among his crops. Gillis has won numerous awards for production efficiency on the district and state levels for soybean, corn, and peanut yields.

Gillis averages 200 bushels per acre of corn, 60 bushels per acre of soybeans, and 5000 lbs. per acre of peanuts. His best peanut yield was 6400 lbs. per acre. Several years ago, Gillis broke the state record for corn and soybeans.

His farm is manicured and one weed is one too many. It is a pleasure to work with him on his conservation concerns and he is always open to new ideas. He is planning to strip till his row crops next year.

Even though he always farms on the contour to reduce soil loss, Gillis has observed the benefits of strip till and is changing his farming operation to strip till.

## 2006 Quick Facts for Congressional District 1

Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance	2130
Total Conservation Cost-share Funds	\$1,879,046
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$1,761,777
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$23,269
* Conservation Security Program	\$94,000
Number of Community Nutrient Management Facilities	1
Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds	\$2,045,419
Total RC&D Funds Brought to the State	\$1,600,073
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments	27,075 acres
Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned	33,357 acres
Irrigation Efficiency Improved	505 acre-ft
Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat	6,753 acre
Soil Erosion Reduced	115,971 tons
Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced	180 acres



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# Senator Johnny Isakson

## Organizations Partner to Meet Needs of Man and Nature

With the common goal of maintaining an abundant water supply in the lower Flint River basin, conservationists and agriculture met near Albany to celebrate Earth Day 2006: A Celebration of Water.

Conservationists, educators and members of the agriculture community celebrated the successful partnership that resulted in the installation of cutting-edge irrigation technology that will improve water conservation and preserve the diverse life found in the lower Flint River.

The variable rate irrigation system, developed by UGA-NESPAL, is a new technology that will enable users to irrigate their crops as needed, yet save approximately 10 to 20 percent of the water used in standard irrigation practices.

Using funding from the Farm Bill, NRCS is providing 75 percent of the cost of the purchasing and installing the variable rate irrigation system equipment.

To date, 23 agricultural water users, representing a combined 3,500 acres, have enrolled in this project.

"The 2002 Farm Bill encourages the use of innovative approaches to address

resource concerns, said James E. Tillman, Sr., state conservation for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"The variable rate irrigation technology is one of many conservation approaches to use the latest technology to address water conservation issues in South Georgia."

Other conservation practices of the program include working with agricultural users to develop irrigation management plans, implement best management practices, and installing efficient farming practices such as a low pressure drop nozzles and end gun cut offs.

"The natural resources of the Flint River Basin are being strained to support the needs of farmers and the environment," said Marty McLendon, chairman of the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District.

"The variable rate irrigation system is a proactive way to reduce the amount of water needed by the agriculture community without jeopardizing their livelihood.

Anything we can do to ensure that the water resources of the Flint River basin will be around for our children, grandchildren and future generations is a worthwhile endeavor."

### 2006 Quick Facts for Georgia

<b>Individuals Receiving Conservation Assistance</b>	<b>16,069</b>
<b>Total Conservation Cost-share Funds</b>	<b>\$20,571,296</b>
* Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$14,700,000
* Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$305,323
* Conservation Security Program	\$4,594,000
* Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	\$790,000
* Grassland Reserve Program	\$181,973
<b>Number of Community Nutrient Management Facilities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Conservation Innovation Grants</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Conservation Technical Assistance Funds</b>	<b>\$16,699,767</b>
<b>Total RC&amp;D Funds Brought to the State</b>	<b>\$4,427,380</b>
<b>Technical Service Providers provided assistance to 29 producers.</b>	
<b>Conservation on the Ground</b>	
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments</b>	<b>224,786 acres</b>
<b>Total Acres with Conservation Treatments Planned</b>	<b>319,386 acres</b>
<b>Irrigation Efficiency Improved</b>	<b>3,840 acre-ft</b>
<b>Private Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>57,758 acres</b>
<b>Soil Erosion Reduced</b>	<b>780,453 tons</b>
<b>Conservation Plans Created for Air or Water Quality</b>	<b>448,250 acres</b>
<b>Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced</b>	<b>581 acres</b>



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