



Athens
Georgia
December 2005

2005 Celebration of Conservation and Guide to the

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Helping People Help the Land

Mission

Helping People Help the Land

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NRCS Organizational Structure



State Conservationist

Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

State Conservation Engineer

State Administrative Officer

Assistant State Conservationist (Programs)

Assistant State Conservationist (Operations)

State Public Affairs Specialist

State Soil Scientist

Water Resources Program Manager

State Resource Conservationist

Plant Materials Specialist

Key NRCS Staff in Georgia

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Assistant State Conservationist for Operations - Dot Harris
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State Resource Conservationist - Josh Wheat
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Water Resources Team Leader - Jimmy Bramblett
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Soil Sciences/NRI Team Leader - Edward Ealy
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State Administrative Officer - Sharon Gipson
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Plant Materials Team Leader - Don Surrency
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****Complete directory available online at www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov*

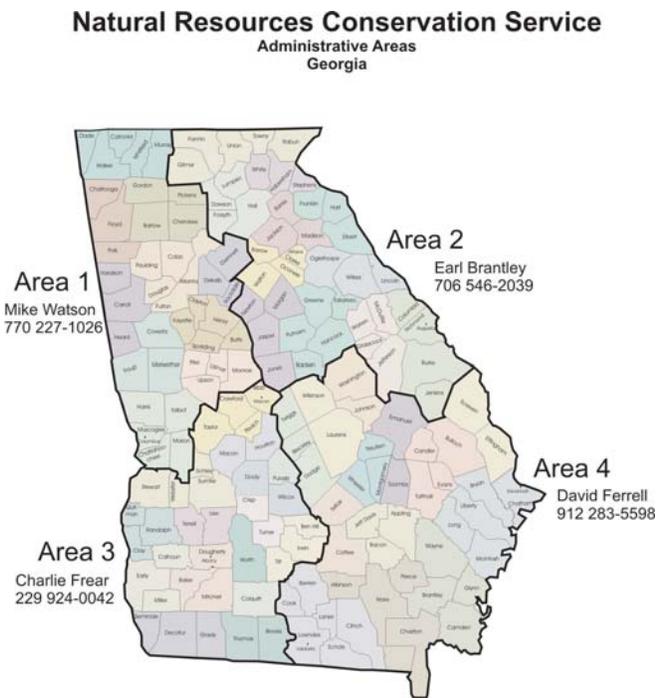
Georgia NRCS Administrative Areas

Area 1 - Griffin
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations - Michael Watson
Phone: 770 227-1026 **Fax:** 770 227-1511
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Area 2 - Athens
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations - Earl Brantley
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Area 3 - Americus
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations - Charlie Frear
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E-mail: charlie.frear@ga.usda.gov

Area 4 - Waycross
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations - David Ferrell
Phone: 912 283-5598 **Fax:** 912 283-8648
E-mail: david.ferrell@ga.usda.gov



Designated District Conservationists

| Area | Soil and Water Conservation District | NRCS District Conservationist |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Catoosa County Coosa River Limestone Valley West Georgia Clayton County Cobb County DeKalb County Fulton County Gwinnett County Henry County Lamar County Pine Mountain Rockdale County Roosevelt Towaliga | Cindy P. Askew, LaFayette Sheri E. Teems, Rome Machelle Simmons, Calhoun Sam Sharpe, Carrollton Angie Billups, McDonough Valerie Pickard, Marietta Stephen C. Leslie, Lawrenceville Valerie Pickard, Marietta Stephen C. Leslie, Lawrenceville Angie Billups, McDonough Carmen Westerfield, Barnesville Jack L. Fokes, Jr., Buena Vista Stephen C. Leslie, Lawrenceville Kevin Keel, Newnan Carmen Westerfield, Barnesville |
| 2 | Blue Ridge Mountain Hall County Stephens County Upper Chattahoochee River Broad River Lincoln County McDuffie County Oconee River Piedmont Warren County Brier Creek Columbia County Upper Ocmulgee River Walton County | Douglas Towery, Blairsville George Belflower, Gainesville Russell F. Biggers, Toccoa Russell F. Biggers, Toccoa Forrest W. Ferguson, Hartwell Joseph M. Riley, Washington J. Russell Young, Louisville Carol Boss, Commerce Dennis Brooks, Greensboro J. Russell Young, Louisville J. Russell Young, Louisville Leon Brooks, Augusta Dennis B. Brooks, Madison Jose' V. Pagan, Monroe |
| 3 | Ocmulgee River Flint River Lower Chattahoochee River Middle South Georgia | Ray Jones, Vienna Eddie Glover, Albany Lyndon McCavitt, Dawson Mary Leidner, Tifton |
| 4 | Alapaha Altamaha Satilla River Coastal Ogeechee River Ohooppee River Central Georgia | Harold B. Simpson, Jr., Nashville Bo Bannister, Douglas Vacant, Brunswick William G. Thrift, Statesboro Sidney Lanier, Swainsboro Britt S. Parker, Dublin |

Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|----------------|--------|----------|---------------|
| Area 1 | Griffin | Michael Watson | Area 2 | Athens | Earl Brantley |
| Area 3 | Americus | Charlie Frear | Area 4 | Waycross | David Ferrell |

District Conservationists & RC&D Coordinators

Alphabetical List of District Conservationists and RC&D Coordinators

| Last Name | First Name | Telephone | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | | McCavitt | Lyndon | 229-995-5811 |
| Askew | Cindy | 706 638-2207 | McCranie | Charles V. | 478-374-8140 |
| Bannister | Clemon L. | 912-383-6234 | Napier | Jim | 229-776-4488 |
| Barrett | Bryan | 706-453-2086 | Nichols | Elizabeth | 912-285-5975 |
| Belflower | George (Buddy) | 770-536-6981 | Pagan | Jose | 770-267-1359 |
| Biggers | Russell | 706-886-8223 | Palmer | Scotty | 229-924-9324 |
| Billups | Angie | 770-536-1221 | Parker | Britt S. | 478-275-0425 |
| Blackburn | Austin V. | 912-564-2207 | Pickard | Valerie | 770-792-0647 |
| Boss | Carol | 706-335-7145 | Reese | Karen | 229-732-6211 |
| Brooks | Dennis | 706-342-1315 | Richardson | Rory | 229-263-4909 |
| Brooks | Leon | 706-798-4070 | Riley | Joseph | 706-678-2630 |
| Brown | Jerome | 229 723-3841 | Sanders | K. Byron | 478-552-6073 |
| Cabe | Doug | 706 625-9943 | Sharpe | Sam | 770-832-8942 |
| Cleland | Steve | 229-723-3825 | Simmons | Machelle | 706-629-2582 |
| Comegys | Durham A. | 912-583-4432 | Simpson | Harold B. | 229-686-2363 |
| Ferguson | Forrest | 706-376-2876 | Steen | Bert | 229-246-8282 |
| Fokes | Lewis | 229-649-3131 | Stephens | Rebecca | 912-564-2207 |
| Futch | Joey A. | 912-367-4368 | Teems | Sheri | 706-291-5651 |
| Glover | Eddie | 229-430-8509 | Thompson | Kimberly C. | 912-529-6652 |
| Hall | Graylen | 229-268-9106 | Thrift | William G. | 912-265-8043 |
| Haygood | Cindy | 770 505-4288 | Towery | Doug | 706 745-2794 |
| Hill | Forrest | 706 885-0101 | Westerfield | Carmen | 770-358-3223 |
| Hinson | David | 770 339-6071 | White | Donald F | 912-876-6485 |
| Johnson | Andy | 770-957-5705 | Young | Russell | 478 625-7771 |
| Jones | Luther D. | 912-367-7679 | | | |
| Jones | Ray | 478-956-6490 | | | |
| Keel | Kevin | 770-251-4283 | | | |
| Lanier | Sidney C. | 478-237-8037 | | | |
| Leidner | Mary | 229-382-4776 | | | |
| Leslie | Steve | 770-963-9288 | | | |

Conservation Security Program

Program Manager: David Lamm

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Program Highlights

This one-of-a-kind conservation program seeks to reward farmers who are practicing sound resource management on their farms and to motivate others to take better care of their natural resources.

The CSP was expanded to a nationwide program in 2005 with farmers in 220 watersheds being eligible for participation.

Georgia was fortunate to have five watersheds in the southwestern corner of the state which were eligible for the Conservation Security Program. These watersheds; the Little River, Upper Ochlockonee, Ichawaynochaway, Kinchafoonee-Muckalee, and



Middle Flint, cover all or parts of 20 counties.

Scott Everidge signs a 2005 CSP contract while NRCS State Conservationist James Tillman and others look on.

Four information meetings were conducted to explain the program to interested producers. One hundred twenty applications were submitted and 111 were selected for funding. These 111 contracts will divide \$2.7 million in CSP payments annually to protect over 85,000 acres enrolled in the program.

Patricia Rigdon, Scott Everidge, and Bill Sanders were recognized by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service as one of Georgia's 2005 Conservation Security Program participants at a recent signing ceremony in Dooly County.

CSP is a voluntary program that rewards landowners for conservation improvements they've made to soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life.

E-Government

Program Manager: Dot Harris

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Landowners and others wanting to do business with the government can now do it online! NRCS is one of three USDA Service Center agencies.

Many services provided by these agencies are now available online.

The United States Department of Agriculture has implemented a new process for registering customers who choose to conduct electronic transactions with USDA agencies. This new process was implemented on October 21, 2003.

Under the new process, a customer can register for access to eGov applications by visiting

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

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

When registered, the customer will need to visit their local service center and have their identity verified by presenting one of four forms of id; State Drivers License; State issued identification card; US passport or a Military ID.

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

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Program Manager: Jimmy Bramblett

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Program Highlights

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program provides local communities with emergency technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns resulting from a natural disaster.

An example would be downed trees blocking creeks and/or excess sedimentation. These impediments cause blockage to creeks or small drainage ways, threatening damage to roads, bridges and other structures and increased risk to human life. The EWP provides assistance in assessing the problem and potential damage, identifying alternatives to mitigate the situation and financial resources to remove the impediment. NRCS may be involved in three types of emergencies:

- Presidential/Federally declared disaster
- State declared disaster
- Local disaster

Cost-Share

75% NRCS

25% Sponsor (Usually state or local governments)

Funding

Funding for EWP comes in the form of supplemental appropriations from Congress on an “as-needed” basis when a disaster occurs. Georgia received over \$2.79 million dollars in EWP funding in November of 2004 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. Emergency measures include debris removal, streambank protection, bioengineering, road and culvert headwall protection, and road-slide stabilization.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

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Program Highlights

The primary purpose of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals, and to optimize environmental benefits:

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

In 2005, approximately 1200 Georgia Farmers benefited from \$15.5 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost share funds. Georgia livestock producers received over 64% 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.

The Buena Vista Field Office is currently assisting Mrs. Peggy Woolam, owner and operator of Bryan's Run Poultry Farm with constructing a waste storage facility and installing an animal mortality system to meet the latest state and local regulations. Mrs. Woolam has 8 broiler houses in Marion County.

NRCS assisted Mrs. Woolam with a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan which included a litter storage facility or stack house and also an incinerator to dispose of dead birds.

Mrs. Woolam was accepted into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program as an outreach participant and received 75% cost-share assistance to help with the cost of installing the stack house and incinerator. By installing these practices Mrs. Woolam has been able to abide by all regulations that coincide with an AFO permit.



Peggy Woolam and her brother Henry Keeble

EQIP Continued...

Conservationist R.E. Hendrix Conducts Conservation Tillage Experiment on Vidalia Onions with the help of NRCS District Conservationist Glyn Thrift

When District Conservationist Glyn Thrift was looking for an innovative farmer to try a conservation method known as conservation tillage on Vidalia onions, he wasn't having much luck. "I struck out two times before I talked to R.E. (Hendrix of Hendrix Produce)," said Thrift .

Then, he asked long-time farmer R. E. Hendrix of Hendrix Produce in Candler County. "He said I reckon I just wanna volunteer," he laughed. Thrift is the District Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.



R.E. Hendrix observes his onion crops in Candler County

The federal agency works with landowners to take care of their natural resources and provides cost-share assistance for conservation practices that help the environment. Hendrix, a long-time conservationist, said he has worked with NRCS "since forever."

One of those practices is conservation tillage. Conservation tillage is a conservation practice that leaves residue on the soil to prevent erosion from wind and water. Strip till and no-till are variations of the practice.

Georgia farmers are having a lot of success with conservation tillage. It is being used on cotton-Georgia's fastest growing crop, corn, and soybeans.

Hendrix said he was skeptical at first about trying no-till on Vidalia onions. "I didn't think it would work," said Hendrix speaking of conservation tillage. "I mean, I had my doubts about it. I just couldn't see how it was going to work."

Hendrix tried it anyway for the erosion control benefits. "It stops erosion. It's doing that right now. That's the reason we tried it. We put it on highly erodible land because we get a lot of wind damage." Hendrix said.

"We fixed our land and set our onions out and we overseeded it with rye. You couldn't even see the onions. I had to spray it three times instead of one time," Hendrix said. The mature crop won't come out of the ground until May. "Right now, it looks healthy," he said.

Hendrix received cost-share funds for retrofitting his irrigation system to reduce water loss and improve irrigation efficiency. Last year he improved his water source by renovating his pond dam and pool area with cost-share assistance from the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

EQIP Continued...

A Good Day on the Farm

Approximately four years ago, Teri and Barry West decided to try full-time poultry farming. They purchased a 40-acre farm in Gordon County, to begin raising broilers for GoldKist. Barry even put his “singer-songwriter” career on temporary hold in order to dedicate enough time to establishment of the poultry operation.

After some time and lots of hard work, they now have an established and successful poultry operation.

Unfortunately, having four full-size poultry houses also generates a lot of waste.

That’s where the EQIP came to help. Through the EQIP cost-share and the technical advice of Machel Simmons, District Conservationist in Calhoun GA, the West’s were able to



Well designed stream crossing at the West farm in Gordon County

build a composter/combo stackhouse for their waste. The stackhouse allows composting of both the chicken litter and the dead birds. Composting is much more desirable, both economically and environmentally than disposing of waste in pits.

Although it’s long, hard work, Teri quotes, “A bad day on the farm is better than a good day in retail”.



Interior of stackhouse

Farm & Ranchlands Protection Program

Program Manager: David Lamm

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Program Highlights

The Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP) is a permanent easement program designed to help keep farmers and ranchers in agriculture.

The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governmental organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements or other interests in land.

In 2005, seven proposals were received from sponsors to protect 1,200 acres of farmland located in four different counties with a conservation easement value of \$3.2 million. Six proposals were selected and will provide permanent protection of 1, 147 acres of Georgia farmland. These farms are located in Carroll, Clarke, and Oconee Counties.

Carroll County Farms receive Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program Funding

Conservation easements in the amount of \$796,500 were purchased on three Carroll County farms under the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRRP) These easements will result in 719 acres of farmland being permanently protected.



Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

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Program Highlights

NRCS and the Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) encourage forage and livestock producers to adopt practices that promote the efficient use of their grazing land resources, while conserving soil and protecting water quality.

The demonstration project, funded with the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) congressional earmark, is a producer- developed cost-share program designed to demonstrate innovative practices on existing forage and livestock operations. The GGLCC conducted its fourth sign-up for this project in 2005. Each sign-up obligates \$400,000 of improvements on livestock and forage management operations.

A Brief History of the GGLCC

The GGLCC is probably best known for its two major projects: the GGLCC demonstration cost-share project and the Statewide Forage Conference. The demonstration project has been ongoing since 1999.

At the conclusion of the fourth contracting period, the GGLCC demonstration project will have assisted 80 producers in 50 counties, offering them a total of \$900,000 in cost-share assistance to apply a wide variety of conservation, production and economic efficiency practices. As a project offering 50% cost-share, this equates to \$1.8M in grazing lands management improvements. Georgia NRCS stands out as a recognized and envied leader among other states due to its financial support of this project.

To balance its program activities, the GGLCC offered grazing lands managers a one-day educational opportunity as its Statewide Forage Conference. The conference was held three times having a total registration of more than 650 people.

With active leadership, the Coalition has progressed from a concept to a non-profit corporation.

National Resources Inventory

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Program Highlights

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistically based survey that has been designed and implemented using scientific principles to assess the trends of soil, water, and related resource conditions on nonfederal lands in the United States.

NRI is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) tool to provide Congress natural resources information. Section 302 of the 1972 Rural Development Act and legislation in 1977 and 1985, requires a USDA report to Congress on natural resource conditions.

Since the early 1970s, resource data has been gathered on a random sample of 160-acre land tracts called Primary Sample Units (PSUs). The entire 1997 NRI database is now available to the public on CD.

Resource information available in NRI includes:

Land Use - Cropland, Forestland, Pastureland, Urban Land, Transportation, Federal, Wetlands · Water Erosion · Developed Land · Land Cover - Forest, Grass, Water, Crops · Prime Farmland

2005 has been a transition year. The NRI will now be organized on a regional level throughout the nation. Three Remote Sensing centers throughout the nation will collect the photographic portion of the data. The states will support with on-site verification. Historical materials were moved from Georgia to the new center in Greensboro, North Carolina in 2005. The 2004 and 2005 NRI data collection will begin in the spring of 2006.

The entire 1997 NRI database is now available to the public on CD. The national release of 2003 data (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/>) shows Georgia losing prime farmland to development at the third fastest rate in the nation. In good news, the nation showed its first net gain of agricultural wetlands since the NRI began in 1982. NRI also anchors the Conservation Effects Assessments Project (CEAP). CEAP began in 2003 as a multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation practices used by private landowners participating in selected USDA conservation programs.

Plant Materials Program

Program Manager: Don Surrency

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Program Highlights

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a branch of the USDA-NRCS. It is one of 27 plant materials centers located throughout the country. The Center is located on the Northwest corner of Americus, Georgia, in Southwestern Georgia and is approximately 40 miles North of Albany. Areas served include Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Florida.

It is our mission to develop plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology to solve natural resource problems and meet the objectives of environmental programs. NRCS includes the use of native plants as a high priority in the plant materials center's strategic plan. We develop, test, and release superior adapted plants to commercial growers along with production and management technology.

The PMC has eight active studies involving plants native to the Southeastern U.S. Major emphasis has been placed on seeding rates, establishment, growth, management and culture of native warm season grasses. Big bluestem, switchgrass, little bluestem, indiagrass and eastern gamagrass show great potential as forage, wildlife habitat improvement, carbon sequestration, nutrient reclamation, erosion control, conservation buffers, etc.

The PMC is studying several native plants for forage, nutrient uptake, wildlife habitat improvement and 2002 Farm Bill implementation. Until recently there were no native warm season grasses selected for the Southeastern U.S.; however, in the summer of 2002 the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus, Georgia released 'Americus' Indiangrass. Americus was selected from plant material originating in the Southeast. It is adapted to upland sites of our region for use as cattle forage, wildlife habitat improvement, soil conservation and plant community restoration.

New Native Plant Releases

In 2004, the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center released two native plant germplasms from South Carolina and one from North Carolina. They are Newberry Germplasm Indiangrass and Union Germplasm Purpletop in South Carolina and Durham Germplasm Switchgrass in North Carolina.

For the first time we are partnering with the U.S. Forest Service (Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests) in South Carolina and the South Carolina Native Plant Society to release two plants that were collected in the National Forests.

Plant Materials Program Continued...

Small Farmer Initiative

In 2005 the PMC focused on the issues facing small farmers. To improve the visibility of the PM program a special small farmer initiative was launched to reach small farmers in the service region. Special plant material native grass demonstrations were established in Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina.

The PMC provided native grass seed to set-up small demonstrations in strategic areas to reach small farmers. The purpose of the demonstration was to introduce new/latest plant technology to small farmers. Through our technology transfer effort a total of seven (7) field demonstrations were established in Georgia. In addition, a native grass conference for small farmers and universities was held in September, 2005.

Approximately 95 people registered for the conference. Other technology transfer products included a video produced in cooperation with Fort Valley State University and two publications, entitled, "Plant Materials - Assisting Small Farmers" and "Plant Materials Assistance to Small Farms".



Resource Conservation & Development

Program Manager: Jimmy Bramblett

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Introduction

Over 40 years ago, Congress established a unique program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture that empowered rural people to help themselves. The USDA focus was to assist local people by providing tools and technical support to stabilize and grow their own communities while protecting and developing natural resources.

To carry out the RC&D concept, diverse groups of local volunteers (The RC&D Council) are brought together in a unique partnership to find solutions to their problems. Local people are best able to determine needs and create solutions for their community.

The focus on the local direction and control has made RC&D one of the most successful natural resource programs of the Federal Government. The focus of the program provides for the sustainability of local economies and resources.

Georgia RC&D Councils

Central Savannah River
3456D Peach Orchard Road
Augusta, Georgia 30906
(706) 798-7967
Fax: (706) 798-9445

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

Seven Rivers
400 East Park Avenue, Suite 5
Baxley, Georgia 31513
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Fax: (912) 367-1184

Chestatee-Chattahoochee
624 Green Street, N.E.
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(770) 536-1221
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Oconee River
P.O. Box 247
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(706) 769-7922
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Two Rivers
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Fax: (912) 877-8021

Pine Country
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(912) 529-6652
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Upper Ocmulgee River
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Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045
(770) 339-6071
(678) 442-1329

Golden Triangle
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RC&D Continued...

The RC&D Council Program in Georgia consists of 11 Council areas comprising 127 counties of Georgia's 159 counties. RC&D programs provide assistance to the people in their Council areas by helping them plan and implement projects in their communities that will make their communities better places to live and work.

The governing bodies of the Councils are made up of volunteers from within the Council areas. The Natural Resource Conservation Service provides technical and administrative support through NRCS personnel including a full-time coordinator.

During 2005, RC&D Councils in Georgia created 8 businesses, and 29 new jobs for the state of Georgia. They planned 3 watersheds, Ebenezer Creek, Williamson-Swamp Creek and Upper Oconee River, totaling over 433,000 acres; in addition to administering the technical and financial assistance for some 2,200 acres of wildlife habitat creation. It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 263 projects totaling over \$12 million in assistance during the year.

Coastal Georgia RC&D Council Turns Off Free Flowing Artesian Wells to Conserve Water

Coastal Georgia RC&D Council has completed its free service to repair and install flow controls on free flowing artesian wells in the southern Georgia coast.

The project goal was to conserve water from the Upper Floridan Aquifer, used by three states for drinking water. Several hundred wells were currently flowing 24 hours/day, seven days/week along the south Georgia coast. The wells were once used to provide water to now abandoned homesteads or grazing operations.

Because they flow continuously, a flow of 2 gallons per minute is over 1,000,000 gallons of water lost each year.

This project was funded by a \$6,000 Savannah Presbytery Ecology Fund grant and matching \$6,000 Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission grant.



Before



After

This free service was available to landowners on a voluntary basis. It paid for 100% of materials and labor costs. The free service also allowed cooperating landowners to use as much water from their wells as they needed to achieve their land management goals.

The Council repaired or capped 15 wells. Where repairs were not feasible, the Council employed local well drillers to cap several wells with concrete.

RC&D Continued

The water saved from the wells treated is 73,835,600 gallons year. Using the rate of \$1.50 per 1000 gallons, the value of the water saved is \$110,753.40 year.

Treating these wells has cost \$12,000, so the project's benefit to cost ratio in the first year alone is \$110,753.40/\$12,000 or 9.2/1.

Because the repairs are a one-time expense but the benefits continue to accumulate, the benefit/cost ratio increases to 18.4/1 in the second year, 27.6/1 in the third year, and into infinity.

An additional 10,512,000 gallons of water per year were saved by landowners who completed their own repairs. These savings were not included in the 73,835,600 gallons / year cited above and achieved through project repair and capping activities.

Wiregrass Trail Regional E911 Project Funded

Coastal Georgia RC&D received approval of its \$488,000 OneGeorgia Grant to fund the Wiregrass Trail Regional Enhanced 911 System for Long, McIntosh, and Tattnall Counties. The grant would pay 100% of all E911 startup equipment and services.



The Georgia legislature originally made \$3 million available from the State's tobacco fund settlement to the 30 Counties which did not have enhanced 911 services, but funds were only provided for regional projects.

Enhanced 911 emergency dispatcher station

Long and McIntosh were the only counties in the Coastal Georgia RC&D Area which qualified. Long ranks last of Georgia's 159 counties in per capita income, and McIntosh ranks 153rd (2002 Georgia County Guide). Coastal Georgia RC&D helped lead and facilitate this process for the past year.

When a 911 call is placed, the enhanced 911 system instantly displays a road map showing the location of the call and a color picture of the structure from which it was placed. Even if the caller is incapacitated, emergency vehicles are dispatched to the correct location.

The current system in Long and McIntosh Counties merely forwards 911 calls to the Sheriff's Dept. which must get location information verbally from a caller and transmit it to emergency responders.

River Basin Program

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River Basin Program

NRCS cooperates with federal, state and local agencies to make surveys and investigations of river basins as a basis for the development of coordinated water resource programs.

Reports of the investigations and surveys provide useful information to be used in the development of water, land, and related resources in agricultural, rural, and urban areas within upstream watershed settings.

They also serve as a basis of information for coordination with major river systems and other phases of water resource management and development.

Safe Dam Rehabilitation Program

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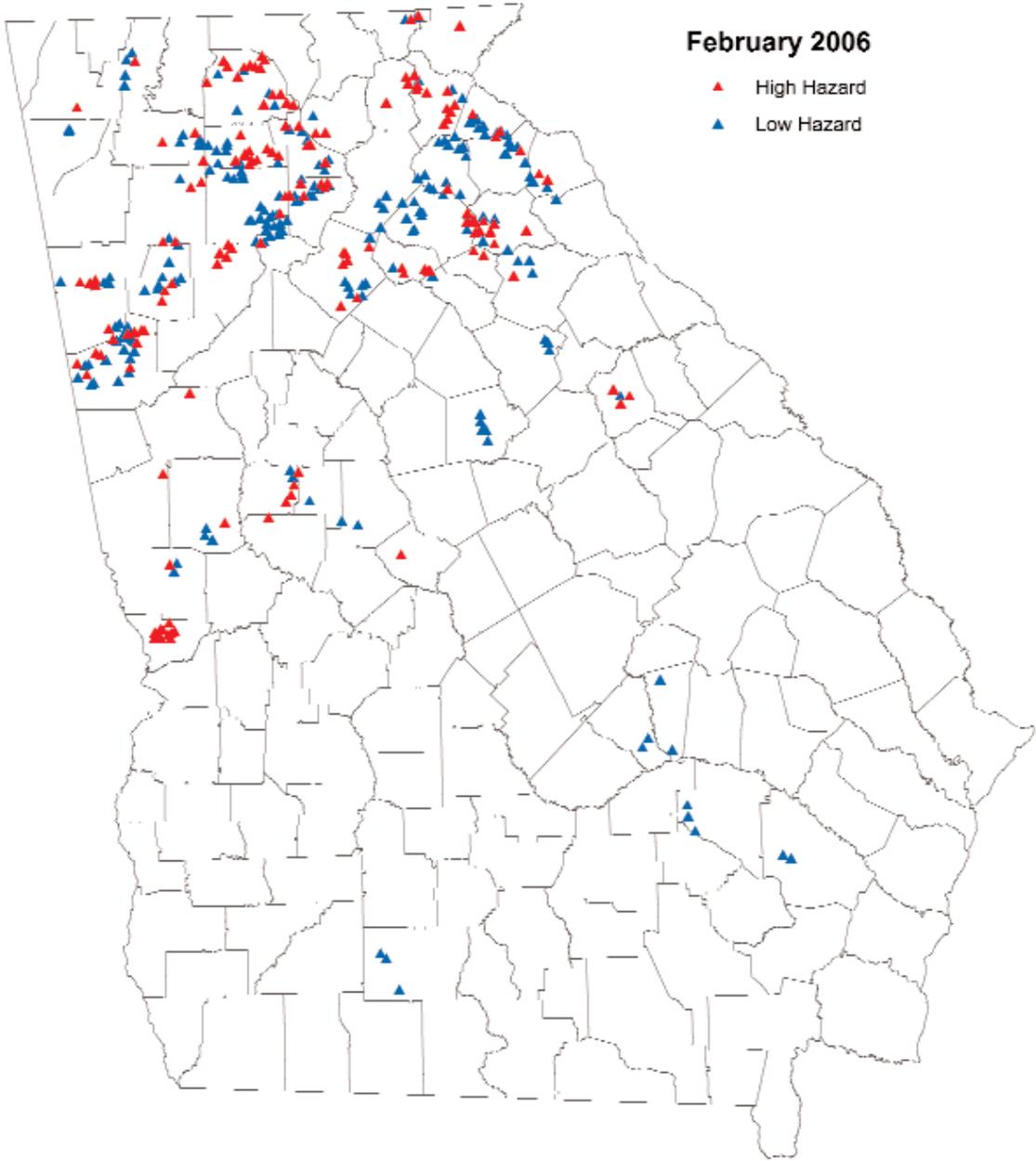
Program Highlights

Since 1953, 357 project dams have been built in Georgia. The Georgia Safe Dams Program has categorized 150 of these as "High Hazard," indicating a potential loss of life if the dam were to fail. Preliminary investigations indicate that some \$85 million will be needed to upgrade these structures and ensure compliance with current dam safety legislation. NRCS project dams annually provide \$19 million of benefits to local communities by providing flood protection, water based recreation, municipal water supply, and other water uses.

One of the major issues involved with aging dams is the safety and health of an estimated 15,000 people downstream from the dams. Many dams were originally built in rural areas to protect agricultural lands. Homes, businesses, and roads have now been built downstream, and increased damages would occur if they were to fail. Congress passed legislation in 2000 that authorized NRCS to provide financial and technical assistance for rehabilitation of dams that were originally constructed under NRCS water resources programs.

During 2005, NRCS upgraded Yellow River Watershed Dam No. 17 for \$1.75 million. Three Yellow River dams along with Haynes Creek-Brushy Fork Creek are currently working their way through the design phase toward upgrade. The hazard classification was documented on 10 additional watershed dams: Etowah River, Mill-Canton Creek, Palmetto Creek, Grove River, Little Sandy Creek & Trail Creek, three dams of the South River and two dams of Sandy Creek).

Safe Dam Rehabilitation Program Continued...



Soil Survey

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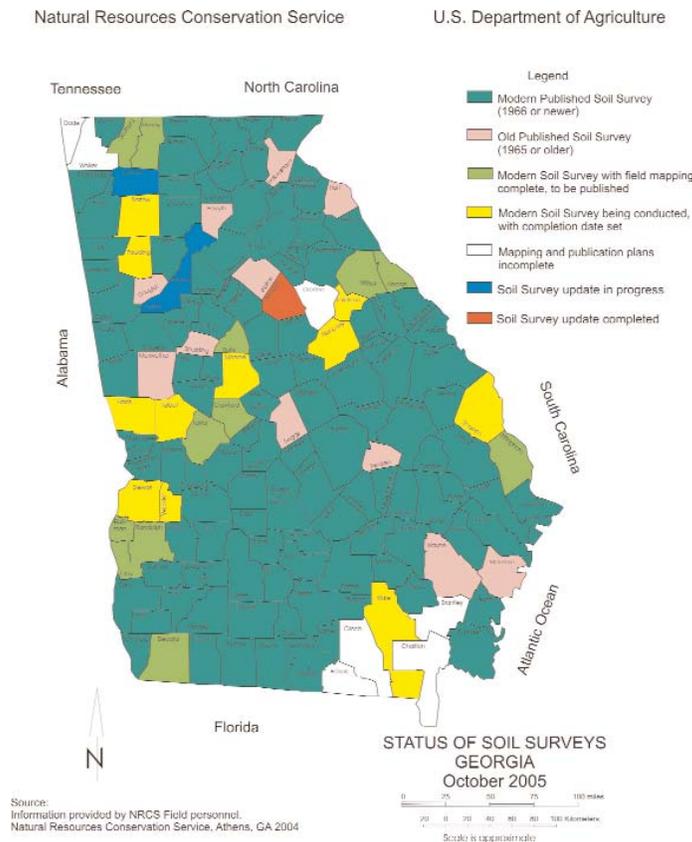
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Program Highlights

Soil surveys provide a comprehensive inventory of soil resources and conditions that describe soil erodibility, soil productivity and properties that affect suitability for many uses. NRCS is authorized by Congress to conduct a soil survey of the nation and territories including the Pacific Basin, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

One hundred and thirty one Georgia counties have published soil surveys, 11 counties have completed surveys that are being published, 11 are presently being surveyed, 1 county has been updated, and 2 other updates are in progress. There are now 52 survey areas (92 counties) with a Soil Survey Geographic database.



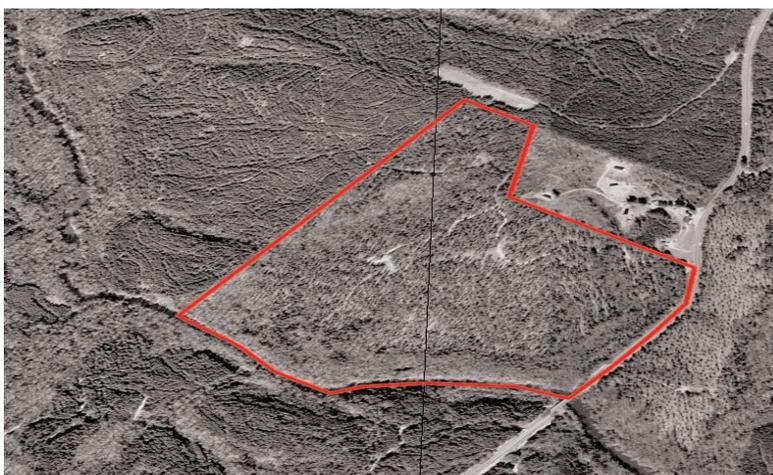
Soil Survey Continued...

NRCS Assists Chattahoochee County with Information for Land Use Planning

The Buena Vista NRCS Field Office assisted the Chattahoochee County Board of Commissioners with digital aerial maps, topographic maps, soil maps, and soil survey interpretative data on 250 acres of county-owned property.

The county is using this information for land use planning to encourage economic development.

Due to a limited amount of available commercial property outside of Fort Benning, the area is being made available for sale to private individuals or corporations interested in the Chattahoochee County area.



Technical Service Providers

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Program Highlights

Fiscal Year 2005 saw continuation and expansion of the Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program in Georgia. An improved website (<http://techreg.usda.gov>) consolidates all Technical Service Provider activity, including web-based self-certification, and Certification Agreements.

Eighty-nine individuals have been certified to provide technical services in Georgia. This is up from 54 two years ago, and 76 last year. Eighty Georgia producers received technical assistance on Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts impacting on more than 30,000 acres this year, and another 40 received services from state agency personnel working under TSP agreements with NRCS.

Watershed Program

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Program Highlights

The Watershed Program helps sponsoring organizations in the development of a plan on watersheds 250,000 acres or less.

During planning, problems such as water quality, flooding, water and land management, and sedimentation are evaluated and works of improvement are proposed to alleviate problems.

The resulting watershed plans estimate benefits, costs, cost-sharing rates, and arrange for operation and maintenance necessary to justify Federal assistance to install works of improvement.

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. There are currently two active flood prevention projects and seven active watershed protection projects. In 2005, long-term contracts were completed with 20 landowners for almost \$1 million.

The following are active watershed protection projects:

Lower Little Tallapoosa River Watershed - Carroll County South Chickamauga Creek Watershed - Walker and Catoosa Counties Piscola Creek Watershed - Brooks County Turkey Creek Watershed - Dooly County Five Points Area Watershed - Macon County Tobesofkee Creek Watershed - Lamar and Monroe Counties.

Watershed Planning and Surveys Program

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

In 2005, NRCS in Georgia provided \$216,000 in technical assistance to eleven communities. The Big Cedar Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment was completed. Project Sponsors selected a plan calling for \$1.7 million in technical and finan-

Watershed Program Continued...

cial assistance to improve water quality in the Polk County, Georgia area.

An emerging resource concern associated with water supply lead to three communities requesting for federal assistance under the Watershed Planning and Surveys Program. NRCS-Georgia has requested almost \$4 million in technical assistance funding to provide needed assistance to these communities with over 60,000 beneficiaries.

North Broad Watershed Rehabilitation Underway

Since 1953, 357 NRCS Assisted Project Dams have been constructed.

Most dams provide flood protection benefits to communities downstream. As man-made structures, these dams need regular maintenance.

After years of neglect, many local sponsors (with financial assistance from the state) have allocated approximately \$200,000 for much needed maintenance.

NRCS provides technical assistance with identification of maintenance needed.



Swath created by gyro-tech machine

These photos are from a recent work site in the North Fork Broad River Watershed in Franklin County.



Marker like this one were a common sight in '60's.



The gyro-tech is a unique machine that can mulch trees.

Wetlands Reserve Program

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Program Highlights

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to restore, enhance, and protect wetlands. Landowners have the option of enrolling lands through permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreement.

Three easements were finalized in 2005 protecting 750 acres of wetland habitat permanently. There are also 5 new WRP applications that are being considered for funding. The highlight of 2005 was the completion of the Bradley Farm restoration in southwest Georgia. This restoration project included 100 acres of tree planting, installation of a water control structure to allow manipulation of the water level in 60 acres of wetland to improve water fowl habitat, and the use of micro topography techniques to create areas of varying depth of water to insure that water will be present year round.



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

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Program Highlights

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land.

Through WHIP USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed. WHIP has proven to be a highly effective and widely accepted program across the country. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides assistance to conservation minded landowners who are to meet the specific eligibility requirements of other USDA conservation programs.

Georgia received \$415,000 in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year. 105 contracts were approved in 53 counties. WHIP contracts seek to improve one of four priority wildlife habitats: 1) Early Successional Plant Habitat; 2) Longleaf Pine Ecosystems; 3) Riparian Forest Buffers; and 4) Upland Hardwood Communities. Typical practices to accomplish this include longleaf pine planting, forest openings, field borders, and hedgerow planting.

Management of invasive species was targeted by 30 participants who will use \$44,000 in WHIP cost-share. Targeted invasive species include wild privet and Congo grass. Other practices included Longleaf Pine planting on 48 farms and Upland Wildlife Habitat on 46 sites.



WHIP Continued...

Haralson County Success

Jeff Watson is a second generation landowner of approximately 83 acres in Haralson County.

The majority of the property is in hardwoods with a 10-acre tract that is predominately Loblolly pine. There is an 11-acre open area that is managed for wildlife. A small portion is planted as a food plot while the remaining is allowed to go native.

Jeff applied for, and received cost-share funding through the WHIP program. This funding enabled him to complete noncommercial thinning on his property to improve the wildlife habitat.

He still has to do some prescribed burning to complete the project. This 83-acre tract has been set aside for wildlife, with an emphasis on deer and turkey.



Non -commercial thinning.

Jeff's son is disabled and wheelchair bound, so Jeff built an observation tower with handicapped accessibility so that his son could enjoy observing the wildlife. The observation tower was not part of the cost-share funding.



Wildlife observation tower with handicap accessibility

