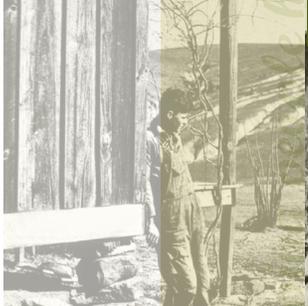


ing people help the land



*“If we take care of the land,
it will take care of us”*
— First NRCS Chief Hugh Hammond Bennett



the land • help



Mission

75 Years of Helping People Help the Land

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

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

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

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

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Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors

Program Description

To date, Georgia Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has put nearly \$450,000 into the Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES) program. This program is designed to meet employers' needs for competent workers by providing access to individuals age 55 and older, and to enhance lifelong employment opportunities of experienced workers through training, job placement, education, research and advocacy. ACES is a program administered by the USDA-NRCS from a bigger program run by the National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC), a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Arlington, VA. Georgia currently has seven ACES employees across the state.

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2010 Highlights

Georgia has 11 ACES employees working throughout the state. The state is divided into four areas. Each area has at least two ACES.

Georgia NRCS has put nearly \$450,000.00 into the ACES program to date.

ACES have greatly benefited Georgia's NRCS with the implementation of conservation practices and data input.



Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

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Program Description

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

As part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), AWEP operates through contracts with producers to plan and implement conservation practices in project areas established through partnership agreements.

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



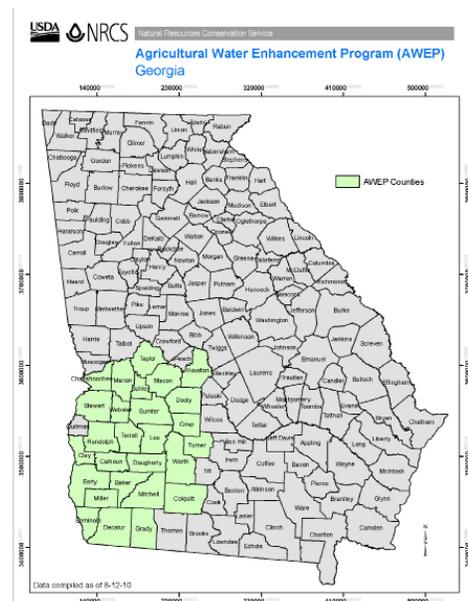
Variable Rate Irrigation

2010 Highlight

To date, \$1.8 million covering 263 contracts have been obligated. AWEP 2010 funding was available for all AWEP practices including: the low pressure drop nozzle retrofit with end-gun shutoff, remote soil moisture monitoring, sod based rotation and variable rate irrigation.

The AWEP grant funds agricultural water conservation in the Lower Flint River Basin at a 75/25 cost share rate.

The counties eligible for funding include: Baker, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Colquitt, Crisp, Dooly, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Houston, Lee, Macon, Marion, Miller, Mitchell, Randolph, Schley, Seminole, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, Taylor, Turner, Webster and Worth.



Map of 2010 AWEP Counties



Conservation Innovation Grants

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Program Description

The Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production.

These projects may be watershed-based, regional, or statewide in scope.

State, tribal, and local governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and individuals may apply.

Selection will be based on the criteria established in this notice, and selected applicants may receive grants of up to 50 percent of the total project cost.

Applicants must provide non-Federal funding for at least 50 percent of the project cost. Up to 50 percent (25 percent of the total project cost) of the applicant's match may be from in-kind contributions. The remainder must be cash.

2010 Highlights

Georgia had one Conservation Innovation Grant in 2010 funded at \$40,000 to help study ways of reducing the spread of Palmer Amaranth, more commonly known as pigweed.

Cotton farmers in South Georgia and other farmers throughout the southern part of the state are fighting this invasive species. Resistant to Roundup and other glycine-based herbicides, each grown pigweed plant can disperse 600,000 seeds.

Local weed scientists estimate that Palmer Amaranth in Georgia infests 10,001-100,000 sites and the number of sites is increasing. They also estimate that there are 1-2 million acres infested with this plant. Several other states have reported infestations with Louisiana being the most recent.

To save their crops, one University of Georgia economist estimates that farmers spent \$10 million in 2009 alone hiring workers to pull the weeds by hand.

The cotton industry is the fastest-growing farm industry in Georgia. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, in 2008, there were 1.6 million bales produced in the state on 940,000 acres, bringing in \$562 million in cash receipts. Despite the historic success of Georgia's cotton industry, its sustainability is threatened by the spread of Palmer Amaranth.



Conservation Stewardship Program

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Program Description

Through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land.

Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

It also includes private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed.

Participation in the program is voluntary.

CSP encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities.



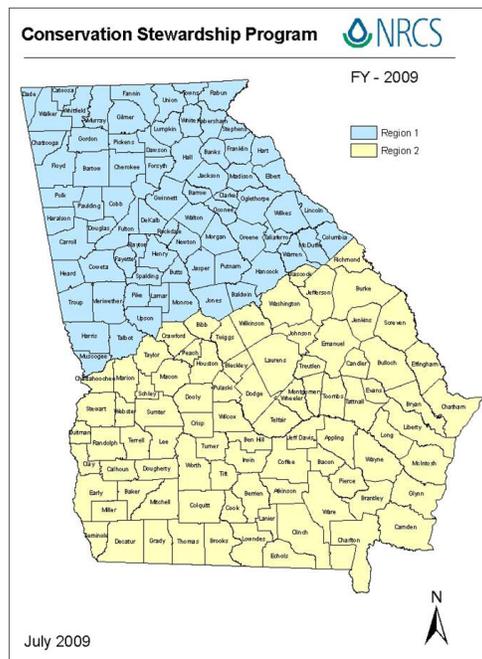
Conservation tillage improves soil health and reduces soil erosion. An additional benefit is the energy savings due to less plowing of the fields.

2010 Highlights

\$10.7 million was obligated with CSP in 2010 comprising 584 contracts.



Non-industrial forestland can be enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program.



Conservation Technical Assistance



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Program Description

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

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

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

2010 Highlights

In fiscal year 2010, in Georgia, there were 2,572 conservation plans written on 315,172 acres.



NRCIS District Conservationist Kevin Keel (R) reviewing a conservation plan with a program participant.



NRCIS District Conservationist Jose Pagan (R) conducting a farm visit.



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

To learn more, visit the web site at

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Emergency Watershed Protection Program



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Program Description

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

An example would be downed trees blocking road crossings at creeks.

These impediments cause blockage to creeks or small drainage ways, threatening damage to roads, bridges and other structures and increasing risk to human life.



Streambank damaged by storm



Streambank restored to pre-storm condition

2010 Highlights

In 2010, \$4.8 million was obligated to restore 96 project sites in 30 communities.



EWP helps avoid the disaster after the disaster by restoring water structures to their pre-storm condition.



An example of streambank stabilization

Emergency Watershed Protection Program - Floodplain Easement Program



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Program Description

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

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



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

2010 Highlights

In 2010, EWP floodplain easements were placed on 5 properties, 4 in Upson County and 1 in Gordon County, for a total of 515 acres of floodplain protected and restored. Restoration on these areas will include removal of exotic grasses and replanting of native hardwood trees.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

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Program Description

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

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

2010 Highlights

In 2010, the EQIP Program was funded at \$16.7 million covering 1,277 contracts.

Practices include retrofitting of irrigation nozzles to reduce water use; fencing to keep livestock out of natural water sources and other practices to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and increase water quantity.



A retrofitted nozzle allows water to be applied directly to the crops and reduces the amount of water lost due to evaporation.



On-farm erosion and threats to water quality can be reduced with an EQIP contract.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Organic Initiative



Program Description

Organic Initiative funding is provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a voluntary conservation program administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals.

The 2008 Farm Bill provided for assistance specifically for organic farm operations and those converting to organic production.

Eligible producers include those certified through USDA's National Organic Program, those transitioning to certified organic production, and those who meet organic standards but are exempt from certification because their gross annual organic sales are less than \$5,000.

The program provides up to \$20,000 per year per person or legal entity, with a maximum total of \$80,000 over six years.

2010 Highlights

In 2010, 19 contracts were funded and \$337,438.00 was obligated.



Organic Vidalia onions



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

High Tunnel Initiative

Program Description

Under this pilot study, NRCS funded up to one high-tunnel per applicant with a maximum size of 2,178 sq. ft. The applicant agrees to maintain the structure and a record system for three years.

High tunnels, sometimes known as hoop houses, help small farmers extend their growing season allowing them to generate income as the temperature gets colder in the fall and winter.

They are used year-round in warmer parts of the country, providing steady incomes to farmers – a significant advantage to owners of small farms, limited-resource farmers and organic producers.

Made of ribs of plastic or metal pipe covered with a layer of plastic sheeting, high tunnels are easy to build, maintain and move.

NRCS is studying whether the use of high tunnels leads to conservation of natural resources.

2010 Highlights

In 2010, 78 high tunnels were approved and funded at a cost of \$444,995.00.



A high tunnel differs from a greenhouse in several ways. Crops must be planted in the ground in a high tunnel and they cannot be heated. The 3-year pilot study will evaluate the natural resource benefits of high tunnels.



A greenhouse differs from a high tunnel in that crops can be raised above the ground.



Program Description

The pilot project is being funded via the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and is targeted to cotton farmers.

Participants worked with NRCS to design a conservation plan and agree to implement several practices that will assist with the control of the glyphosate-resistant pigweed.

General Criteria:

- 1. Participants must meet the regular EQIP eligibility requirements.*
- 2. Individuals, groups of landowners or non-government organizations are eligible but must have evidence of control or ownership of land.*
- 3. Payment rate will be up to \$75.00 per acre for two years.*
- 4. The contracts are for three years with a minimum of 100.0 acres of cropland owned and a maximum of \$13,000 per contract.*

2010 Highlights

In 2010, NRCS funded 12 contracts and obligated \$155,338.00.



Palmer Amaranth, more commonly known as pigweed.



Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

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Program Description

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) was founded to provide high quality technical assistance on privately owned grazing lands on a voluntary basis, and to increase the awareness of the importance of grazing land resources.

These objectives are carried out through state-level, broad-based coalitions of landowners, farmer and environmental organizations, universities, and government agencies.

In Georgia, NRCS in cooperation with the Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) works to promote adoption of grassland management practices that facilitate improved soil and water quality while increasing the sustainability of private grasslands in the state.



Healthy grazing lands improve animal health.

2010 Highlights

In 2010, the three NRCS grazing specialists in Georgia conducted numerous county and state-wide meetings focusing on important forage and livestock management issues.

Over 2,000 producers benefited from presentations and discussions on varied topics such as improving pasture and animal health through rotational grazing, how to stockpile forage for winter feeding, the cost savings and animal benefits of including legumes in pastures, and forage systems for horses.

Four farms in the state were selected by GGLCC to cost-share with producers to make relatively minor changes in their operations with the objective of increasing grazing and improving soil and water resources.

The demonstration farms will be used for field days and workshops, allowing transfer of experiences and knowledge to neighbors. Funds made available to NRCS through GLCI are being used to cost-share with farmers for making the changes to their grazing systems.

Additional grazing highlights during the year included a field day at the site of an extremely successful establishment of 28 acres of mixed native warm-season grasses that are providing wildlife habitat while being used to graze stocker cattle in the summer.

Also, the Coastal Plain Grazing System Demonstration Project completed its third year at the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus.

Weather early in the year challenged the ability of the system to provide winter grazing for the herd of 20 calving cows.



Grasslands Reserve Program

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Program Description

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

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

A grazing management plan is required for participants.

2010 Highlights

GRP allows for conservation easements and for rental contracts.

Between 2009 and 2010, 4 properties were selected for funding for a total of 334 acres of prime grazing lands proposed for protection.

These funds, for 2 projects in Oconee County and 1 in Jackson County, will help these cattle farmers maintain, protect and restore their grazing operations in perpetuity.



The Grassland Reserve Program ensures that grazing land will be available for generations to come.

Healthy Forest Reserve Program



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Program Description

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

2010 Highlights

In 2010, work was continued on the 6 HFRP applicants selected for funding.

These projects, totaling over 1,000 acres, will include restoration of habitat for the Gopher Tortoise and other state recognized species of conservation concern.

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



Thinning out weaker saplings and young trees allows healthier, stronger trees to thrive.



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Program Description

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

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

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

Crop year 1997 – Land Use in broad categories of Cropland, Pastureland, Forestland, Urban Land, Transportation, Federal Land, and Permanent Water. In addition to the broad categories, land use can be further sub-divided into approximately 200 finer categories of crop types, forest types and other types of land use. Resource condition is mainly erosion estimates. In current NRI work, a transition from the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) to the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation

Resource information available in NRI includes: (RUSLE II) is a major emphasis. Wetland loss and gain is another of NRI's data points.

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

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

A complete library of CEAP publications since 2002 can be found at the NRI website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/>



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Program Description

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a branch of the USDA-NRCS. It is one of 27 plant materials centers located throughout the United States.

The Center is located on the Northwest corner of Americus, Georgia, in Southwestern Georgia and is approximately 40 miles North of Albany. Areas served include Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Florida.

Its mission is to develop plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology to solve natural resource problems and meet the objectives of environmental programs.

The emphasis of the PMC is using native plants, developing test and release and providing superior adapted plants to commercial growers along with production and management technology.

2010 Highlights

The PMC worked with 14 different studies and 8 field plantings in Alabama and Georgia.

Among the projects are:

- The evaluation of plants for pharmaceutical use,
- A Bobwhite quail restoration study,
- A release of Penn Center switchgrass for use along the South Carolina coast
- nature trail plant identification in Hawkinsville,
- New pollinator study to determine basic information on pollinator culture.
- New switchgrass growth study for Agronomists and grazing specialist data and
- New Tropic Sunn Hemp clipping study to determine production of an important legume cover crop.



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

Resource Conservation & Development

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Program Description

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

2010 Highlights

During 2010, RC&D Councils created 35 businesses for the state of Georgia. They completed 11 watershed or area-wide plans, totaling over 47,000 acres. It is also estimated that RC&D Councils implemented 270 projects totaling over \$15 million in assistance during the year.

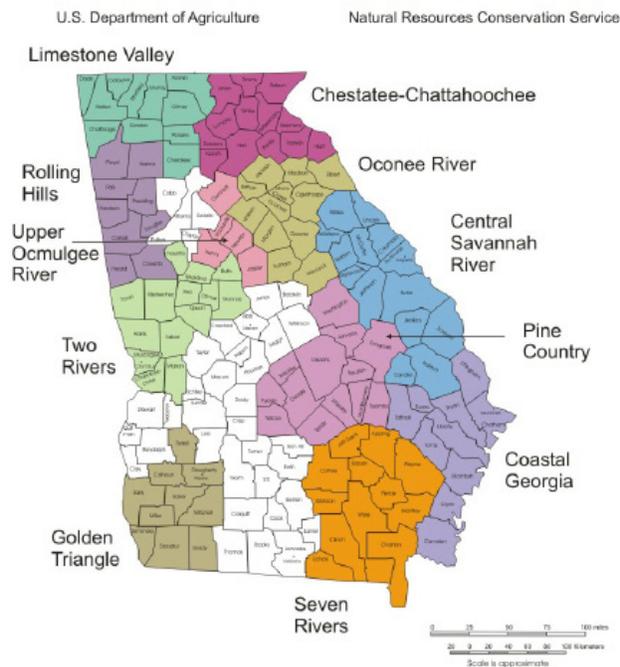
Examples of projects Councils will be pursuing include, but are not limited to:

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

The diversity of RC&D is unmatched by any other organization.

As 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, RC&D Councils enjoy the support of a full-time federal employee, along with additional program resources from the federal government.

At the same time, RC&D Councils enjoy flexibility to provide local assistance in many ways beyond the ability of all units of government.



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Program Description

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

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

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

The soil survey program of the United States is a cooperative effort conducted by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other Federal agencies in collaboration with states and other entities. Leadership for the

Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey is delegated to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service by the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (7 CFR 2.61).

2010 Highlights

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

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

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

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

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

Technical Service Providers



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Program Description

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

2010 Highlights

Georgia obligated \$571,047 through TSP agreements and through the ACES Program in 2010.

Sixteen agreements were developed with counties, soil and water conservation districts, Georgia Forestry Commission and with the National Wild Turkey Federation. Georgia's NRCS has also developed Conservation Activity Plans (CAP's) cost payments to offer through EQIP.

These CAP's can only be completed by Technical Service Providers.

A list of CAP's offered in Georgia; Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (102), Nutrient Management Plan (104), Agricultural Forest Management Plan (106), Irrigation Water Management Plan (118), Agricultural Energy Management Plan-Head Quarters (122), and Agricultural Energy Management Plan-Landscape (124).

Watershed Rehabilitation Program



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Program Description

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



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

2010 Highlights

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

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

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

Since 2002, NRCS-Georgia has secured \$16 million under this program to upgrade eleven watershed dams. Additionally, 55 dams have been, or are being, analyzed to determine the extent of downstream hazards. Emergency

Action Plans are being developed on all of these dams to help protect Georgia residents living below these structures.



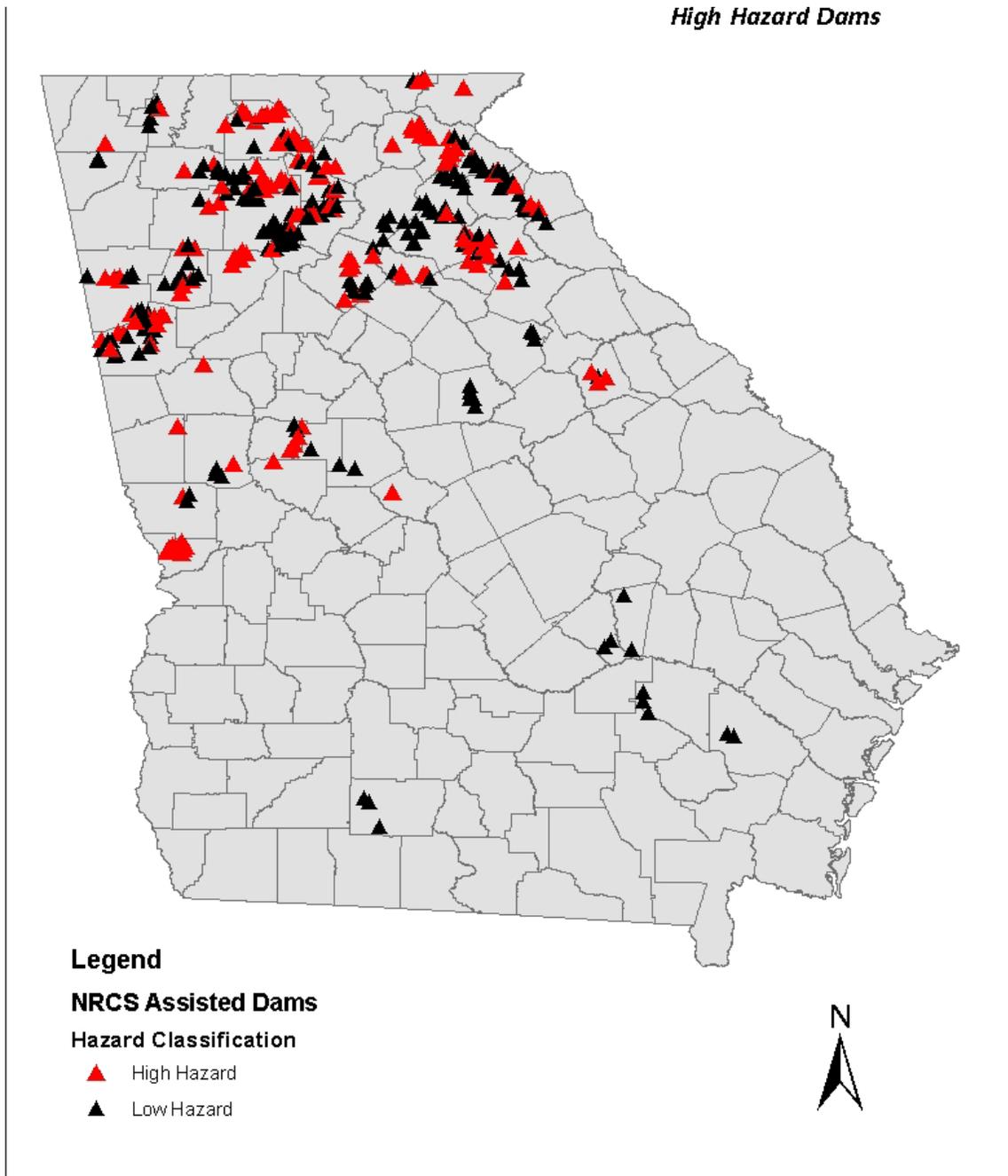
Watershed Rehabilitation Program

continued

NRCS Assisted Dams



High Hazard Dams





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Program Description

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

2010 Highlights

In 2010, 3,430 acres or 3 new easements were signed up under the wetlands reserve program with \$1.5 million in funding.

An additional 1,062 acres were restored in existing WRP easements.

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



Wood Storks, an endangered species, nesting atop a palm cypress. This is a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) site in Mitchell County in Southwest Georgia that contains about 89. The total wetland area is around 200 acres. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources in May 2010 counted about 125 Wood Stork nests and over 500 other water fowl nests in this one site. The DNR representative was very happy with the wetland and the Wood Storks.



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

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Program Description

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) develops or improves wildlife habitat on privately owned land.

Through WHIP, NRCS provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

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

2010 Highlights

Georgia received \$1.1 million in Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds this year and signed 132 contracts.



Canadian geese



Brown rabbit



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative

Program Description

This was a new initiative designed to help wildlife whose habitat was degraded due to the oil spill in the Gulf region.

Under the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI), farmers and ranchers worked with NRCS to develop and enhance habitat for birds making their annual migration south.

NRCS is providing support to landowners through two programs--EQIP and WHIP--on private agricultural lands.

Through these two programs, NRCS will assist producers in managing shallow water and moist areas for wildlife habitat during critical migratory months.

2010 Highlights

In 2010, Georgia had a total of four contracts and obligated \$214,990 in funds.



Waterfowl at a landowner's habitat in Pike County.