

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Coweta County, Georgia

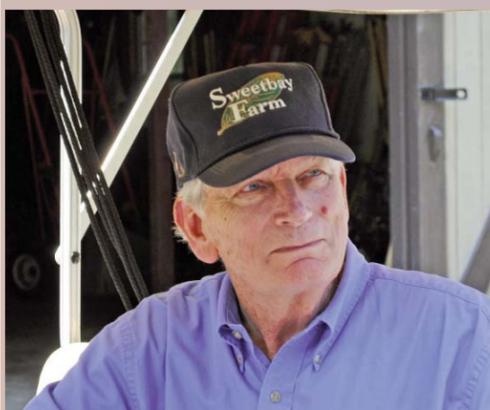
August 2010

### Furniss Family Dedicated to Protecting the Land

The Furniss family is a family that is committed to protecting the land and conserving natural resources located on their 100-acre Sweet Bay Farm in Newnan.

The Furniss family is very ecologically minded and is exceptionally vigilant about keeping herbicides and pesticides out of their production process.

"Mrs. Furniss has told me several times that they want to leave this land better than they found it. And, I try to go along with her



Peter Furniss owns Sweet Bay Farm.

wishes," Sweet Bay Farm manager, Steve Milan said.

Milan has been managing the cattle farm for the past eight years. Keeping Mrs. Furniss' wishes in mind, Milan approached the Two Rivers RC&D Council and inquired about the types of programs to help improve farmland and aid with wildlife protection. Milan applied for the Wildlife Incentives for Non-Game and Game Species Program (Project W.I.N.G.S) and was awarded a grant to create a wildlife

**"Mrs. Furniss has told me several times that they want to leave this land better than they found it. And, I try to go along with her wishes"-Steve Milan, Farm Manager**

habitat underneath power lines located on the family's property.

The Project W.I.N.G.S grant has helped Milan manage the land in these electrical transmission rights-of-way for a three-year period.

Through their contact with the Two Rivers RC&D Council, they learned about other assistance available from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Kevin Keel, the district conservationist in Coweta County says, "When I was contacted to assist Steve with getting the wildlife habitat off the ground, I saw an opportunity to promote the conservation programs we have available for farms through the NRCS." Together, Keel and Milan were able to work on the issues of soil erosion, water quality and forage quality on the farm.

After applying for (Environmental Quality Incentives Program EQIP) funds, Milan was able to use the contract to help fight erosion and improve water and forage quality at Sweet Bay Farm.

The farm operates a small cattle operation covering 14 pastures.

At any given time, there are about 20 head of cattle grazing on 50 acres of the property.

Keel and NRCS land grazing specialist, Al Hubbard, informed Milan about a conservation practice known as rotational grazing.

Rotational grazing addresses the forage quality.

Milan said Hubbard's in-depth training helped him determine when to move the beef cattle to different pastures for grazing and give other pastures time to regenerate grass.

To improve erosion control, Keel recommended that Milan place a geo-textile base underneath gravel in the heavy-use area on the



Farm manager Steve Milan (left), NRCS intern Steven Morris (center), and District Conservationist Kevin Keel (right) look over paperwork.



This is one of the ponds located on Sweet Bay Farm in Newnan.

farm. This is where the cattle gather at water troughs.

Cross fencing was also installed on parts of the farm to keep the cattle from wandering into a pond on the property. This fencing helps protect water quality. Due to a lack of a consistent water source for the farm, Keel was able to

have a pipeline installed on the property so that the county could connect Sweet Bay Farm to Coweta County's municipal water supply.

Keel said this collaboration with Milan was beneficial for both the agency and the producer. "We were able to keep the pro-

ducer's objectives in mind and keep resource conservation in mind. It was a good fit for us



These are just two of the cattle pastures on Sweet Bay Farm that are separated by cross fencing.

Two Rivers RC&D  
706-885-0101

 **NRCS** Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
770-251-4283

West Georgia Soil And Water  
Conservation District

and a good fit for him.” Milan hopes the technical assistance received through the Natural Resources Conservation Service will help Sweet Bay Farms improve cattle production and wildlife preservation.