

The new year promises to be an exciting one for Georgia. Early in fiscal year 2008, we asked you to move the Environmental Quality Incentives Program sign-up a month earlier to take advantage of the existing farm bill rules and regulations.

You did it! In fact, you did so well that Georgia received about a half a million dollars in extra funds as an award for a job well done. I commend you.

Not only does this help ease the strain of a somewhat tight budget, but it will allow us to install more conservation practices this year.

We also just completed a civil rights review and, again, Georgia employees are lighting the



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Cat Gap Construction

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A Visit to Louisiana After Katrina

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All About Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES)

DC Participates in Cultural Exchange with China Researchers, Scientists and Teachers

By Mr. Fuli Xu & Mary Leidner

Mary Leidner recently participated in a cultural exchange with agriculture researchers, scientists and teachers from the Shaanxi Province of China.

Eighteen Chinese delegates spent 3 days at the UGA-Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Tifton exchanging ideas with American scientists on fruit & vegetable production, fuel and biodiesel production, pest management, soil conservation and other topics.

Several of the participants are associated with Northwest A & F University in the Shaanxi Province.

FOCUS ON THE FIELD



Mr. Fuli Xu and Mary Leidner at the UGA-Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Tifton

Leidner presented a program on the USDA-NRCS programs for soil conservation in the U.S.

Researcher

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way in terms of reaching out to the under-served while maintaining relationships with existing clientele.

You are to be commended for all the unseen work you do by answering questions from small scale or limited resource farmers to taking the time to explain the details to those who may need a little more help.

We kicked off 2008 with an outstanding All Employees Conference.

From tips on how to handle personal stress, to the changing demographics, to the self-evaluation of stereotypes, there was ample opportunity to get geared up for the challenges in conservation's future.

We are rapidly changing. One example is the change in conservation practices that we are funding.

This year, for the first time, the second highest number of conservation practices in Georgia was those that address water supply issues.

This is an example of the agency rising to the challenge to help Georgians who are suffering from an extended drought.

A short four years ago, we had almost no money obligated for water conservation practices. This year, we'll spend \$2 million in irrigation retrofits and the like.

We can be proud that we are doing our part to help ensure the efficiency of water use.

Those outside the agency are taking a look at the way NRCS builds dams and evaluating the opportunity to increase the use of dams as water supply sources.

In March we will deploy 4 mobile offices—one for each area.

We are taking conservation on the road.

The leadership team will be having a special meeting in the very near future to talk about the changes we anticipate down the road—and, more importantly—to develop strategies and solutions that will ensure we are ahead of the game.

I urge you to think about the needs of your customers in the next decade. Share your thoughts and ideas with us.

I am pleased and impressed at the way Team Georgia has met the conservation challenges of the past year and turned them into positive outcomes for everyone.

I am also impressed with the way we are continuing to move forward. I wish all of you a healthy and prosperous new year.

China Continued from Page 1

Mr. Fuli Xu commented how difficult it was to get Chinese farmers in his area to stop burning all the crop residues.

He said there was a great need to control erosion and improve soil quality.

Shaanxi Province is in the heart of China.

It is home to some of the oldest known human cultures on earth surviving the rule of 13 dynasties over the centuries.

Corn, wheat, rice, vegetables and apples are the main crops.

This province produces nearly 25% of apple production in China. Soil erosion is a major problem on loss soils and steep slopes.

Diversity Quiz

Take the challenge! See if you can answer these questions taken from the "Exploring our own Perceptions and Realities" handbook provided at the Diversity Training Session. If you need a copy, e-mail mary.mcquinn@ga.usda.gov

My style in a conflict situation is __the Fox, __the Teddy Bear, __the Turtle, __the Rhino, __the Owl. Pg. 27

"Americans, in general, prefer _____ interaction in teams."Pg. 19

"What will it take?" is an example of what kind of language? Pg. 22

_____ is an integrated system of learning behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Pg. 30

Surface Culture and Deep Culture are defined as _____. Pg. 31

Manana in Latin America is considered sometime in the future--not necessarily _____. Pg. 33

Are you an A or a B. Take the test on page 35 to find out.

_____emphasize the present, and consider a "five-year-plan" to be a long-term plan. Pg. 48

"The best listener is someone who refrains from _____ when someone is relaying a story." Pg. 18

Pride is often associated with group affiliation rather than individual accomplishment in _____ culture. Pg. 43

Ag After-Hours

By Eunice Graham, County Technician, Barnesville

An estimated crowd of over 80 people gathered January 17, 2008, to honor two distinguished Lamar County farmers. Paul Wallace, Chairman of the Lamar County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) greeted all in attendance at the Ag After-Hours event as the presentations were made.

Being honored for their participation in wise use of conservation-friendly practices throughout the years were Tom Aiken and Ralph Adamson.

Both Tom Aiken and Ralph Adamson were a part of the original Lamar County SWCD board which was founded in 1981.

Both were dedicated Board members and served all positions during their tenure. They worked hard to make the District outstanding. The District's first field day was entitled the "Rebirth of a Farm."

It was held April 8, 1982 and drew approximately 2000 people. Among other recognition that should be noted is the receipt of the Goodyear Award three times; with honorable mention several other times; the prestigious Georgia Goodyear Award in 1990 (the first recipient in Georgia); and the Tennessee Valley Authority award in 2000.

Tom Aiken served 26 years on the Lamar County SWCD. Tom came to Lamar County as a retired



Tom Aiken, 26-years of service.

Lieutenant Colonel from the U. S. Marine Corp.

He purchase his farm in 1980 and started improving the natural resources through pasture renovations, timber management,

Christmas tree operation, farm pond, and wildlife habitat.

He had several demonstration projects clovers as cover crops in Christmas trees, plantings of native grasses for wildlife, and a grazing demonstration project.

His primary farming activity is his Christmas tree farm, but he also has a small beef cattle operation. He

was awarded the Lamar County Farmer of the Year award in 1993. His was a Forest Stewardship Farm in 1990, receiving second place.

Tom held several field days on his farm. Among the subject covered included pond field day. Other accomplishments include: McIntosh Trail Master Gardeners Association; past president of the North Georgia Christmas Tree Cooperative; Director of Lamar County Board of Farm Bureau; past president of the Lamar County Chamber of Commerce. He was named "Outstanding Citizen of the Year for Barnesville" in 1995.

Ralph Adamson was on the Lamar County SWCD board for 20 years. He joined the Towaliga SWCD and was instrumental in the formation of the Lamar County SWCD in 1981.



Ralph Adamson, 20-years of service.

He was a third generation dairy farmer. For many years Ralph was a member of his church choir. Ralph remains active with the farming community, currently holding positions of President of the local Farm Bureau Board as well as District Director of the State Farm Bureau.

The event was sponsored by of the Lamar County SWCD, local Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, and the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.



Tom Aiken with Andy Bush, the Lamar district's newest supervisor.

End Approaching for Cat Gap Construction

By Will Brown, P.E.

Three years after Hurricane Ivan, Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) construction is nearing completion for the Cat Gap Road Landslide Repair in Rabun County.

The original damage occurred in November 2004 when part of Cat Gap Road slid off into the Tallulah River.

NRCS partnered with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and Rabun County to complete this project.

The design of the project was completed by MACTEC Engineering of Atlanta and includes the construction of a soil nail wall and two mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) retaining walls to stabilize the landslide.

“A number of alternatives were considered, but this turned out to be the most feasible with the tight working conditions of the site,” stated Jeff Holloway, P.E., COTR for the design contract with MACTEC.

In May 2007, the construction contract was awarded to Phillips & Jordan, Inc. from



Workers apply shotcrete to the Soil Nail Wall. The soil nail wall stabilized the hillside so the road below could be repaired.

Robinsville, NC for approximately \$1.54 million. Construction commenced in June.

“The construction techniques for the repair are unlike anything we have done before,” stated Henry McFarland, P.E., State Construction Engineer.



Workers install the lower mechanically stabilized earth wall. This wall will support the road bed when completed.

“Our Inspector, Robyn Ledford, and our other technical people working on this job have done an outstanding job, quickly picking up on installation techniques for soil nail walls and MSE walls,” Henry continued.

Once complete, this repair will restore quick access to Clayton, Georgia for local residents and prevent future landslides from obstructing the Tallulah River.

The contractor is expected to complete the project near the end of January 2008.

They are approximately two months behind the required schedule.

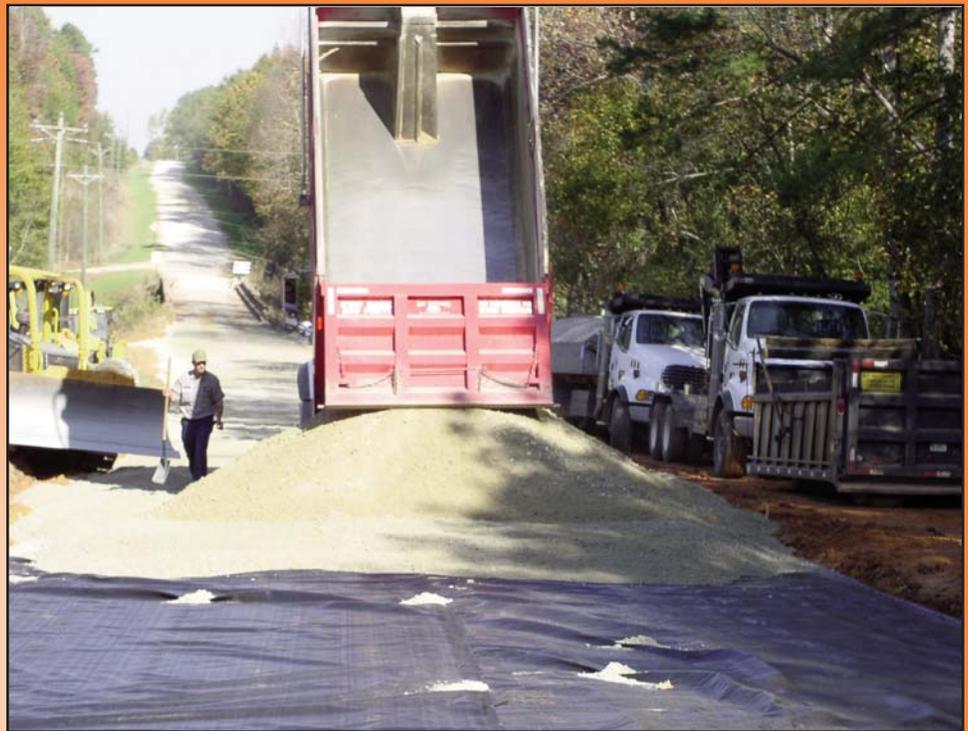
Franklin County gets Big Check for Water Improvements

By Nianne Mullis, Project Coordinator, *Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D, Demorest*

The Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource, Conservation and Development Council presented the Franklin County Commissioners with a check for \$106,987.00 for water quality improvements on the North Fork Board River (NFBR) at Crumps Bridge Road.

The NFBR was declared “impaired” by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) due to sediment and erosion.

The EPD Watershed Protection Branch provided funding for the water quality improvements through a 319 (h) grant. The grant provided 60% of the cost of



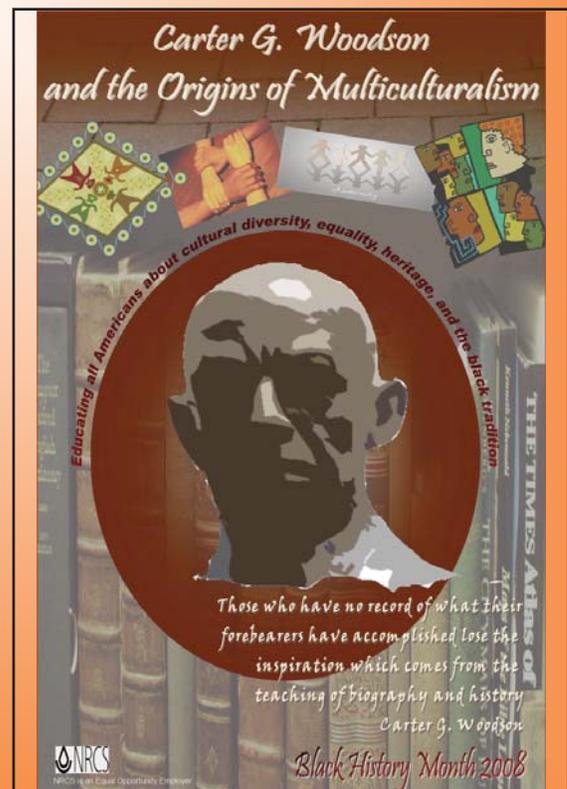
improvements, while Franklin County provided 40% of the cost in matching non-federal funding.

The NFBR watershed 319(h) project, located in Franklin and Stephens Counties, began February 2003 and concluded December 2007.



Be on the alert for more information on this new public affairs campaign: Conservation. Our Purpose. Our Passion.

A poster, dvd, and post cards are on their way to all headquartered field offices.



Doing the Right Thing Leads to Great Rewards

By Ron Morton, Assistant State Public Affairs Specialist



We all have hobbies and activities that feed our needs after we leave the work place; some volunteer in youth organizations, some with church groups and others with the community in which we live. Debbie Henry, a soil conservation technician from Colquitt, loves working with her community as the

Emergency Management Director for Miller County.

“I feel a great satisfaction in knowing I am helping people prepare for and recover from a disaster,” she said.

Henry became involved with the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in the fall of 1998 because of her actions during a flood in 1998. She saw the possibility of a Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) project and worked to achieve her goal.

“In the flood of 1998, I was helping the volunteer firefighters and other first responders with evacuations of some local citizens and saw the need for a possible Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) project in our county. I was able to work with the local city and county governments and the NRCS and Miller County was approved for a EWP project for debris removal due to damage caused by the flood,” said Henry.

“Billy Rathel, the EMA director at the time, was looking for an assistant and he saw my desire to help the people in the community and thought I would be an asset to his team,” said Henry. “He asked me to take a volunteer position as the Deputy EMA Director with the county.”

Henry worked as the Deputy Director until June 2007 when she assumed the position of Director which requires her to take leave from the NRCS when she is needed for a disaster in her county or to attend schooling.

To hold the director position, she had to earn a Certified Emergency Managers degree involving many hours of classroom training as well as several online courses. She also has annual continuing educa-

tion hours that are required to maintain this certification.

“I feel a great satisfaction in knowing I am helping people prepare for and recover from a disaster,” said Henry.

Her primary responsibilities are to plan development and coordination of city and county resources and serve as the liaison for state and federal resources in the event of a disaster in accordance with The Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA).

Henry was recruited 25 years ago to work as a technician on a EWP project with the NRCS in Decatur County and she was converted to a full-time technician within a year.



Mr. James E. Tillman Sr., state conservationist, Georgia NRCS (left), Debbie Henry, director Miller County Emergency Management Agency (center) and Gary Rice, area 2 field coordinator for GEMA (right) review information on damages caused by several tornados that hit Miller County in March 2005. The tornados damaged over 50 homes in the county. NRCS was checking to see if Miller County would be eligible for any EWP funds.

Water Resource Update: Major Projects Accomplishments in 2007

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP):

-Planned, designed, construction contracted for \$1.5 million landslide [Rabun County]

Irrigation Ponds Program:

- Processed over 900 applications
- Assessed 100 potential sites
- Developed 63 designs
- Storing 1,818 acre-feet of water
- \$4.2 million w/\$2.5 million for cost-share

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D):

- No Till Implementation on 5,100 acres
- Published 3,000 Publications
- Implemented Wildlife Habitat on 2,000 acres
- Provided Educational Training to 1,150 Participants
- Installed 645 conservation practices
- Provided C/S Payments to 306 Producers
- Developed 250 Contracts for Wildlife Habitat [WINGS]
- Created 49 Jobs
- Set up and conducted 36 Educational Courses
- Managed 23 No Till Drills
- Conservation Practices Installed in 13 Watersheds
- Provided technical and financial assistance to 8 Cooperative Businesses
- Help develop farmland protection program information for 4 farms
- Demonstrated Dirt Road on 3 roads
- Organized, publicized, and managed 1 Conservation Tillage Conference

WATERSHED PLANNING:

- Completed Authorization Process for Big Cedar Creek Watershed [Polk County]
- Developed Rapid Watershed Assessment [Upper Oconee River Watershed]
- Planned land-treatment [water quality] on two watersheds [Upper Alapaha, Upper Withlacoochee]
- Conducted Wetlands/Stream Delineation for Water Supply Reservoir [Dawson County]

WATERSHED OPERATIONS:

- Completed 23 LTCs totaling \$706,489
- Developed a plan to close out Watershed Operations Program
- Provided annual inspections on 357 watershed dams
- Provided engineering inspections on some 60 watershed dams

WATERSHED REHABILITATION:

- Designed, construction contract for \$5.0 million [\$3.2 million federal funds] rehabilitation upgrade [Gwinnett County]
- Developed breach zone below 9-high hazard dams [33 to date]
- Developing Emergency Action Plans on 33-high hazard dams to protect 2,000 of Georgia's 17,000 residents living below these dams



Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.—Helen Keller



ESAP

National Environmental Stewardship Award Program

Nomination Due March 14 for...

The 18th Annual Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP) has officially opened its nomination season for 2008. The program has recognized the outstanding stewardship practices and conservation achievements of U.S. cattle producers for almost two decades. Regional and national award winners are honored for their commitment to protecting the environment and improving fish and wildlife habitat while operating profitable cattle operations.

“America’s cattle operations are dedicated to doing what is right for the environment and it is evident in the 114 operations the ESAP program has recognized since its inception,” says Jonathan Beitia, program director for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA).

“This year, we are expecting another great pool of applicants and encourage your participation in the process.”

Nominations can be submitted by any organization, group, or individual on behalf of a U.S. cattle producer. In the past, nominations have been submitted by a diverse mix of organizations. A partial



list includes the Nature Conservancy, the Society for Range Management, state government services, universities, wildlife organizations and livestock groups.

“This is always a great program, which gets a great deal of attention,” says NCBA President and North Carolina cattle producer John Queen. “If you haven’t had a chance to nominate someone in the past, now’s the time! You have until March 14 to get your application and nomination ready.”

ESAP was established in 1991 by NCBA and is made possible by the support of Dow AgroSciences, LLC, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Seven regional winners and one national winner are selected annually by a committee of representatives from universities, conservation organizations, and federal and state agencies. The nominees compete for regional awards based on their state of residency, and these seven regional winners then compete for the national award.

“This program has inspired cattle producers to try new techniques utilized by the winners, and it continues to reward innovators for their stewardship,” says Queen. “It also exhibits to the world how producers are the original, true environmentalists.”

The deadline for 2008 ESAP nomination packet is March 14, 2008. Go to www.beefusa.org/esap or contact NCBA’s Washington, D.C., office to request a copy of the application at 202-347-0228.



NRCS moves to Quick Hire

Quick Hire is an E-Gov initiative to increase overall job-seeker satisfaction in the application process. Recruitment One Stop (ROS) integrated with hiring tools (like Quick Hire) which allows applicants to:

- Search for Federal positions being advertised,
- Create a User Profile Account,
- Create and store multiple resumes,
- Apply for announcements on-line (when appropriate), and
- Track the status of their on-line application

Quick Hire is an automated staffing system that will be implemented effective 2nd Quarter, 2008 by NRCS Georgia for the 457 series only and for grades 5, 7, 9, 11, 12.

- What Does It Do? Speeds the process for:
- Announcing job vacancies
 - Examining and rating applications
 - Developing List of Candidates under Merit

- Promotion procedures
- Developing Certificate of Eligibles under Delegated Examining Unit Authority
- Making selections to fill jobs

You can now create your resume online through USAJOBS.

You can create your resume by taking the following steps;

- (1) Go to <http://www.usajobs.gov>;
- (2) Click on "Create a Resume";
- (3) Click on "Create Your Account Now" (note: If you previously; created an account in USAJOBS, enter the User name and Password previously established.);
- (4) Enter the requested information; (5) Click "Submit".

All at one-stop internet location

<http://www.usajobs.gov>

Official Job Site of the United States Federal Government

Exceeded Your Mailbox Size?

by Mary Ann McQuinn, State Public Affairs Specialist

Are you getting messages on Outlook that you have exceeded your mailbox size?

Want to automatically save e-mail from a specific person or with a specific word in the subject to a file folder?

Outlook has a "Rules" feature that allows you to customize your e-mail.

Here's the instructions on how to automatically move e-mails from a specific person to a personal folder thereby reducing mailbox size.

Open Outlook Mail

Select Tools

Select Rules and Alerts

Select New Rule

Under Step 1

Leave the Default Start Creating Rule from Template Under Step 2

Select from people or distribution list. Type in the e-mail address of the person. Select next.

Select specified and enter the name of the folder* you want to move e-mails from this person to.

Make sure that you place it in a folder under your personal folder. Otherwise it will count against your e-mail space.

Each time you open Outlook, your new messages will flash briefly and then be filed in your personal folders. The number of new messages will also appear beside the folder.

You can create a new folder by clicking on the personal folder and selecting new. If you do not have a personal folder, contact your IT person. It is simple to set up.

There are many rules that you can apply. Just experiment and have fun.

Administration

Recruitment

By Delores Almand, Human Resources Specialist

Volunteer Program:

When you meet exceptionally qualified high school students (at least age 16). Introduce them to the Volunteer Program to gain experience and skills working only a few hours a week. Not all students that graduate from high school go to college.

We could provide Soil Conservation Technician (SCT) on-the-job training such as surveying, going to meetings, answering the telephone, reading our technical program guides and providing assistance to the farmers, landowners, units of government and going on-site to observe our projects. Everything we do is to conserve and protect our soil and water not just for today, but also for the future.

Please contact Janice Lester, Volunteer Coordinator for Georgia, at 706-546-2420, for an application and more information on the Volunteer Program.

Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP):

This program is comprised of two components: the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). The STEP provides maximum flexibility to both students and managers because the nature of the work

does not have to be related to the student's academic or career goals.

The SCEP, however, must provide work experience which is directly related to the student's academic program and career goals. Students in the SCEP may be noncompetitively converted to term, career or career-conditional appointments following completion of their academic and work experience requirements.

The (SEEP) benefits both the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the students. You can discover first-hand the abilities of a potential employee.

In the case of SCEP, you can bring well-educated graduates into the workforce while giving the NRCS the ability to evaluate the students. Students, on the other hand, can avail themselves of such flexibilities as year round employment and flexible work schedules and assignments. Students in the SCEP gain exposure to public service while enhancing their educational goals and shaping their career choices.

We encourage you to utilize the Student Educational Employment Program for several reasons. In an era of downsizing there is a continuing need to recruit and develop talented employees to support changing missions, ensure that NRCS meets its professional, technical, and administrative needs, and achieve a quality and diverse workforce.

Appointments made under the Student Educational Employment Program can help us meet these needs.

If you have questions, you can contact the Human Resources staff at 706-546-2270.

Articles and photos for the next Conservation Connection are due by June 30, 2008. Please e-mail them to rhonda.byers@ga.usda.gov

FOIA Reminder

By Melanie Cox, Secretary, Athens

This is a friendly reminder that all Freedom of Information Act requests need to be routed through the State FOIA Officer, Sharon Gipson.

If you receive a FOIA request directly, please forward the request by fax, email, or hardcopy to Sharon Gipson at the State Office in Athens and notify her by phone that it is on its way.

Public Affairs Welcomes New Earth Team Volunteer!



Maria Morton is an Earth Team Volunteer working with Public Affairs in the State Office in Athens. She is the wife of Ron Morton.



Thank you to all of the Earth Team volunteers for the hours that have been recorded for Georgia NRCS. Thanks to you, we had a total of 52 volunteers with a total of 2,415 hours in FY 2007.

EEO Statement Usage

The EEO statement is required on all materials with a non-internal audience. It is required on partnership pieces to which we lend our logo, if we have contributed funds for the publication.

The reference on this question is Departmental Regulation 4300-3, Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy, issued by the USDA Office of Civil Rights, November 16, 1999.

This states that the “nondiscrimination statements shall be used in the next issuance of publications, immediately after the approval date of this

New Campaign launched

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) launched a new campaign Feb. 12 at the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) annual meeting in Reno, NV.

“Conversation... Our Purpose, Our Passion,” is designed to tell the NRCS story through the conversation success stories of landowners.

These stories were developed around eight customers (landowners) who represent the diversity of geography, culture, conservation practices and products, represent a cross-section of our landowner-partners nationwide and they share the NRCS’s purpose and passion for conversation.

Chief Arlen L. Lancaster said during a teleconference that through this program we can recognize the good work of the landowners-partners and our employees.

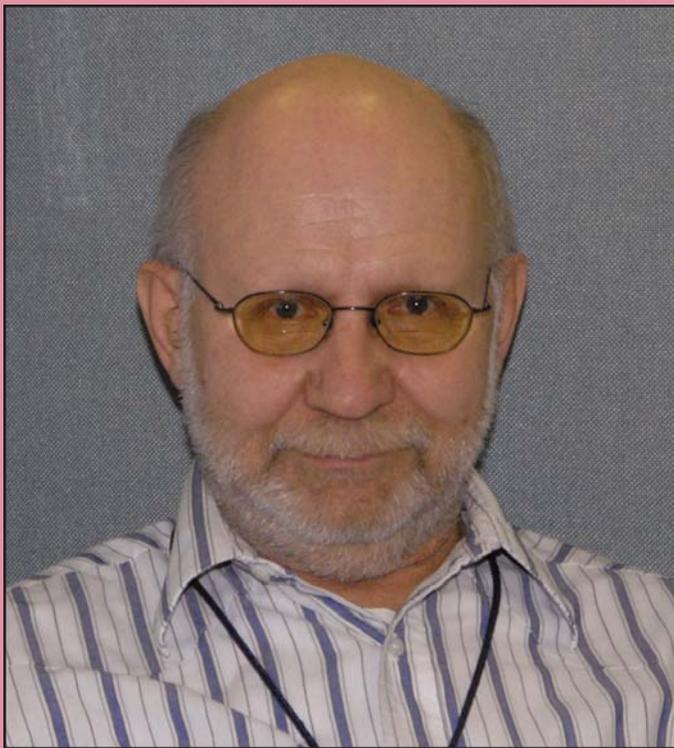
For more information on “Conversation... Our Purpose, Our Passion,” and the eight customers selected for this campaign you can go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.



regulation.” On page 3, the regulation specifies that “the statement...shall be...included, in full, on all materials (includes print and non-print, audio, video, Internet, etc.) produced by USDA agencies...” This would include partnership pieces to which we contribute funds for printing, etc.

On page 4, the regulation notes: “If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material will at minimum include the statement, in print size no smaller than the text, that “The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Public Affairs Welcomes New Team Member



For those of you that have not seen my smiling face, I'm Ron Morton. I retired from the Army as a Sgt. First Class after 22 years.

I attended Cameron University in Lawton, OK, earning a degree in Radio and Television Communications with a minor in Public Relations.

After college, I applied for and was selected for the U.S. Army Public Affairs Internship program in August of 1999 and started working at the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command in Warren, MI. in October 1999.

After completing the intern program in May 2001, I was assigned to Fort McPherson as the Media Relations Officer.

I am married to Maria Morton and we have a son, Ronnie, a daughter, Natasha, and a granddaughter. I'm active with Boy Scouts in the Flint River Council, Boy Scouts of America, located in Griffin.

New Employee Web Site

Did you know that there is a new homepage for new NRCS Georgia Employees? Please have your new employees visit http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/New_Employees/ for a comprehensive guide on what to do before you start, during your first day, week, and month.

The site also features common NRCS acronyms and links to employee benefits.

Celebrate Women's History Month

by Carolee Osborne, Federal Women's Program Manager

March is Women's History Month. The National Women's History Month was organized and started by the National Women's History Project (NWHP), a nonprofit educational organization founded in 1980 to "promote gender equity through education about women's diverse lives and accomplishments." The organization was a result of a 1978 California committee formed to address the lack of inclusion of women's history in the educational curriculum of K-12 schools. In 1981, the NWHP successfully lobbied congress to declare a Joint Congressional Resolution for "National Women's History Week." Congress expanded the celebration to an entire month in 1987.

Every year the NWHP works to mobilize and unify the national celebrations of Women's History Month by choosing an annual theme. The theme for the 2008 Women's History Month is "Women's Art: Women's Vision." The history of women and art is quintessential women's history. It is the story of amazing women's accomplishments acclaimed at the time but written out of history.

This year's theme provides a special opportunity to discover and celebrate women's visual arts in a variety of forms and mediums that help expand our perceptions of ourselves and each other.

If you have any questions about the Federal Women's Program please contact Carolee Osborne at 770-832-8942, Ext.3 or carolee.osborne@ga.usda.gov. For more information please visit their website www.nwhp.org.

SOILS

A Look Back In Time

by Lewis Fokes, District Conservationist

The Buena Vista Field Office staff, Soil Scientist Alfred Green, and State Soil Scientist Edward Ealy assisted the Unified Government of Chattahoochee County in locating and marking over 80 old unmarked graves in the Mount Olive Cemetery in the City of Cusseta.

NRCS Soil Scientist Wes Tuttle from North Carolina on the National Soil Survey Center utilized Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to identify soil disturbances and other features which indicated the burial sites.

The investigation was done to prevent the disturbance of any existing graves and to determine the extent of any remaining available areas for new grave sites.

As suspected, the cemetery is virtually filled to capacity and the County will need to find another site soon.

While the exact age of the Mount Olive Cemetery was not known at the time of this investigation, it was noted however that there were headstones dating back to 1853.



The Ground Penetrating Radar unit is pulled along a line of flags as the operator looks for disturbances in the soil profile which indicates a potential gravesite. Pictured L-R; Wes Tuttle, Soil Scientist with the National Soil Survey Center, Lewis Fokes, District Conservationist, and Alfred Green, Soil Scientist.



Chief Arlen Lancaster presented a National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) Award to Rita Barrow, District Conservationist, from Brunswick, Georgia at the national meeting of the NWTf in Atlanta. The award recognized Rita for her efforts to build partnerships and help landowners receive assistance to plan and install conservation on their lands. Rita's award was one of three presented to NRCS employees across the nation for their service.

Recovering from Hurricane Katrina Tour

By: Elaine Adkins, Human Resources Specialist, Athens

On December 13, 2007, while in training at The National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) Conference located in New Orleans, Louisiana, I had the opportunity to tour areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Some of the areas we visited were the Lower Ninth Ward, City of Slidell, and some sites in Mississippi. The tour elaborated on how Louisiana implemented the Emergency Water Protection (EWP) program in response to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

We also looked at the various methods used by contractors in areas covered by wetlands, urban sprawl, and scenic streams.

The pink fabric symbolizes the promise of homes that will be constructed for their community.



The above picture was taken in one of the near by subdivisions. The "X" and the numbers around the "X" located on the front of the house means that person(s) were found dead in the house. When the Rescue Unit arrived at the house, they would know by the "X" and the numbers around the "X" how many were dead inside the house that they would have to retrieve. NRCS employees were not allowed to recover dead person(s) from the homes; only offer assistance to person(s) they found alive that wanted to leave their homes to go to a shelter.



The pictures above and below were taken in the Lower Ninth Ward. The pink rectangular shape of the house without a roof means the "Make it Right" Foundation has not received enough funds to build the new house. The house with a roof means the Foundation has received enough funds to build the new house in the shape you see in the picture.



The above picture was taken at a site in Mississippi. This stream was filled with a lot of debris after the storm.

This tour was a true experience, and I recommend that if any of you have the opportunity to visit New Orleans, Louisiana or Mississippi, do so.

Technical Support

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

By Dennis Chessman, Grazing Lands Specialist, Athens

The Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is a nationwide collaborative process of individuals and organizations working to maintain and improve the management, productivity, and health of the Nation's privately owned grazing land.

During 2007, \$213,000 of GLCI funds was committed to support forage and livestock management improvement projects on 26 Georgia farms. In addition, four regional grazing conferences, and a tall fescue field day were sponsored by GLCI.

A significant portion of GLCI funds were used to help support NRCS personnel throughout the state as they provided local planning and technical assistance on grazing lands.

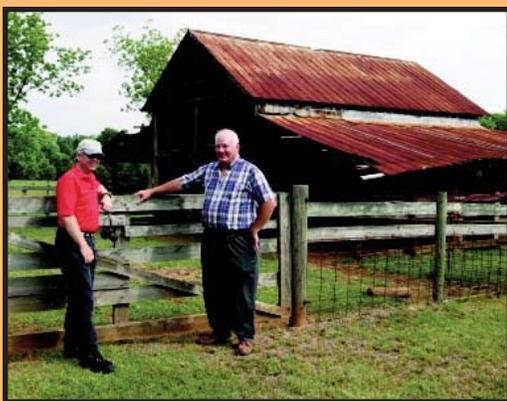
Grazing Land Improved in Jasper County

According to Henry Bell, the high point of his GGLCC demonstration project has been watching his 'MaxQ' tall fescue grow, and seeing his cows respond to it.

Bell observes that cattle on MaxQ are out in the pasture grazing during the heat of the day when cattle on 'Kentucky 31' tall fescue are in the shade.

He documents that cattle on MaxQ are in better body condition than cattle on Kentucky 31.

When asked how his operation and management had changed as a result of identifying and



NRCS Employee, Ray Spencer, and Henry Bell.

addressing problem areas on the farm Bell replied, "I think I have more productive pastures for the cattle, better facilities for the working pens, the barns are more functional, and I pay a lot more attention to what the grass is doing so I can utilize rotational grazing for its intended benefits.

My cows are grazing better pastures and live in a cleaner and safer environment."

"The application process really made me think about the big picture for the cattle and the farm, instead of putting band aids on things to correct a specific problem or area, and then having to do it again later," observes Bell.

Plant Materials Program

By Dennis Chessman, Grazing Lands Specialist, Athens

Approximately 50 acres at the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus are being developed as a grazing system demonstration.

The system consists of seven pastures with a variety of forages, including warm-and cool-season introduced species, and native warm-season grasses.

A 12 acre pasture, with longleaf pine planted in 2001 that were pruned this January, will be managed as silvopasture.

Fence should be completed in early February, with cattle introduced shortly thereafter.

It is hoped that the grazing system will be used for training, demonstrations, and field days.

In addition, plant, cattle and soil data will be collected.

Some of the goals of the project include:

- Continued evaluation of longleaf pine/bahiagrass silvopasture systems related to forage and tree growth, soil quality, and cattle performance.
- Gain greater understanding of the management necessary to optimize both forage and tree growth in silvopasture.
- Demonstrate that dependence on stored forage can be reduced through rotational stocking on a diverse forage base.
- Demonstrate proper management of a multi-paddock system that includes silvopasture and a variety of warm and cool season forages.
- Demonstrate appropriate grazing to maintain native warm season grasses.

Technical Support

Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES) Project

NRCS partnered with the National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC) to implement a pilot project called Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES).

The objective of ACES is to obtain experienced older workers to support NRCS employees to meet very high conservation workload demands. NRCS has undertaken a pilot or demonstration project in selected locations to explore the feasibility of expanding the effort throughout the agency.

Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES) is a cost effective recruitment opportunity to obtain the services of experienced workers age 40 and older on a temporary basis through an agreement with NOWCC.

Chief Bruce Knight authorized a team to explore establishing legislation to institute a NRCS senior employment program very much like the Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program of the EPA.

Congress authorized the EPA, under the Environmental Programs Assistance Act of 1984, "...to enter into cooperative agreements with private, nonprofit organizations to utilize older workers (at least 55 years old) to provide technical assistance to Federal, State, and/or local environmental agencies on projects of pollution prevention, abatement, and control. NRCS is developing a concept based upon the existing statutory authorities under the SEE program.

In addition, NRCS is working with NOWCC to place 27 participants in 6 states (CO, GA, KS, MN, MS, and UT) and 1 Center (WNTSC). NHQ will also participate in the pilot. VA requested 9 additional positions beginning in October 2005. Each area identified positions that range from clerical (level 2) to professional (level 4) and committed funds to support the positions.

These positions cannot displace NRCS employees and participants enrolled in the pilot are not considered a federal employee. Participants work between 20-40 hours a week assisting a NRCS employee.

They can earn benefits and if retired, their retirement annuity is not impacted by the stipend they receive from NOWCC. Stipends (hourly wage by level is: \$6.75, \$8.16, \$9.56, and \$11.81) are low but have been sufficient to attract participants to the 20 year old EPA program. An additional 25% for benefits and 15% administrative fee is an associated cost of each position.

NOWCC is a nonprofit organization that will recruit, administer, and pay the participants to assist NRCS employees. NOWCC screens the applicants and forward qualified ones to NRCS for interviews. NRCS conducts the interview and recommends the applicant for placement. ACES participants are not considered NRCS employees.

The National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC) posts (ACES) positions on their website: www.nowcc.org or <http://www.nowcc.org/applicants/positions/index.html>

. Click on the link "View Open Positions"

- Click on the state of interest to browse positions.

Currently CO, GA, KS, MN, MS, UT, NHQ, and the WNSTC (Oregon) are posted unless filled.- Scroll down the listing to find positions with the following demarcation: Program: NCEP Program (identifier used by NOWCC to distinguish NRCS positions) Minimum Age: 40.

Applicants can complete the online application or mail a copy to NOWCC as instructed in the website. Basic instructions are to complete the application and forward it to the appropriate NOWCC field office.

NRCS offices must contact the National Coordinator for an ACES starter package (position description template, cost worksheet, guidelines and website information).

The State must establish a State Coordinator, identify positions and associated funds and complete an allowance transfer in the amount of the cost of their positions. The National Coordinator must approve the positions and work with NOWCC to post the position on their website. NRCS will eventually place the information on its website.

NOWCC enrolled the first participant on July 25, 2005. Currently 14 of the 27 (36 counting VA) positions in the pilot have been filled. The NOWCC agreement obligates over \$484,000 for a 3-year period. The legislation is in the clearance process approval by the Secretary of Agriculture.