

For Immediate Release

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## **NRCS ANNOUNCES NATIONAL WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE**

*Agricultural Producers located in priority watersheds will be able to participate*

**ATHENS, GA**, May 16, 2012 — State Conservationist James E. Tillman, Sr., announced the launch of a new National Water Quality Initiative committed to improving three impaired waterways in Georgia. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will manage the initiative by making funds available to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners in the selected watersheds. Applications must be in by June 15, 2012.

“The Water Quality Initiative will further NRCS’ partnership efforts to improve water quality using voluntary actions on private lands,” Tillman said. “This initiative is a focused approach in areas facing significant natural resource challenges. It bolsters the positive results of landscape conservation initiatives NRCS and its partners already have underway.”

Through this effort, eligible producers in the following three watersheds: Lower Deep Creek, in Turner County; Lower Piscola Creek; and Middle Piscola Creek, both in Brooks and Thomas Counties, will invest in voluntary conservation actions to help provide cleaner water for their neighbors and communities. The selected watersheds were identified with help from state agencies, partners, and the NRCS State Technical Committee.

Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, NRCS will provide funding and advise to producers to install conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces in watersheds with impairments where the federal investment can make a difference to improve water quality.

“American farmers are good stewards of the environment, especially when they have the tools they need to protect or improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality,” said NRCS Chief Dave White. “We look forward to collaborating with producers in key watersheds to help them have a positive impact on streams with impaired water quality.”

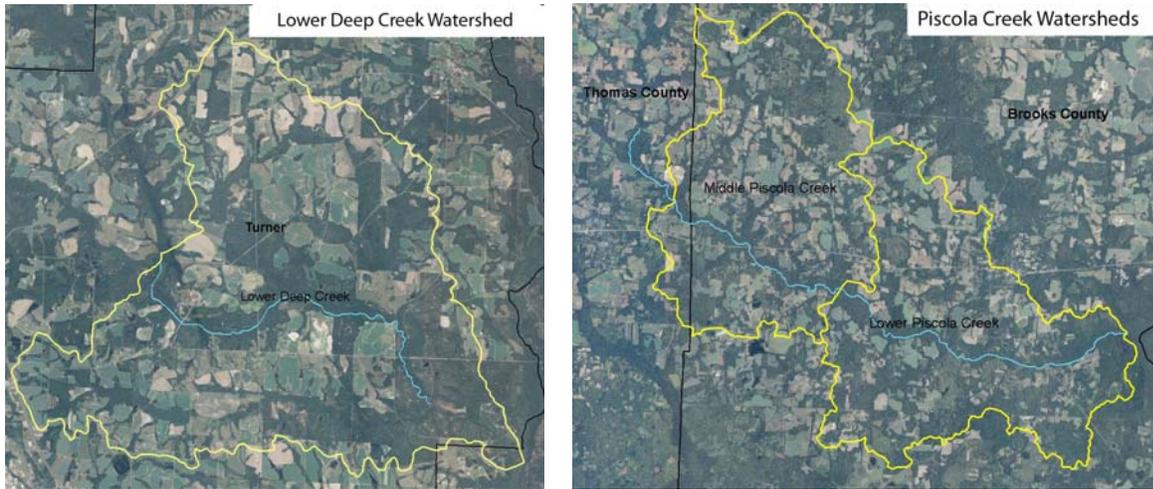
NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. Remember to check with your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected

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watershed. All applications for funding consideration, during this fiscal year, must be received by June 15, 2012. This summer, NRCS will notify all applicants of the results and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

Since 1935, NRCS' nationwide conservation delivery system works with private landowners to put conservation on the ground based on specific, local conservation needs, while accommodating state and national interests. For more information about NRCS' programs, initiatives and services in Georgia, visit us online at [www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov).



Above are maps of the three priority watersheds in Georgia. Left is Lower Deep Creek, located in Turner County and right is the Middle Piscola, located in Thomas and Brooks Counties and Lower Piscola Creek located in Brooks County.

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