

Another StrikeForce Conservation Success Story...

Quitman County, Georgia

August 2011

EQIP Funds Help Farmer Fight Soil Erosion

For several years, George Cathrall watched helplessly as he lost priceless top soil with each passing day.

“When I first started, there were gullies you couldn’t drive a tractor through. Rain would cause big ol’ gullies,” Cathrall said.

He tried every possible solution he could think of to correct the problem to save the invaluable natural resource. The problem persisted until Cathrall said his local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office got involved.

District Conservationist, Karen Reese, in the Cuthbert Service Center offered technical assistance that allowed Cathrall to begin successfully addressing concerns on his farm.

“The calves started picking up weight when the water troughs were put in. We fenced them out of the woods from the creek. So, that meant they didn’t have to walk as far and have been able to gain much needed weight,” Cathrall explained.

A Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) agreement helped improve forest stands by utilizing pest management in order to control the undergrowth. Prescribed burning also helps Cathrall manage the understory.

Cathrall has also planted Longleaf Pine trees as part of the Longleaf Pine Initiative. Longleaf Pine is native to Georgia and can withstand fire—an important consideration in this climate.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is allowing Cathrall to continue his conservation efforts. CSP is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

Reese has worked with Cathrall for several years and

said, “I’ve been working with him since he started farming in the 1980s and he has grown into a well-rounded farmer.”

Cathrall said that he has appreciated all the programs because, “there’s funding to carry out practices you couldn’t do with only the money in your pocket.”

He also noted that the NRCS and the technical assistance provided in the

field help him stay in line with his conservation philosophy.

“If we don’t protect our natural resources and the land, we won’t have anything,” Cathrall explained.



George Cathrall’s farm is located in Georgetown, Georgia.



George Cathrall was recently approved for a Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contract. CSP allows landowners to expand conservation efforts on their land.

Through the financial assistance provided under NRCS conservation programs, his conservation plans became a reality.

“You can go almost anywhere on this farm, look around and find something that NRCS helped achieve through some program,” Cathrall explained.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds assisted Cathrall in installing terraces to control soil erosion. A grassed waterway was installed as a safe outlet for water. Livestock on Sunnyview Farms were fenced out of a stream and an alternative water supply was put in place. Heavy use areas now hold water troughs for cattle.

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Quitman County is a designated StrikeForce county in Georgia. The USDA StrikeForce Initiative is designed to help relieve persistent poverty in high-poverty counties.



Cathrall has been able to fight an erosion problem by installing terraces and planting grass in waterways around his property.

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

229-732-3001

**Lower Chattahoochee River
Soil And Water
Conservation District**