

Soil and Water Gazette

Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District

Fall 2016

A Brief History of the District

The **Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District (MRSWCD)** was chartered by the State of Florida on April 5, 1945.

The District Board of Supervisors entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, whereby the USDA/NRCS provides technical information and experienced conservation personnel to the district. Manatee County Government has been and continues to be a strong supporter of the MRSWCD by providing staff and technical assistance.

Supervisors meet regularly on the second Monday night of each month at the Manatee Extension Office in Palmetto.

Board Members

Jennifer Brunty	Chairman
John J. O'Connor, Jr.	Vice-Chairman
Paul Howard	Treasurer
Callon C. (Buddy) Keen, Jr.	Supervisor
Ben King	Supervisor

2016 USDA FARM BILL PROGRAM

Cost Assistance for Conservation Practices

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is now accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and several other programs.

USDA program applications are accepted on a continuous basis. **However, applications must be submitted by **October 21, 2016** to be considered for FY2017 funds.**

Farms and ranches will be ranked based on environmental benefits, then government **incentive funds** will be allocated based on highest to lowest ranking until available funds run out.

Examples of incentive practices are: reorganize inefficient irrigation systems, irrigation water management, troughs and pipeline for livestock watering, and exotic weed control for Category I pests.

For more information or to receive an application contact the local NRCS office at (941)907-0011 or visit <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/soils>

For further information visit: <http://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

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OFFICE STAFF:	
Janie Besselman	Administrative Specialist II
Israel Vega	District Conservationist
Vacant	Soil Technician
John Noll	Soil Conservation Planner
Gail Somodi	Soil Conservation Supervisor
An Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender.	

MRSWCD News: For more information on these programs call 907-0011. ***If you would like to make a donation to the MRSWCD to help defray the costs of MRSWCD sponsored student programs, please call 907-0011 Ext 3142. Any donations would be greatly appreciated.***

Speech Competition

Each middle school and high school participant prepared a 6-8 minute speech on the topic selected by the Association of Florida Conservation Districts, "Why Do We All Need Trees?" Southeast High School student Pankti Parikh, placed 1st and was awarded \$150. Placing 2nd was Braden River High School student Harley Wade (\$100), and in 3rd place was Palmetto High School student Elanie Mason (\$75). Parikh presented her speech at the annual history luncheon as part of Farm City Week.

Staff hosted 5 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.

Manasota Regional Envirothon

Manatee High School's *Those Who Shall Not Be Named* team was the Manatee County winner of the Manasota Regional Envirothon. The second place team *Golfwang*, also from Manatee High School, represented Manatee County at the state contest held at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, and placed 10th overall. The Florida Envirothon competition is a field event for high school students requiring problem solving, teamwork and the application of knowledge in five areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and current environmental issues.



Staff assisted 80 students with the help of 40 volunteers.



Manatee County Land Judging Competition

The 55th annual event allowed students from local 4-H and FFA chapters to compete and show their knowledge of soil science, home site evaluation and conservation practices on a parcel of land. The students compete for the opportunity to represent Manatee County in the state contest, and possibly move on to the national competition held annually. Southeast High School won the senior FFA team division and the junior

FFA winning team was from Buffalo Creek Middle School. One intermediate and two senior 4-H teams also competed. Placing first among 4-H seniors was a team including Claire Strickland, Sam West, Jesse West and Meagan Gigliotti. The winning teams went on to compete at the state level.

Staff assisted 50 students with the help of 7 volunteers.

Manatee Spring Conservation Farm Tour

In the spring of each year the MRSWCD sponsors a Farm Tour of the county and its various farming areas and communities. We take citizens on a guided bus tour through our county to educate participants on the importance of agriculture to our area. Lunch and snacks are provided. ***For more information on attending in spring 2017 please call 941-907-0011 x 3142.*** If you would like your farm to be considered as a stop on the tour please call us.

Staff hosted 102 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.

2017 Manatee River SWCD Events

February 2	Envirothon
February 23	MRSWCD Land Judging
March 10	Farm Tour



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service Corner

***NEW* Conservation Client Gateway.** We encourage our clients to sign up for the secure online web application that gives landowners and land managers, operating as *individuals*, the ability to track their payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance, and electronically sign documents anytime, anywhere. In the future, entities will be able to use this tool as well as individuals. Conservation Client Gateway provides users the flexibility to determine when they want to engage with NRCS online and when they prefer in-person conservation planning assistance. Visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/cgate/> for more information and to sign up for the Conservation Client Gateway.

Statistics 2016 (Oct 2015-Sept 2016)

Customers assisted	5484
Students assisted through educational events/classroom visits	965
Adult education through farm tours and training	309

2016 Conservation Planning (Acres) (Jan 1, 2016-Oct 1, 2016)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs	11,693
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Services Provided

Natural Resource Information. NRCS access to recent and historical aerial maps, topography maps, and soil maps.

USDA Soil Survey Distribution. Soil surveys used for development and crops are available. Soil survey information for many areas may now be found online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/> Please contact us if you would like assistance.

Develop Conservation Plans on land used for agriculture. The plans recommend Best Management Practices for protecting resources.

Available Programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and others. Call for information 941-907-0011.

Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District

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Phone: (941)907-0011
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Soils Unit/Extension website
<http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/soils/>
MRWCD website
<http://www.manateeriverswcd.com>

Farm City Week November 14 – November 19

For more information contact

Samantha Kennedy/County Extension Director at 722-4524

- Nov 14** MRSWCD Speech Contest: “Healthy Soils are Full of Life” Pre-registration required. Rules posted: <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/soils>
- Nov 15** Kiwanis Luncheon/Agriculturalist of the Year
- Nov 16** Agriculture Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Nov 17** Ag Venture
- Nov 18** Farm Tour
- Nov 19** Beef Workshop and Prospect Show

The **Prospect Beef Show** educates the youth of Manatee County on their beef projects in areas such as the industry, proper animal care, show techniques and how to prepare their animals for a show. This show is provided to the youth of Manatee County through sponsorships. If you are interested in being a sponsor or **for more information** contact Extension Agent Christa Kirby 722-4524 or visit <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/agriculture/livestock/>