

## **Soil and Water Gazette**

### **Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District**

**Fall 2017**

#### **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

#### **2017 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 November 17, 2017 to be considered for FY2018 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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<b>OFFICE STAFF:</b>	
Vacant	Administrative Specialist II
Israel Vega	District Conservationist
Jeremy Ansel	Soil Conservation Technician
David Outerbridge	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, "Healthy Soils Are Full of Life." Lakewood Ranch High School student Cara Zeveney, placed 1<sup>st</sup> and was awarded \$150. Placing 2<sup>nd</sup> was Lakewood Ranch High School student Kylee Graham (\$100), and in 3<sup>rd</sup> place was Palmetto High School student Katy Cardinal (\$75). Zeveney presented her speech at the annual history luncheon as part of Farm City Week, and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the area competition in May.

**Staff hosted 6 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.**

**Manasota Regional Envirothon**

Manatee High School's *Flying Monkeys* team was the Manatee County winner of the Manasota Regional Envirothon. The team represented Manatee County at the state contest held at Myakka River State Park, and placed 11<sup>th</sup> 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 100 students with the help of 40 volunteers.**



**Manatee County Land Judging Competition**

The 56<sup>th</sup> 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 individual and one senior 4-H team also competed. The winning middle school team went on to compete at the state level, finishing in 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

**Staff assisted 37 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 to educate them on the importance of agriculture to our area. Lunch and snacks are provided. **For more information on attending in spring 2018 please call 941-907-0011 x 3142.** If you would like your farm/agricultural operation to be considered as a stop on the tour please call us.

**Staff hosted 103 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.**

## 2018 Manatee River SWCD Events

February 1	Envirothon
February 22	MRSWCD Land Judging
March 9	Farm Tour



United States Department of Agriculture

### Natural Resources Conservation Service Corner

**Conservation Client Gateway.** We encourage our clients to sign up for the secure online web application that gives landowners and land managers the ability to track their payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance, and electronically sign documents anytime, anywhere. 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 2017 (Oct 2016-Sept 2017)

Customers assisted	5765
Students assisted through educational events/classroom visits	916
Adult education through farm tours and training	205

### 2017 Conservation Applied (Acres) (Oct 1, 2016-Sep 31, 2017)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs	7,790
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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 (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and others. Call for information 941-907-0011.

## Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District

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Palmetto, FL 34221

Phone: (941)907-0011  
Fax (Toll Free): 1(855)464-1961

Soils Unit/Extension website  
<http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/soils/>  
MRWCD website  
<http://www.manateeriverswcd.com>

### Farm City Week

For more information contact

**Crystal Snodgrass/Interim County Extension Director at 722-4524**

- Nov 7** MRSWCD Speech Contest: "Watersheds; Our Water, Our Home" Pre-registration required. Rules posted: <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/soils>
- Nov 9** Agriculture Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Nov 14** Kiwanis Luncheon/Agriculturalist of the Year
- Nov 16** Ag Venture
- Nov 17** Farm Tour
- Nov 18** 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 ext. 1824 or visit <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/agriculture/livestock/>